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ELEMENTS OF THE RETURN TO TRADITION
IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDAISM
FROM 1885 TO 1976

by

David J. Meyer

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

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Referee, Dr. Michael A. Meyer

This thesis is dedicated in love
to Rabbi William B. Silverman,
who gave me encouragement and direction,
a treasure and a vision.

May this document ever attest
to Rabbi Silverman's fulfillment
of the mitzvah to
"raise up many disciples."

DIGEST

This thesis explores the process by which the American Reform movement has recovered previously abandoned traditional practices, from the Classical Period of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 until the adoption of the Centenary Perspective of 1976. A case study of three Reform congregations is integrated into this research. It analyzes their patterns of return to tradition against the background of the movement as a whole and their own specific circumstances. For this component of the thesis, I have selected Wilshire Blvd. Temple, Los Angeles, United Hebrew Congregation, Terre Haute, and the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

Chapter One chronicles the roots of Reform in America, both indigenous and imported. I trace the development of European Reform, exploring the process of ritual and liturgical reform from the early 1800's through the middle of the nineteenth century. I then examine the early trends and debates among the leaders of American Reform, devoting special attention to their prayerbooks and conferences. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the gradual unification of the American Reform movement as Eastern and Western reformers gathered to enunciate the principles of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. Chapter Two is also of an introductory nature, as it chronicles the evolution of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and Congregation B'nai B'rith (Wilshire Blvd. Temple) from their Orthodox beginnings to their acceptance of Reform.

Chapter Three examines the early cases of return to tradition within the movement as a whole, from the years 1885 until the adoption of the Columbus Platform of 1937. Examples have been drawn from a comparison of the Revised Union Prayerbook with the first edition, as well as from a similar comparison between the first edition of the Union Haggadah and the Revised version. I have also looked at holiday celebrations for the home and synagogue which came into existence during these years, as well as surveys of lay practices, approaches to life-cycle events, and the demand for a new statement of principles which led to the Columbus Platform. Chapter Four begins with a discussion of the early history of Temple Israel of Terre Haute, and the ultimate merger which brought the United Hebrew Congregation into being, and then follows the process of return to discarded traditional practices in Terre Haute, as well as at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and Wilshire Blvd. Temple through the year 1937.

In Chapter Five, I explore the traditional elements of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook which were absent in the previous edition, and I conduct a similar analysis regarding the Gates of Prayer and the New Union Haggadah. I also examine trends towards greater traditionalism in life-cycle ceremonies, festival celebrations, and Shabbat observance

which became prominent in the publications and discussions of the Reform movement during the period between the Columbus Platform and the Centenary Perspective of 1976. The chapter includes an analysis of the societal and historical forces which led to this increased emphasis on traditional expressions and ritual practices. Chapter Six concludes the case-study of the three congregations by following their tendencies toward returns to tradition during this same period.

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PREFACE

In a letter published in the Fall, 1983, issue of Reform Judaism magazine, Leon S. Cahn, Past President of Temple Sinai, New Orleans, angrily objected to the cover photograph from the previous issue showing a father and daughter wearing kipot. "Since when, pray," writes Mr. Cahn, "have Reform Jews reverted to this outmoded custom, which our ancestors renounced when they created our branch of the faith a century and a half ago?" His question, though framed rhetorically, deserves a serious reply, for it is related to the entire phenomenon of return to tradition in American Reform Judaism.

This work is intended as the latest--not the only--description of the trend towards greater traditionalism among Reform Jews. Histories such as Philipson's The Reform Movement in Judaism, Borowitz's Reform in the Process of Change, and Schwartzman's Reform Judaism--Then and Now, in addition to various other books, articles and papers, have dealt with this trend for many years, for it is a development which was being noted even as it occurred. A rabbinic thesis dealing with this matter was submitted by Robert M. Scott in 1966, but it was limited to a discussion of the years between 1930 and 1948. This study breaks new ground not only because of its historical breadth, but also in its use of congregational minutes to document the process of re-traditionalization in specific

settings.

My rabbinic thesis explores the process by which the American Reform movement has recovered previously abandoned traditional practices, from the Classical Period of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 until the adoption of the Centenary Perspective of 1976. The indicators I isolate as evidence of this reversal include: the increasing use of Hebrew and the reincorporation of discarded elements in worship, the re-introduction of Bar Mitzvah and other life-cycle rituals, the utilization of head-coverings and tallitot during prayer, the development of Reform patterns of festival observance, and the renewed interest in halachic norms.

A case study of three Reform congregations is integrated into this research. It analyzes their patterns of return to tradition against the background of the movement as a whole and their own specific circumstances. I have selected Wilshire Blvd. Temple, Los Angeles, United Hebrew Congregation, Terre Haute, and the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. I have utilized congregational minutes, bulletins, and yearbooks, as well as made use of oral history in the preparation of this portion of the study. These congregations were chosen due to their geographical distribution (one from each coast and one from the Mid-West), the accessibility of the primary documents, and

also because of the diversity of modern Reform expressions represented by these three congregations.

I am most grateful to Dr. Michael Meyer not only for his helpful insights and the many hours he devoted to this project, but also for the sincere concern he displayed for my personal growth as a rabbi and historian.

I would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Steve Breuer for his valuable assistance with the Los Angeles research, and to Dr. Herman Koren for his insights into the development of the Terre Haute Jewish community. I wish to thank Fanny Zelcer and the staff of the American Jewish Archives for all of their assistance in locating the primary documents.

This seems to be an appropriate opportunity to thank my parents, Louis and Betty Meyer, who placed at my feet opportunities for Jewish learning, and who encouraged me to explore my rich cultural inheritance. That exploration has led me onto the path I have chosen.

Finally, to my wife, Marla, for her love, humor, patience and support, I offer the thanks which cannot be expressed.

CHAPTER 1--THE ROAD TO PITTSBURGH

THE ROOTS OF REFORM IN AMERICA

More so than any other religious or ethnic population, the character of the American Jewish community was radically altered by the extensive immigration of the nineteenth century. Prior to the first massive influx of Jews to America in 1836, the half-dozen Jewish congregations then in existence all adhered to the traditional Sephardic rite. [1] By 1840, the immigration of Jews mainly from villages in Bavaria, Southeast Germany and Posen brought the Jewish population above 15,000. By 1850, it had more than tripled to around 50,000, and by 1880, a quarter-million souls comprised the American Jewish community, the vast majority of whom were of German origin. [2] Sidney Ahlstrom comments that, by 1880, the Jews had achieved "not only a most remarkable accommodation to the American scene, but had institutionalized a new and distinct stage in the history of Judaism." [3]

The immigrants of the 1830's and 1840's, uprooted from the ways of life to which they had become accustomed, craved a sense of belonging to the mainstream of American culture as well as continued participation in Jewish life. They were usually poor and minimally educated in either Jewish or secular learning. Most of these newcomers worked in a petty trade or craft, and a great many were engaged as tailors or

shoemakers. [4] Leon Jick points out that the ability of the small and isolated Jewish community to retain its identity, even without the presence of well-educated, religious leadership, was indeed a remarkable achievement. Nonetheless, American Jewry had become highly acculturated by the middle of the nineteenth century, and their patterns of religious practice differed widely from the tradition-bound Judaism of their European communities. Jick writes: "Its life patterns, religious institutions, and general outlook were so completely Americanized--so far from the traditional sense or the life style inherited from their fathers--as to be an entirely new phenomenon in the Jewish experience." [5]

For these immigrants, the process of religious reform was not so much determined by intellectual or theological convictions, but rather by their developing sense of the appropriate forms of Jewish expression for a community which was rapidly integrating into their new society. [6] So despite the connection which Philipson discerned between the "practical outworking of these [Reform] principles in the United States and their primal enunciation in Germany," [7] Reform in America was for the most part an indigenous development. Still, the evolution and expansion of Reform in America was stimulated by European examples and by the leaders of European liberal Judaism, many of whom made their way to American congregations in the latter half of the

nineteenth century. And it was in Europe that the principles of systematic reform were developed in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

CASTING OFF TRADITIONS IN EUROPE

The first period of reform in Europe was not an era of widespread ritual innovations or of discarding the long-held traditions of a Judaism which had begun to emerge from the isolation of its medieval past. This was the time of Moses Mendelssohn, the major Jewish figure of eighteenth century Enlightenment, who paved the way for the Reform movement by bridging the gap between the Jew and the modern, Christian world. His successes stimulated other Jews to seek a broad, secular education, especially in terms of German language and culture, as the means to civil and cultural equality. Mendelssohn's place in the history of Reform Judaism derives from his ability to resolve the conflict between Judaism and modernity. But Mendelssohn upheld the authority behind the halachic demands of Rabbinic Judaism, and he never rejected the Divine origin and eternal validity of Judaism's ceremonial laws. For this reason, Philipson considered Mendelssohn's views to be inconsistent with the ideals of true reformers, and places him outside the circle of the founders of Reform. [8]

The age of ritual reform begins with Israel Jacobson. His school in Seesen, founded in 1801, was the scene of

moderate liturgical innovations which would not have been possible in the synagogues. The most important goal of Jacobson's reforms was to improve the aesthetics of Jewish worship, making the services appealing and attractive to both his Jewish and Gentile contemporaries. In 1810, Jacobson built a chapel for students at his school and for a few Jewish families in Seesen, which he called the Seesen Temple. Although he utilized the traditional liturgy, Jacobson insisted that the praying be done quietly, together as a congregation, and not even the Torah was chanted. In addition, an organ was installed and accompanied the singing of a well-rehearsed choir. He continued to introduce German hymns and prayers, and he gave to the sermon a much more prominent position than had been traditionally afforded. In order to further elevate the importance of the sermon, he moved the bima from the center of the congregation to the front of the room. In his sermons, Jacobson stressed the distinction between Jewish particularism and general universalism, the precedence of the moral laws over the ceremonial regulations, and the importance of returning to the Bible as the primary source for religious inspiration.

[9]

After the collapse of the Westphalian Kingdom, Jacobson moved to Berlin in 1815, where he began conducting private services in his home. Shabbat services were held for two hours every Saturday morning, and at those services, further reforms were instituted, including the elimination of both

the musaf service and the repetition of the amidah. When the crowds became too large for Jacobson's home to accommodate, the services moved to the residence of Jacob Herz Beer. In 1817, the group published a prayerbook for their services which included German prayers and hymns, but there was little consistency regarding alterations in the prayers made for theological reasons. In some places references to the Messianic rebuilding of Zion and the sacrificial cult were retained, and in other places these references were altered. [10]

The services and the prayerbook of Jacobson's Berlin congregation inspired other systematic reforms, most notably, those of the "New Israelitish Temple Association" in Hamburg, led by Eduard Kley, who had been a preacher at the service at the Beer home. As in Seesen and Berlin, the Hamburg Temple offered German prayers, a German sermon, choral singing, and organ music. [11] The prayerbook of the Temple was printed from left to right like an English book. The idea of a personal Messiah to lead the Jews back to Palestine was replaced with the more general concept of redemption for all of mankind. [12] Its Zionism was neutralized, the triennial cycle of Torah readings was introduced, and the reading of Haftarah was abrogated altogether.

Among the leading supporters of the Hamburg reforms was the Hungarian rabbi, Aaron Chorin, who published his liberal views in the question-and-answer style of responsa

literature. He permitted on halachic grounds the elimination of piyyutim, the use of vernacular, the accompaniment of an organ, and even the practice of worship with uncovered head. Of course, other rabbinic authorities, notably Rabbi Moses Sofer, the head of the Jewish community of Pressburg, considered these innovations to be heresies and the reformers to be "infidels." [13] Still, the congregation flourished, and they even established a branch congregation at Leipzig in 1820, in order to attract the merchants who gathered in Leipzig for the yearly fairs. [14]

The decades of the 1820's and 1830's were a period of latency in the development of European Reform. The only places of Reform worship in Germany continued to be Hamburg, Seesen, and Leipzig, and no new Reform prayerbook was issued until the revision of the Hamburg prayerbook in 1841. But during this time, a new generation of rabbis were receiving university educations in addition to their religious training. Among them were notably Abraham Geiger, Samuel Holdheim, David Einhorn, Samuel Adler, and Ludwig Philippson. This second generation of reformers put forward their cause on the basis of scholarly justification and philosophic reasoning. They emphasized the evolutionary nature of the Jewish religion, and viewed the Reform movement as a further, inevitable stage in the progressive development of Judaism. In the words of Abraham Kohn, a supporter of Reform, "The whole history of the Jewish religion proves that certain changes in the customs and

ordinances of rabbinic Judaism were not only permissible, but indeed were undertaken at all times." [15] In their attempts to separate Judaism's eternal truths and uplifting observances from the superstitious elements which had crept into the culture of the Jews over the course of time, the advocates of Reform continued to be at crossed swords with the supporters of Orthodoxy. Among the most vehement of battles was that which began in 1839, when Geiger was appointed as rabbinical colleague to the Orthodox rabbi, Solomon A. Tiktin, in the community of Breslau. This controversy became the focal point of an ongoing war of words and personalities between the advocates of Reform and their detractors until the death of Tiktin in 1843.

In the decade of the 1840's, the progress of Reform gained new momentum. In Hamburg, the Temple began to grow, and the second edition of their prayerbook was published. In Frankfort, a group of well-educated laymen who felt the rabbis were moving too slowly in their reforms founded the Society of the Friends of Reform in 1842. This radical group denied the authority of the Talmud, and they too, rejected the belief in a Messiah who would lead the Jews back to Palestine. [16] The Frankfort Society was short-lived, but it nonetheless proved important as an indicator of the desire on the part of many Jews for more sweeping reforms.

In 1844, the first of three major conferences of Reform rabbis was held in Brunswick at the call of Ludwig

Philippson. The Conference carried no binding authority, but served to clarify the goals of Reform, and to give formal direction for future conferences.

The second Conference, held in Frankfort in 1845 featured nine days of debate on liturgical issues alone. At Frankfort, the liberal rabbis decided that halachah did not require Hebrew in prayer, but advised that the barechu, shema, the Torah portion, and the final three blessings of the amida should be read in Hebrew for practical, subjective reasons, and that the rest of the service could be recited in German. They authorized the elimination of the musaf service, advocated the triennial cycle of Torah readings, and sanctioned the playing of organ music in the synagogue.

The rabbis at the Breslau Conference of 1846 supplemented these reforms by supporting the elimination of the second days of festivals, the religious equality of men and women, the permissibility of eating leguminous plants on Passover, and the shortening of the shiva period from seven to three days. At this conference, Holdheim's argument that the idea of "consecration" was the most important religious element of the Sabbath paved the way for arguments in favor of moving principal day of worship to Sunday.

In addition to the Frankfort Friends of Reform, a second radical group was formed in Berlin, in 1845. Like the Frankfort Society, the Berlin "Association for Reform in Judaism" was a lay-movement, and their radical posture was not endorsed by the Breslau Conference. They went so far as

to eliminate the wearing of head-coverings and tallitot. They substituted the blowing of a trumpet for the shofar, allowed women to sing in the choir, sat men and women on the same floor, and had the reader pronounce the traditional priestly blessing. [17] Originally, services were held on both Saturday and Sunday, but three years after the election of Holdheim as the congregational rabbi, only Sunday services were being held. [18] Unlike the Frankfort Society, the Berlin Association became a permanent locus of the type of radical reform characteristic of the Classical period in America.

THE DAWN OF AMERICAN REFORM

Outside of Germany, attempts to bring about similar reforms in Jewish ritual and worship were much less radical, and were largely unsuccessful. Indeed, only in the United States were the ideals of the European reformers brought to widespread fruition. Graetz is probably correct in reasoning that the communal traditions in Europe were too strong to be abolished without severe struggles, and hence the reformers' successes there were on a much smaller scale than those made in America, where the principles were more easily introduced into fledgling Jewish communities. [19] Furthermore, proponents of religious reform were protected in America by constitutional guarantees of religious pluralism, which safeguarded avenues of reform which the

traditionalists occasionally tried to close through civil litigation. America also lacked State-sponsored religious authority and organization, which in Europe slowed the process of reform. Instead, America offered voluntary religious affiliation, freedom from unwanted religious authority, and a social atmosphere which encouraged individualism, innovation, and democracy.

Although the foundations of American Reform are closely tied to German language and culture, it is a reflection of the indigenous origins of American Reform that the first congregation to adopt the principles of Reform was a splinter group from the traditional Sephardic synagogue, Congregation Beth Elohim in Charleston, South Carolina. Charleston in 1820 was the Jewish capital of America. At that time, there were only four hundred Jews living in Philadelphia and about five hundred living in New York City, while Charleston boasted a Jewish population of more than seven hundred. [20] In 1824, a group of forty-seven members from Beth Elohim demanded a series of reforms, including that some of the Hebrew prayers be repeated in English, that the service be abridged, and that there be an English sermon delivered on the Torah portion each week. This disgruntled group, unable to convince the majority, broke away from Beth Elohim and created the Reformed Society of Israelites.

The Society was short-lived, and rejoined Congregation Beth Elohim in 1833. But by the time the old synagogue building burned down in 1840, the reformers had gained the

upper hand, and voted in favor of installing an organ in the new building. The traditionalists took their case against the reformers to the civil courts, and the case lasted for three years before the judge ruled in favor of the reformers. [21]

During the decades of the 1840's and 1850's, the German-educated rabbis who were to become the fashioners of American Reform began arriving in this country, and new congregations were organized, based from the beginning on the principles of Reform. The first such congregation in America was Temple Har Sinai, founded in Baltimore, 1842, by a group of men influenced by the Hamburg prayer-book reforms. [22] The second congregation founded under Reform guidelines was organized in 1845, when a Reform Society in New York established Temple Emanuel, with Leo Merzbacher serving as rabbi.

In November of that same year, Max Lilienthal, one of the notable early leaders of American Reform, arrived in New York. "The bridge between the past and the present is broken off," stated Lilienthal, and he took an active role in the city's Reform Society, Verein der Lichtfreunde. [23] Lilienthal would come to be regarded as within the camp of the moderate reformers, as he himself acknowledged:

...we wish to know when religious ceremonies have to yield to the necessities of life, and when they have to be kept at any price, subjugating life and its exigencies. In a word, we wish to know what in our law is God's command and what is the transient work of mortal man.... We are no reformers from inclination, no reformers for fashion's sake, but reformers from conviction. We

do not belong to that frivolous or arrogant class that do away and abolish because it suits them just now. [24]

ISAAC M. WISE AND THE CLEVELAND CONFERENCE

A substantial milestone in the development of American Reform was reached in 1846, with the arrival of Isaac Mayer Wise, who was elected to the pulpit of Albany's Beth El congregation. Wise spent eight years in New York before accepting the call in 1853 to serve as the spiritual leader of Bene Jeshurun in Cincinnati, and it was in Cincinnati where Wise accomplished his most important tasks of constructing an American Reform movement. Immediately upon arriving in Cincinnati, Wise founded two weekly papers, The Israelite published in English, and Die Deborah in German. These weeklies served as the organ through which Wise disseminated his plans for a unified American Judaism, his theories regarding the role of tradition for modern Jews, and his arguments against those whose views differed from his. In an early issue of The Israelite, Wise described the necessity for Reform:

Judaism has become a set of unmeaning practices, and the intelligent Jew either mourns for the fallen daughter of Zion or has adopted a course of frivolity and indifference. Therefore we demand reforms.... All forms to which no meaning is attached any longer are an impediment to our religion, and must be done away with.... Whatever makes us ridiculous before the world as it now is, may safely be and should be abolished.... Whatever tends to the elevation of the divine service, to inspire the heart of the worshipper and attract him, should be done without any necessary delay.... Whenever religious observances and the just demands of society exclude each other, the former have lost their power... [25]

Yet like Lilienthal, Wise wanted to retain many traditional institutions:

We want twice everyday minyan in the temple for mourners, Yahrzeit and such other people who want to go there; we want the daily minyan even if some of the Minyan men must be salaried. We want every wedding in the temple and go outside under protest only; religious solemnities must take place in the house of public worship. We want every boy to say the benediction over the Torah on the Sabbath of his Bar Mitzvah, even if he has been confirmed already... [26]

The most vocal leader in the cause of uniting all American Jews under a single congregational and rabbinical union, Wise chided those rabbis who failed to understand that the future of the Jews in America depended upon their solidarity. Despite the disparaging view of Aryeh Rubinstein, who on the basis of Wise's inconsistencies and inclination to straddle the fence on certain theological issues, denounces Wise as the "Great Compromiser of nineteenth-Century American Judaism," [27] Wise's willingness to sacrifice for unification was grounded in the belief that "this separateness is un-Jewish, and against the destiny of Judaism in this country." [28] According to Glazer's more even-handed characterization, "Wise represents the first stage of Reform, in which its concern is purely practical and primarily with the modernization of the service, as we can see by his indifference to any formulated theoretical position." [29]

In October of 1855, Wise organized the Cleveland

Conference in order to begin forging such a union. Congregations from Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, Louisville, and Detroit sent representatives to the conference, where Wise was elected president. [30] Along with Wise, Lilienthal and Merzbacher were the most radical reformers, and Isaac Leeser, a leading scholar in Philadelphia and founder of the conservative monthly, The Occident, was regarded as the leader among the contingent of traditionalists.

"On the one side were the reformers," describes Wise, "without fixed principles, and on the other, the orthodox, who wanted the Conference to declare for the divinity of the Talmud. A union of these contradictory elements seemed impossible, and yet it had to take place if the synod and the union of congregations were to be established." [31]

In the end, the task was accomplished, even though the success was to be short-lived. The declarations of the Conference were as follows:

The conference of the rabbis and congregational delegates, assembled in Cleveland, actuated by the earnest desire to preserve the union of Israel and its religion by a mutual understanding and union, and convinced that the organization of a synod is the most efficient means to attain this sacred aim, whose legality and utility are taught in the Bible, Talmud, and history--consider it their duty:

To convene a synod and call upon the American Jewish congregations in an extra circular, to send their ministers and delegates to the said synod. The conference also feels obliged to give utterance to the following points, on which they unanimously agree to be the leading principles of the future synods:

1. The Bible as delivered to us by our fathers and as now in our possession, is of immediate divine origin, and the standard of our religion.

2. The Talmud contains the traditional, legal, and logical exposition of the biblical laws which must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud.

3. The resolutions of the synod, in accordance with the above principles, are legally valid.

4. Statutes and ordinances, contrary to the laws of the land, are invalid. [32]

The Conference unanimously approved the declaration, and appointed committees to oversee the implementation of such a national synod and to create a new prayerbook suitable for use throughout American Jewish congregations. Wise was ecstatic over the results of the Conference and wrote: "I imagined that the battle had been fought and won.... Orthodoxy was defeated, and grasped eagerly at the few concessions which we had made in order to proceed peaceably and unitedly along the path upon which we had entered." [33]

EAST VERSUS WEST

Less than a month prior to the Cleveland Conference, David Einhorn, who was quickly becoming Wise's most staunch adversary among the reformers, arrived in America to serve the Baltimore congregation, Har Sinai. While Wise's approach was to "make haste slowly," [34] Einhorn believed that rapid reforms with no compromise to the orthodox were required for the survival of Judaism in modernity. In his biography of Einhorn, Kaufmann Kohler writes: "Both conservatives and liberals dreaded the Radical Reformer who was so fearless in living up to his convictions and in

condemning hypocrisy, whether in the pulpit or in daily life." [35]

In his inaugural sermon at Har Sinai on September 27, 1855, Einhorn enunciated his view that "Judaism has reached a turning-point when all such customs and usages as are lifeless must be abolished, partly with the object of retaining its own followers, partly to protect it from moral degeneracy..." [36]

Einhorn protested loudly against the resolutions of the Cleveland Conference and the compromises of Wise, especially regarding the first two articles of the platform. "We also appreciate peace in Israel as a precious boon," wrote Einhorn, "but a peace which degrades Judaism, our greatest boon, appears to us to be too dearly bought, and is in the highest degree of a precarious tenure, when a few men in the name of collective Israel set up articles of faith which deny to dissenters a place in the communion of professing Israelites." [37] So began the rift between the Eastern reformers and the Western reformers which would last until the Pittsburgh Conference of 1885.

The following year, in 1856, Einhorn published the first edition of his own Jewish monthly, Sinai, and the very first article by Einhorn rebuked Wise's understanding of the role of the Talmud in modern life. [38] Sinai was published until 1862, as the battles between Wise and Einhorn over issues such as intermarriage, Sabbath observance, and relations with fellow Jews continued to be waged in the

press.

The greatest monument to Einhorn's vision of American Reform remains his prayerbook, published for the first time in German in 1856, entitled Olat Tamid: A Prayerbook for Israelitish Jewish Congregations. Einhorn believed that the use of the German language was critical if American Judaism was to survive, and the prayerbook was widely acclaimed by the German-speaking Jewish communities in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. [39] By 1872, it had gone through three revisions and an English translation. The foundations for the prayerbook had been written while Einhorn was still living in Europe, and it was the first to reflect the reforms enunciated at the Frankfort conference in 1845. [40] Like Holdheim's Gebetbuch für jüdische Reformgemeinden, the services were considerably shorter than the traditional worship, and the pagination was ordered from left to right. Another model for Einhorn was provided by Zunz's Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge, a scientific work which aimed at the reconstruction of original forms of the prayers. [41]

In the daily service, with the exception of the major responses--barechu, shema, first and last three prayers of the amidah, the Torah service, and the kaddish--which are given in Hebrew, the rest of the service appears in German. Slightly more Hebrew appears in the Sabbath and Holiday services. Absent are petitions for the Messianic restoration of the Jewish state in Palestine and return to

the Temple cult. Prayers reflecting the belief in a physical resurrection were replaced by passages describing spiritual immortality. By abandoning in large measure the forms, concepts, and language of the traditional siddur, Einhorn composed a prayerbook internally consistent in language and theology, utilizing passages from the Prophets and Psalms alongside medieval and contemporary readings.

In the West, the prayerbook project begun by the Cleveland Conference came to fruition in the summer 1857, when Wise's Minhag America was completed. Wrote Wise:

The commission met in my library and finished the work in thirty-eight sessions. They adhered anxiously to tradition; they had no desire to found a new religion, or to institute a new cult. They wished to recast the old and traditional prayers reverently, so that they might be brought into accord with the religious consciousness of the time and the democratic principles of the new fatherland. [42]

Consonant with his ideology which led to the Cleveland Conference, Wise wanted only moderate changes and the retention of Hebrew, in his desire to promote the unity of the Jewish people. The book appeared in three editions: one had only the Hebrew text, one in Hebrew and English, and one in Hebrew and German. While the structure of the traditional siddur was left largely intact, like Einhorn's Olat Tamid there are no lamentations over the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, no references to a personal Messiah, and no kabbalistic angelologies. [43] Like Einhorn's work, an emphasis was placed on universalism, spiritual immortality, and a Messianic Era of redemption.

In an attempt to shorten the Sabbath service to two hours or less, Wise followed the European precedents by reverting to the ancient Palestinian triennial cycle of Torah reading.

Minhag America was soon adopted by most of the congregations in the southern and western portions of the country, and was often in direct competition with Olat Tamid and with several other less significant works. All the while, new Reform congregations were springing up, and many older, traditional congregations were adopting the principles of Reform. Of the former type, Temple Sinai was founded in Chicago in 1860 and engaged Bernhard Felsenthal, who had come to America in 1854. In 1859, Felsenthal had published a pamphlet, entitled "Kol Kore Bamidbar", outlining the importance of adopting religious reforms. In it, he wrote: "There is but one class of laws which, biblical or post-biblical, have eternal validity, and these are the moral laws, engraved by the finger of God with ineradicable letters in the spiritual nature of man." [44]

Although the Civil War did much to prevent any major rabbinical conferences after the Cleveland Conference of 1855, the feud between the moderate camp in the West, led by Wise, and the Eastern radical camp of Einhorn continued from the pulpits and in the papers. Einhorn had meanwhile been forced to flee Baltimore in 1861 due to his outspoken opposition to slavery. In June of 1869, as he was serving as the rabbi of Adath Jeshurun Congregation in New York, Einhorn joined Samuel Adler, who had taken over the Emanuel

pulpit in New York in 1857, in inviting their like-minded, "theologically educated" colleagues to a conference in the Fall. The invitation which was published in Moritz Ellinger's new German/English paper, The Jewish Times, read in part:

It is proper that the call should be addressed to all who are in sympathy with Reform principles. In matters of religion, in things which concern the relation between man and his Creator, compromise is out of the question. No man of conscience will consent to retain anything which, he is honestly convinced, belongs to the obsolete views of the past.... It is legalizing hypocrisy... [45]

The Philadelphia Conference of 1869 took place at the home of Samuel Hirsch, who had arrived in 1866 and led the process of reform at Keneseth Israel congregation in Philadelphia. Bernhard Felsenthal took part in the Conference, as did Kaufmann Kohler from Detroit, who was Einhorn's son-in-law and also a staunch reformer. Perhaps the most radical voice of the Conference was that of Isaac Löw Chronik from Chicago, who favored the transfer of Shabbat to Sunday and felt that Hebrew had no place in modern worship. From the West, Wise and Lilienthal were also in attendance.

The Conference approved a set of theological principles which reflected the reformers' modern understanding of the Messianic goals of Judaism and the meaning of Jewish Dispersion. They formally obliterated the ancient caste system of the Temple period, and rejected the concept of bodily resurrection. The final article asserted that Hebrew

is only fitting as a language of prayer when the majority of the congregation is able to understand it.

The following is the declaration of principles as adopted by the Conference:

1. The Messianic aim of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state under a descendant of David, involving a second separation from the nations of the earth, but the union of all the children of God in the confession of the unity of God, so as to realize the unity of all rational creatures and their call to moral sanctification.

2. We look upon the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth not as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but as a result of the divine purpose revealed to Abraham, which, as has become ever clearer in the course of the world's history, consists in the dispersion of the Jews to all parts of the earth, for the realization of their high priestly mission, to lead the nations to the true knowledge and worship of God.

3. The Aaronic priesthood and the Mosaic sacrificial cult were preparatory steps to the real priesthood of the whole people, which began with the dispersion of the Jews, and to the sacrifices of sincere devotion and moral sanctification, which alone are pleasing and acceptable to the Most Holy. These institutions, preparatory to higher religiosity, were consigned to the past, once for all, with the destruction of the second temple, and only in this sense--as educational influences in the past--are they to be mentioned in our prayers.

4. Every distinction between Aaronides and non-Aaronides, as far as religious rites and duties are concerned, is consequently inadmissible, both in the religious cult and in life.

5. The selection of Israel as the people of religion, as the bearers of the highest idea of humanity, is still, as ever, to be strongly emphasized, and for this very reason, whenever this is mentioned it shall be done with full emphasis laid on the world-embracing mission of Israel and the love of God for all His children.

6. The belief in the bodily resurrection has no religious foundation, and the doctrine of immortality refers to the after-existence of the soul only.

7. Urgently as the cultivation of the Hebrew language, in which the treasures of divine revelation are given and the immortal remains of a literature that influences all civilized nations are preserved, must be always desired by us in fulfillment of a sacred duty, yet has it become unintelligible to the vast majority of our co-religionists; therefore it must make way, as is advisable under existing circumstances, to intelligible language in prayer, which, if not understood, is a soulless form. [46]

In addition to these seven principles, the Conference passed a number of resolutions on marriage and divorce. Stressing the equality between husband and wife, the Conference encouraged double-ring ceremonies, and rejected chalitzah. Furthermore, civil divorce was recognized as valid and binding. [47] The question of the necessity and relevance of circumcision for male converts was among the issues most hotly debated by the Conference. Of particular interest was the fact that Wise, generally viewed as a moderate, proposed not requiring circumcision for male proselytes. The Conference declared that "the male child of a Jewish mother is, no less than her female child, in accordance with a never-disputed principle of Judaism, to be considered a Jew by descent, even though he be uncircumcised." [48] The Conference could not reach an accord over a resolution regarding circumcision for proselytes.

A UNIFIED MOVEMENT

Clearly by the time of the Philadelphia Conference, most of the theological foundations for ritual reform were agreed upon by reformers East and West. In addition, many of the practical reforms which at first were considered radical, had become matters of uniform practice in congregations throughout America. For example, womens'

galleries had long since given way to family pews. Wise credits Anshe Emeth congregation of Albany for instituting the reform when, in 1851, the congregation moved into an old church building and voted unanimously to retain the seating arrangement. [49] Mixed choirs soon became the accepted norm to accompany the organ, which also, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was the preferred instrument of service decorum.

The Confirmation ceremony for young boys and girls quickly came to supplement and then to replace Bar Mitzvah as the ceremonial passage into adult Jewish life. Propagated by Israel Jacobson in Berlin, 1815, the custom of Confirmation was introduced in the United States by Lilienthal, on Shavuot, 1846. [50] Because of its egalitarian nature, spectacle, and similarity to the custom of American churches, Confirmation quickly gained acceptance throughout the Reform communities of America, and the tradition of Bar Mitzvah, seen as obsolete Orientalism, fell out of practice.

Another reform which came to be the prevailing custom in American Reform congregations was the removal of head-coverings during worship. Discarding the head-covering during worship is a practice almost entirely limited to American Reform congregations. The only congregation in Germany to adopt the practice, was Samuel Holdheim's Berlin Reformgemeinde, even though scholars in Europe, such as Aaron Chorin, had been writing on the subject since the

1820's. Another Hungarian rabbi, the brilliant scholar Leopold Löw, also prepared a detailed historical study of the head-covering question. Löw concluded that

It is often stated that the prevailing custom of covering the head is a 'millenium-old usage,' and that the Jews who uncovered their heads deny their oriental descent. All of these errors stem from the fact that the study of biblical antiquities is hardly pursued and that of the Talmudic age not at all. [51]

Those who opposed bare-headed worship did so on the grounds that the practice was merely "chukkat ha-goyim,"--an imitation of the customs of the Gentiles. It would thus be forbidden by Jewish law. Such was the argument first put forward in the seventeenth century by Rabbi David HaLevi of Lemberg. [52] The Reformers classified the uncovering of the head as a practice observed by the non-Jew for convenience and comfort which, since it involved no belief or religious meaning, cannot be included in the prohibition against chukkat ha-goyim. [53] The practice of wearing a head-covering was merely based on the Oriental conception of proper public, not religious, etiquette. [54]

In Berlin, the Reformgemeinde passed a resolution suggesting the removal of head-gear for the High Holydays of 1845, although allowing a black skullcap for those who insisted. [55] According to Deutsch, the congregation was praying bareheaded by 1846. [56] Elsewhere, even in Germany, worshippers were expected to keep their heads covered.

The first American congregation to discard the

head-covering was the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, as discussed above. And when the Har Sinai Reform Society of Baltimore was organized in 1842, they abandoned the yarmulke immediately. However, when Samuel Adler proposed that his congregation, Temple Emanuel in New York, introduce the change in 1859, although the motion was supported by the Temple Board of Trustees, it was not immediately accepted by the congregation. [57] Yet they too would be praying without yarmulkes within five years. Similarly, an article from an 1865 issue of The Occident describes the practice at Temple Sinai in Chicago: "The same spirit of innovation has caused the congregation to abolish the duties and privileges of the Cohanim, the wearing of tallit and tefillin, to adopt family seats, to sit with uncovered heads during services, and so forth." [58]

Apparently, the Hebrew Union College had assumed the propriety of studying with uncovered head, because in 1879, only four years after Isaac Mayer Wise founded the College, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Proceedings record a resolution by Rev. Dr. F. De Sola Mendes of New York recommending that "pupils of the Hebrew Union College and Preparatory Schools, who on their enrollment shall express the conscientious desire to study Hebrew with covered heads, in the olden fashion, shall be permitted to do so..." [59]

Not all practical reforms gained the universal approval of those mentioned above. The most furious debates

concerned the propriety of transferring the principal day of worship to Sunday. Those in favor of Sunday services argued that greater numbers of congregants would attend Temple if their Sabbath day coincided with the rest of society's. Furthermore, Sunday services would allow for non-Jews to come into the temples to learn about Judaism and Jewish ethical teachings. On January 15, 1874, Kaufmann Kohler, then the rabbi of Sinai Congregation in Chicago, introduced Sunday services in addition to the regular Saturday service with a lecture titled "The New Knowledge and the Old Faith". [60] By 1887, they had dropped the Saturday service completely. [61] In 1881, the Board of Trustees of Keneseth Israel Congregation of Philadelphia, following the direction of Samuel Hirsch, became the second major congregation to hold Sunday services. [62]

Isaac Mayer Wise had written repeatedly of his opposition to Sunday services, and he continued chiding his congregants to faithfully observe the Jewish Sabbath day.

We consider it a disgrace for congregations to have officers who violate the Sabbath and are Jews when their convenience only would allow it. Therefore none in our congregation can hold an office who observes not the Sabbath and is not present in the synagogue whenever it is opened. [63]

While opposed to Sunday services, Wise believed that late Friday evening services would allow his services to reach a greater number of congregants:

No Jewish congregation will succeed in permanently establishing a Sunday service.... Nobody can serve two masters,

and the Jews will not replace the Sabbath of the Decalogue by the Pope's Sunday. All the good that could be attained by a Sunday Service can be fully reached by a Friday evening Service, strictly within the pale of Judaism and to the satisfaction of all parties. [64]

Wise inaugurated the custom of late Friday evening services on October 19, 1866, and in so doing, created a new option for solving the Sabbath question, an option which became the most widespread in Reform congregations. [65] Wise advocated utilizing the service for lectures, adult education, and interfaith events, and reported an excellent response by his congregation to the change. [66]

Despite the controversy over Sunday services and the different approaches of Reform rabbis in their struggle to revive Shabbat observance among American Jews, a consensus of opinion regarding the form and content of Reform Jewish worship, theology and observance continued to emerge. Organizational unity among Reform congregations was strengthened due to the perseverance of Wise, who finally succeeded in establishing, in 1873, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and in 1875, the Hebrew Union College was opened as a seminary for the training of Reform rabbis in America. The four members of the first graduating class were ordained in 1883. Yet no major conference of American reformers had been held since the Philadelphia meetings of 1869, and rabbis across the country began to recognize the need to establish greater formal and public unity among the forces of Reform.

In November of 1885, Kaufmann Kohler, who had become

one of the leading proponents of Reform Judaism in America, sent a letter to fellow advocates of "Reform and Progress" inviting them to take part in the Pittsburgh Conference "for the purpose of discussing the present state of American Judaism, its pending issues and its requirements, and of uniting upon such plans and practical measures as are demanded by the hour." [67] The call was answered by nineteen rabbis, including two of the eight ordinees of the Hebrew Union College, David Philipson and Joseph Krauskopf. With this Conference can be seen the final resolution of the battle between the moderates and the radicals, between the West and the East.

The Declaration of Principles formulated by the Conference came to be known as the Pittsburgh Platform, and it was the most widely endorsed expression of Reform theology to date (Appendix A). Herein lies the importance of the Pittsburgh Platform in the history of Reform Judaism. The Platform differed from the Philadelphia resolutions mainly in its more positive approach to declaring the meaning of Judaism in modernity. However, even the Pittsburgh document clearly states its rejection of the laws governing "diet, priestly purity, and dress." The Platform begins with a statement of universalism, recognizing "in every religion an attempt to grasp the infinite," but yet asserts the superiority of Judaism as "the highest conception of the god-idea." The rabbis of the Conference voted against using the term "revelation" in their

description of the role of Scripture in modern Jewish life, asserting that the Torah was a doctrine of human origin, and they extended the realm of sanctity from Torah to the prophetic literature and the rest of the Bible.

The third plank of the Platform, establishing an appropriate, contemporary approach to Jewish tradition, summarized the position of the Reform rabbinate:

We recognize, in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and to-day we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

Like reformers since the time of Mendelssohn, those in Pittsburgh emphasized the difference between the moral laws and the ritual laws, and moral laws were considered to be of greater, more lasting importance. The two criteria for judging the role of traditional rituals in modern life were their ability to elevate and sanctify the lives of Jews, and their ability to conform to modern sensibilities.

The extreme position of the fourth article regarding the rejection of certain traditional practices reflects how those practices failed to qualify under the criteria described above:

We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

The Conference also addressed the question of Sunday services, and the following motion passed unanimously: "Be it resolved that there is nothing in the spirit of Judaism or its laws to prevent the introduction of Sunday services in localities where the necessity for such services appears, or is felt." [68] The question of circumcision for converts was debated, but no resolution was adopted.

Despite the broad acceptance of the Pittsburgh Platform, it was never adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and it was never seen as binding by the Hebrew Union College or by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. And, as discussed below in Chapter 3, it also failed to create unity among even the rabbis themselves. Still, it remained the only official statement of Reform ideology passed by a conference of American rabbis until the Columbus Platform of 1937. It was never repudiated by the rabbis or the laity of American Reform, and probably described an approach to liberal Judaism and an outlook on traditional Judaism that was acceptable to a large segment of the Reform community. Writing just after the turn of the twentieth century, David Philipson, who at the age of twenty-three was the youngest colleague attending the conference, summed up the state of Reform practice in the congregations of America in the years following the adoption of the Pittsburgh Platform:

Sufficient to say that now, owing to these reforms in the ritual the service in the reform congregations is decorous, uplifting, and reverential. The chief liturgical and ritual reforms may be summed up as consisting in the reading of prayers in the vernacular, the introduction of the organ with mixed choirs, the abolition of the women's gallery and the introduction of family pews, the worship with uncovered heads, the substitution of the confirmation ceremony for boys and girls in place of the Bar Mitzvah for boys alone, the abolition of the calling to the Torah, the selling of Mitzvot and like practices that had become abuses, the abolition of the second-day holidays; these reforms are now accepted as a matter of course, and show how completely Judaism in America has been occidentalized. Its spiritual interpretation of the tenets of the faith rests on the highest plane of ethical monotheism, and is in a line with the most exalted thought on the universal character of Israel's faith and mission as first proclaimed by the great prophets of old." [69]

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be bound following p. 51]

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CHAPTER TWO

CONGREGATIONAL HISTORIES PRIOR TO 1885

BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION

A survey of the early history of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation provides insight into the process by which a congregation, established as Orthodox, casts off traditions and enters the ranks of Reform Judaism. The congregation was founded in 1830 by a group of thirteen men who may be described as poor, uneducated immigrants, mostly from Bavaria, who made their modest living as peddlers or small storekeepers. [1] According Isaac Fein, some of these members climbed the ladder of economic success with extraordinary rapidity. But for every immigrant who was able to achieve a higher rung of success, another poor immigrant came, and so the overall complexion of the congregation did not really change. [2] The first president of the congregation, John Dyer, rose from a poor butcher to become a successful packing-house operator. Likewise, Levi Benjamin, the first treasurer of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, began as a peddler and he too achieved a measure of financial success. [3] The fact that membership to the congregation cost only five dollars per year--payable in bi-weekly installments--is further evidence of the lack of wealth among the members. An important source of income was the system of fines imposed for poor decorum during

worship. Singing louder than the chazan, taking off one's tallit before the end of the service, and talking during services all resulted in a fine of twenty-five cents.

More than just an organization for public worship, the congregation served to regulate all aspects of the members' Orthodox Jewish life. The congregation supervised the kosher butchers, installed a mikveh for the use of its members, and provided Jewish education in the synagogue school.

In 1840, Rabbi Abraham Rice assumed the pulpit of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. Rice was the first traditionally ordained rabbi to arrive in America, and his Orthodoxy was manifest in his polemics against the reformers from Germany and in his attempt to bar those who did not observe Shabbat from being called to the Torah. [4] Although most of the congregation accepted and approved of Rice's insistence on traditionalism, a group of liberal members broke away from Baltimore Hebrew in 1843 and founded Har Sinai Congregation, which would soon emerge as a focus of radical Reform in America.

Rabbi Rice resigned from the congregation in 1849, largely due to the frustrations of attempting to preserve traditional patterns of Jewish life and worship in the American atmosphere of liberalism and non-observance. [5] His successor, Dr. Henry Hochheimer, was elected that same year. Like Rice, Hochheimer came from Bavaria, and in addition to his excellent Hebrew education, Hochheimer also

had a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Munich. [6] An anti-monarchial radical in Germany, he was forced to leave when the revolution broke out in 1848. [7] Hochheimer was dedicated to the retention of traditional forms of worship and ritual, and in 1856, Leiser wrote that "Dr. Hochheimer has lately worked with much success in the cause of orthodoxy not daunted by the new advocate of Reform [a reference to David Einhorn]." [8]

Despite the existence of a radical Reform option in Baltimore, tremendous friction still divided those who desired certain reforms and those who refused to allow any changes in the customs of the past. As a reaction against the liberal element, the congregation passed a law in 1850 requiring the officers to keep their businesses closed on the second day of holidays, [9] and the following year, the charter was amended with the stipulation that "no alterations be made in the present mode and form of worship, and in the rites and ceremonies now used, except with the assent of two-thirds of the male members in attendance at a regularly called meeting." [10]

Rabbi Hochheimer attempted to convince the congregation to adopt certain innovations, and while by 1853 he had succeeded in establishing a Confirmation ceremony for girls, [11] he did not succeed in introducing Wise's Minhag America as the congregation's liturgy. A second splinter-group of twenty-one men established Congregation Oheb Shalom in 1853, desiring less Orthodoxy than practiced at Baltimore Hebrew,

but also rejecting the extremist stance of Har Sinai. [12]

Rabbi Bernard Illoway succeeded Rabbi Hochheimer in 1859, when Hochheimer left Baltimore Hebrew Congregation for a less divided Orthodox congregation on Eden Street.

Illoway was born in Bohemia, and studied in a Pressburg yeshiva under the famous talmudic scholar, Moses Sopher.

[13] Illoway satisfied the Orthodox faction by his insistence upon the strict adherence to the details of Jewish law. [14]. But even during Illoway's three-year tenure, some movement toward Reform can be detected. In 1860, the congregational president, on the advice of Rabbi Illoway, recommended the removal of piyyutim on Shabbat and the yotz'rot on holidays. The Board voted to allow Rabbi Illoway to use his best judgment in the matter, but a vocal minority was opposed to the decision. Mr. Jonas Friedenwald, long-time leader of the traditional faction, insisted that his name be recorded as opposed to the resolution so that "further generations" would know the dissatisfaction of the minority. [15] Illoway's response, issued three months later, was that the piyyutim and yotz'rot are merely custom, and thus not required by law. As long as the majority approved, they may be abolished.

[16]

While being a step toward the reform of the congregation's ritual, this decision should not be viewed as reflecting a general dissatisfaction with Orthodoxy. On December 8, 1861, the congregation unanimously adopted a

revised constitution which stated in Article 6, Section 1: "The fixed prayers shall always be read in the Original Hebrew Language according to the custom of the Orthodox German Jews." [17] Also, Article 10 of the revised By-laws required that the congregation hire a shochet to provide kosher meat to the members. [18]

Perhaps Rabbi Illoway's pro-Confederate political views were behind his leaving Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in 1862 for a pulpit in New Orleans. The congregation then functioned without a rabbi until Rabbi Abraham Hoffman assumed the pulpit in 1868. Hoffman came from Bavaria and received his rabbinical training in the yeshiva in Wurzburg. [19] But unlike his predecessors, Hoffman stood for change. Under his guidance, sweeping reforms were accepted by the congregation which, on March 7, 1869, gave Rabbi Hoffman authority to decide "all religious questions which may come before the congregation." [20] Among such reforms were those supported by a special committee of the Board in January of 1870. The committee recommended

The abolition of such prayers as contain a desire for the restoration of the sacrificial services in Jerusalem...or such as have for our present time and circumstances no meaning or importance for instance 'y'kum purkan' or such as originated in times of affliction or persecution giving expression to feelings of desperation and revenge...the abolition of all prayers breathing a revengeful spirit toward other nations which are neither consistent with our feelings of humanity nor with our citizenship in a country where we enjoy every civil and religious liberty and prerogative and are really a disgrace to the Israelites of this country.

Included also was the recommendation that the Haftarah be

read in German with the opening and closing blessings still recited in their original Hebrew. [21]

These measures were instituted somewhat with a sense of panic that, should the congregation continue to reject reforms in ceremonial practice, it would not be able to survive. The report concluded: "We have been fully impressed with the importance of the foregoing suggestions of the Proposition and believe their rejection would prove a step whereby the retrogression of the congregation, which everyone must have observed lately, would be materially accelerated, and the not distant dissolution of the congregation predicted." [22]

The congregational minutes report many changes in the following years as the momentum of reform quickened. In the Fall of 1870, a mixed choir was introduced into services amidst many protests and resignations. [23] In March, 1873, the purchase of family pews was approved, [24] and that same year saw the abolition of mi shebeirachs, the introduction of the triennial Torah reading cycle, and the acceptance of an organ purchase. [25] The wearing of a tallit was ordered confined to the chazan, and the chazan was instructed to provide "suitable German prayers" for the occasions of births, Bar Mitzvahs, marriages, sickness and death. [26]

Rabbi Hoffman resigned in 1873 in order to become the first superintendent of the newly formed Hebrew Orphan Asylum, and again, the congregation continued without rabbinic leadership for three years. In 1878, the

traditional prayerbook, Roedelheim Tefillah, was replaced by the Szold-Jastrow prayerbook, Abodath Yisrael. [27] It utilized mainly Hebrew in the service, but, true to the spirit of Reform, it emphasized Israel's mission and abolished all prayers regarding the restoration of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Comparing Baltimore Hebrew Congregation with other congregations founded in the mid-eighteenth century and which also were moving from orthodoxy to a position of liberal Judaism, the more traditional tendencies of the Baltimore congregation, which will remain evident throughout the next century, already appear characteristic of the congregation. Whereas Baltimore Hebrew did not introduce a mixed choir or substantially increase the use of vernacular in services until 1870, and did not, until 1873, adopt family pews, impose restrictions on the wearing of a tallit, or approve the use of an organ, Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco, founded in 1851 by a group of Bavarian immigrants who also began with the traditional German ritual, had introduced an organ into their services as early as 1856, had abolished the tallit by 1869, and even required bare-headed worship in 1881. [28] The San Francisco congregation was heavily influenced by their first rabbi, Elkan Cohn, a liberal, who served the congregation from 1860 until 1889. Cohn's successor, Jacob Voorsanger, dates "every radical change in the service of the the Temple Emanu-El" from the time of his arrival. [29] The more traditionally oriented

among the congregation broke away in 1864 to form Congregation Ohabai Shalome, [30] whereas in Baltimore, the more liberal faction were those who initially left the fold.

Reforms also occurred much faster in New York's Temple Emanu-El than in Baltimore Hebrew. Founded in 1845 by German immigrants, two years later, under the leadership of Leo Merzbacher, they had already begun to introduce the organ, Confirmation, and a triennial cycle of Torah readings. [31] By 1855, they had revised their prayerbook to include prayers in German and English, had discarded the tallit, and had done away with the second days of festivals. [32] Under the rabbinic leadership of Samuel Adler, they were among the first American congregations to abolish the wearing of kipot in 1864. [33]

In 1824, Congregation Bene Israel was chartered in Cincinnati by English Jews, and there too, according to David Philipson, "all the old traditional customs, observances, and practices were in force." [34] This congregation also preceded Baltimore Hebrew in their casting off of traditional ways. By 1865, the Haftarah portions as well as various parts of the service were read in English or German, and an organ accompanied the singing of a mixed choir. [35] In 1875, members of Bene Israel removed their hats during services, and the following year, they ceased observing the second day of festivals. The inevitable friction between the liberals of the congregation and those who championed the traditional modes resulted in a split,

and as was the case at Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, the break-off congregation was formed by the traditionalists.

[36]

In Memphis, at Temple Israel, founded in 1854, an organ was introduced to the previously traditional congregation within the first decade of its existence, and by 1874, the congregation was praying bare-headed. [37] And in Cincinnati's second congregation, K.K. B'nai Jeshurun, founded in 1842, Isaac M. Wise had completed his renovation of the services by 1854, and the congregation decided to remove their head-coverings in 1873. [38]

But in Baltimore, no other further changes in the ritual life of the congregation appear in the records prior to 1885. Perhaps the break-off of two liberal factions within the space of ten years slowed the process of reform within the congregation. Still, by the time of the Pittsburgh Platform, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was well on the way to entering the mainstream of American Reform Judaism. And as we shall see in the next chapter, the demands for further reforms continued to gain acceptance from a progressively more acculturated, Americanized constituency well into the early decades of the twentieth century.

CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH (WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE)

Of the 1,610 residents of Los Angeles reported in the U.S. Census of 1850, six Jewish families was the extent of the Jewish community. The Jewish presence grew slowly but steadily during the next decade, and upon his arrival to Los Angeles in 1854, Joseph Newmark organized the community and formed the Hebrew Benevolent Society. As he had done previously while residing in New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco, Newmark performed rabbinical functions and officiated at religious services for the Society. As an observant Orthodox Jew, Newmark conducted the rituals of the Society, which was renamed Congregation B'nai B'rith, according to traditional practices, [39] until the arrival in 1862 of the Talmud scholar, Abraham Wolf Edelman.

Edelman, a native of Warsaw who there received his education, first settled in San Francisco in 1859, where he worked as a salesman for a wholesale dry goods firm and taught Hebrew on the side. [40] His pulpit in Los Angeles at Congregation B'nai Brith was his first full-time rabbinical position, and under his leadership, reforms were gradually introduced. However, Edelman did not initiate reforms on the basis of carefully enunciated philosophy or with the desire to create a new movement to replace traditional Judaism, rather, simply out of a dedication to keeping Judaism alive and vital. One of his first innovations was the introduction of a service of

Confirmation, first held on Shavuot in 1870, when his youngest daughter, Rachel, was a member of the first Confirmation class. [41]

Writing in 1929, Edelman's son, Dr. David W. Edelman, then president of Temple B'nai B'rith, described his father's approach to ritual reform:

Perhaps it was because my father was young enough to appreciate the fact that Jewish forms change, while fundamentals remain solid. So it happened that he voluntarily little by little changed the form of the service. At first it was entirely in Hebrew; later English was interspersed in the prayers; and an English sermon given. At first there was no choir, nor was there an organ. Later in his services there appeared both choir--and a mixed one too; but entirely Jewish--and an organ. In early days the Rabbi faced the Ark when he prayed; later he faced his Congregation. The tallith which he wore never was wrapped about him as a shawl, but, folded neatly, hung upon his shoulders like a stole. In other words he grew up with his people.

There was one change he would not make. When Hebrew services were read he demanded of his congregation that they keep their heads covered. He was as lenient as he could be, when, after the Hebrew services were completely finished, and he began his sermon, he permitted those who would to remove their hats. [42]

The fact that the majority of the congregation's members were not observant in their personal lives, and had fallen away from the Orthodoxy which they may have brought with them to Los Angeles, allowed for the rather unimpeded progress of ritual reforms in the synagogue. [43] The reforming of the services appears to have progressed significantly by 1883, when the following article appeared in the Los Angeles Times:

A Reformed Church--The Israelitish Congregation in this place has until recently, been orthodox, with all the plainness and lack of display of the old dispensation. Lately, however,

modern ideas have displaced the ancient, and they have one of the finest choirs in the city and all the accessories of what is called the Reformed Church. The present style suits the rising generation, and will certainly please Gentile visitors in the synagogue. [44]

Rabbi Edelman retired from his pulpit in 1884, and with the election of Dr. Emanuel Schreiber, an outspoken proponent of Reform Judaism, as his successor, the evolution of the congregation towards Reform was nearly completed. Still, some segments of the congregation yet opposed the complete move to Reform as advocated by Schreiber. On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Schreiber furnished the chazan with his new, liberal program for the service, but the chazan caused a "major disturbance" by ignoring Schreiber and following strictly the old, Orthodox prayerbook. And when Schreiber began reciting a prayer in English, the traditionalists in the congregation interrupted him. According to Schreiber, "During the afternoon, the chazan was severely censured." [45]

Certainly Schreiber's arrival had a major impact on the ritual life of Congregation B'nai B'rith. But still, the move toward Reform in the congregation must be viewed as a movement influenced to a great extent by the laity, having begun soon after the arrival of Rabbi Edelman, who, as David Edelman noted, "grew with the people." In their biographical article on the life of Rabbi Edelman, M. Kramer and Norton Stern observe: "Reform came to the West coast not as a new movement, certainly not as a cause, but as the slow reforming of Orthodoxy, the adaptive process of a living

faith accommodating to the new life of the West." [46] By the time of the Pittsburgh Platform, the transformation was complete, and Congregation B'nai B'rith had emerged as a congregation in the mainstream of American Reform Judaism.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CLASSICAL ERA OF AMERICAN REFORM--1885-1937

THE CHANGING FACE OF AMERICAN JEWRY

In the years between 1881 and 1914, the flood of immigrants arriving from Jewish communities in Eastern Europe drastically changed the profile of the American Jewish community. Prior to 1880, less than 25,000 Jews of Eastern European descent were counted among the quarter-million American Jews. The pogroms of 1881, 1890, and 1891, the confiscatory taxation of the tsarist regime, and the restrictive decrees limiting residential rights and economic opportunities led to the massive immigration of Russian Jews to America. [1] By 1900, there were more than a million Jews in the United States, and by 1915, about three million. According Sklare, when free immigration to America ended in 1925, there were probably four and a half million Jews in America [2], and the period of German-Jewish predominance in this country had ended.

Unfamiliar with the rationalist universalism of American Jewry, these traditional Jews understood their religion in terms of ethnicity and national consciousness. One reaction of the Reform leadership was to contrast their Judaism--American style--with the "ghetto-Judaism" of the newcomers. The Pittsburgh Platform can be perceived as an authoritative statement of that distinction. But while

ideological differences split American Jewry into traditional and liberal factions, frustrating the realization of Wise's dream of a truly unified American Jewry, the Reform movement was significantly affected by its contact with this new community in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

One of the early responses to the immigrant situation was the attempt to "convert" these newcomers to the principles of American Reform. Reform rabbis were called upon to reach out to their brethren, to teach them the necessity of becoming active participants in the modern world around them, and to share with them the benefits of Americanization. "We must become their friends and rabbis and, in all kindness and sincerity, show them the beauties of Judaism which they failed to see because obscured by a mass of outworn ceremonial and custom." [3] Among the strategies for such an outreach program was the publication in Yiddish of various pamphlets explaining the principles of Reform Judaism to the new immigrants in their own mother tongue. [4]

However, even in 1904, Rabbi William Rosenau insisted that the Reform movement itself had much to gain from the exposure to the immigrant Jew. He noted that many of the arriving Jews were not straight out of the lower classes and ghettos of Europe, but that many were educated men with university educations. Rosenau concluded that "what these people can give to us is infinitely greater in value than

what we give to them. They give us an earnest appreciation of the traditional drift of Judaism." [5]

Indeed, as the years went by, exposure to the immigrant perspective deepened the Jewish consciousness of the Reform community, making the Reform Jew more aware of his heritage and his accountability to the non-Reform Jewish world. The criticisms which the traditional factions frequently levelled against the Reform movement led some of the rabbis and laymen of the movement to examine certain failures and excesses of American Reform. Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron commented in 1920 that

the immigrant Jew has roused the older Jewish residents out of their smug complacency into a consciousness that all's not well in the Reform Jewish camp.... The immigrant Jew has made us realize that the lack of understanding of our history, our literature, our hopes and our ideals, the lack of contact with the great stream of Jewish life, has caused the indifference among us; has cooled that Jewish enthusiasm which, if the knowledge of our message, if the appreciation of our purpose were present, would charge American Jewry with a new vitality. [6]

In addition to their external influence upon the Reform movement, the immigrant community also affected the American Reform movement from the inside, for in the decade of the twenties more and more Jews of Eastern European descent joined Reform congregations. By 1930, almost half of the movement's total membership claimed Eastern European ancestry. [7] The pressure from within brought about by the transformation of the movement's social fabric was partly responsible for the widespread renewal of interest in ceremonial observance and traditional forms. And as

Hitler's campaign of persecution against the German Jews began in 1933, the same internal pressures led to a modification of Reform's posture of anti-nationalism.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, the immigrant situation had led to a turning inward by Reform in order to distinguish its posture from that of the traditionalists. Yet by the time of the Columbus Platform, the immigrant phenomenon had contributed to a desire on the part of Reform Judaism to reach out to the rest of the Jewish world, and to uncover some of its buried roots. The institutional self-examination and criticism, the setting of higher goals for Jewish learning and observance, and the intensification of Jewish consciousness that Rabbi Lazaron detected, all contributed to the momentum behind many of the returns to discarded traditions occurring in the period between the Pittsburgh Platform and the Guiding Principles of 1937.

THE UNION PRAYERBOOK

When Isaac M. Wise addressed the first annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as its President in July, 1890, he stated that the "exoteric object" of the Conference was to unify the American rabbinate which had continued to suffer from internal controversy and dissension even after the establishment of the Hebrew Union College and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. "Here we are," proclaimed Wise, "to redeem

the American rabbinate from the odium of an autocratic and quarrelsome disposition..." [8] He identified the "esoteric object" of the Conference to be the establishment of a uniform system of Jewish practice and education in the home, in the religious school, and in the Temple.

In motions presented before the Conference, the rabbis spoke of the urgent need for a standardized prayerbook for public and private devotion, which would "serve as a powerful magnet to draw together the varying and disparate religious views and sentiments of American Reform Judaism." [9] A committee of ten rabbis was appointed to begin such work immediately. Their task was to submit material for a liturgy which would utilize the "oldest and essential elements" of traditional worship while adding devotional elements which would reflect the modern, progressive religious sentiments of the age. The Conference also stipulated that the vernacular portions were to be creative interpretations rather than mere translations of the Hebrew, and that a set of three or four alternative versions be prepared for the Sabbath services. [10]

At the Midwinter Convention of 1892, the Union Prayerbook was adopted as the official liturgy of American Reform Judaism, [11] although slight changes were made prior to publication in 1895. A work highly consistent in its universalist and rational orientation, it emerged as a masterful expression of the Judaism expounded in the Pittsburgh Platform. The book opens from left to right as

an English book, beginning with selections from Scripture and silent prayers for special occasions, all in English. Reflecting the priority of Sabbath synagogue services, the weekday evening and morning services follow after Sabbath evening and morning services and Festival evening and morning services. The book concludes with a section of "Various Prayers," including a meditation "for the Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem," short prayers for "private devotion," prayers for children, and pairings of scriptural selections to be used as weekly Torah and Haftarah portions.

The Union Prayerbook was patterned to a great extent after Einhorn's Olat Tamid in terms of its minimal use of Hebrew, its universalistic tone, and the truncation of the services. Although there are some differences between its various services, the book regularly omits most of the Hebrew from the middle blessings of the amidah (although the amidah is not identified as a distinct unit within the service), and contains no Hebrew version of the aleynu. In its place, an English reading which emphasizes the universalist aspects of aleynu is inserted, concluding in Hebrew with va'anachnu kor'im.

Particularistic references are avoided by eliminating the reference to Israel's redemption from Egypt in the paragraph after the v'ahavta, and by including universalist paraphrases of the tzur yisrael ("O rock of Israel, be pleased to redeem those who are oppressed, and deliver those

that are persecuted." [12]) and of the kaddish ("May the Father of peace send peace to all troubled souls, and comfort all the bereaved among us." [13])). In certain services, universalistic passages from Micah 6:8 and Leviticus 19:18 are inserted after the v'ahavta. [14] Particularistic elements are not entirely absent, however, as seen by the inclusion of atah vacharta in the morning service for the Festivals. But this is rendered in terms of Israel's messianic mission, as stated in the English version: "Thou hast sanctified us through Thy commandments, that by Israel Thy holy name may be known over all the earth." [15].

The role of the worshipper as defined by the Union Prayerbook is worth noting. Certainly this work assumed the synagogue decorum so much a priority for the early reformers. The bulk of the passages are readings by the "Minister," with congregational participation taking the form of responsive readings, the singing of Hebrew phrases together with the choir, silent meditations, and the ever-recurring "Amen." Without a doubt, the reading of the Minister, his sermon, and the choral and instrumental presentations were the foci of the services, with the congregation playing a passive role in the proceedings.

First published in 1894, Part II of the Union Prayerbook contains services for the New Year and the Day of Atonement. While similar in style to the Sabbath, Festival and Weekday services, these services do provide signif-

icantly more Hebrew passages, including a Hebrew variation of the aleynu. [16] In the morning service for the New Year, instructions appear for the shofar to be sounded between creative versions of the malchuyot, zichronot, and shofarot themes. However, the traditional blessings before the blasts do not appear in the text. [17] This is of interest because by this time, many Reform congregations were using trumpets in place of the ram's horn, as indicated in Einhorn's version, [18] or were merely simulating the traditional shofar calls on the organ. [19]

Just as Einhorn's liturgy omitted entirely the chanting or playing of kol nidre on the evening of Yom Kippur, so too, kol nidre is gone from the Union Prayerbook. The antipathy of Reform rabbis towards kol nidre had been established as far back as the German reformers' Brunswick Conference in 1844. [20] They felt that the misinterpretation of kol nidre by non-Jews had led to mistrust of Jewish oaths in civil courts of law and tended to fuel antisemitic sentiment. Thus the practice of omitting this passage was universally accepted in European and American Reform congregations. [21] In place of kol nidre, the Union Prayerbook inserted the hymn, "Day of God O, Come!", [22] which was an English adaptation of Leopold Stein's anthem, "O Tag des Herrn!", which he had composed as a substitution for kol nidre. [23]

The Union Prayerbook would remain as the authoritative statement of normative worship in Reform congregations until

the early 1970's, even while undergoing two major revisions as discussed below. But as early as 1904, dissatisfaction with the extent of the prayerbook's innovations began to emerge. The desire to rid Reform congregations of passages dwelling on the sacrificial cult and ritualistic performances, in addition to the preference for abbreviated Torah readings, had resulted in the Union Prayerbook's modifying of the traditional weekly Torah readings and their Haftarah counterparts. Instead it listed selections which emphasized narrative portions and ethical passages and which minimized public recitations describing sacrificial practice and regulations of priestly purity. The effect of instituting Torah and Haftarah portions which deviated from the rest of the Jewish world led to protests during the 1904 convention. Admitting that there is no halachic force behind the arrangement of weekly portions, Rabbi Joseph Friedlander of Beaumont, Texas, nonetheless maintained that "there is something in the Sedras, that has a unifying form between the Jews of all countries and all shades of opinion. I believe the weekly portions, as now arranged in the Union Prayerbook are a mistake. It makes a distinction between orthodoxy and reform." [24] After a short discussion, Rabbi Maurice Harris, rabbi of Temple Israel of Harlem, concluded: "We need not even ask for a vote on that question. We can take for granted that you desire that we read the portion each week according to the old sedra." [25] In his speech before the Conference, Rabbi Harris expressed his conviction

that from each "time-honored" sedra, an appropriate lesson could be drawn. [26]

This discussion, held in 1904, represents the first example of the organized Reform rabbinate expressing a desire to reject an established and accepted innovation, and to return to the previously discarded, traditional form. Although the decision to once again utilize the traditional order of weekly Torah portions does not represent any major alteration in the movement's approach to synagogue ritual, it is noteworthy because the motivations behind the return will guide many such decisions throughout the twentieth century; namely, the desire to harmonize community rituals with the Jewish world at-large, and the determination to derive relevance from "time-honored" forms.

Discussion of the full-scale revision of the Union Prayerbook first appears in the yearbook of the St. Paul convention in 1911. The Committee on Prayer Book Revision then articulated the need for "some verbal changes and other modifications." [27] But the Committee asked to be discharged, deeming it "inadvisable and impractical to formulate these changes before the old plates shall have been used up and both the Book of Personal Prayers and the new selection and version of Scriptural readings shall have been definitely adopted by the Conference." [28] Yet the very next year, a new committee had been formed and reported in the Yearbook that such a revision was desirable, and that it was to be done "with great care and due deliberation."

[29] The Committee reported the following year that a large majority "favors a revision which shall be more than merely verbal; yet the feeling appears to be that the main outlines are to be preserved, as something like a tradition has been formed in these twenty years." [30] Kaufmann Kohler agreed: "To my mind there can be no question that the framework of the present book must be retained.... At the same time it is equally clear that the revision must be along radical lines." [31]

One such radical change proposed by the Committee on the Revision of the Weekday Service was to change the name of the Weekday service to Sunday service. The Committee reasoned that because the service was originally written for those congregations holding Sunday services, and seeing that Sunday was the only day other than Shabbat when congregations conducted worship services, the Conference should be honest with itself, the Reform congregations, and the rest of the Jewish community. [32] Proponents of this change cited the Report contained in the 1904 Yearbook which maintained that Sunday services were "helpful to the maintenance and the cultivation of the religious spirit among the people," and offered non-Jews "enlightenment on Jews and Judaism." [33] This proposal was rejected by the Conference following heated debate, mainly because such a change would be viewed as an endorsement of Sunday services and might have turned congregations away from worship on the Sabbath. This rejection may be regarded as evidence of the

unwillingness of the majority to go further in the direction of radicalism. The reaffirmation of the status quo represents a halt, although not yet a move in the opposite direction.

In the Revised Edition of the Union Prayerbook, approved by the Conference in 1918, few changes were made which may be interpreted as returning to previously discarded components of public Jewish worship. Aside from the vast number of verbal alterations, all of the responses and biblical quotations now corresponded to the current translation of the Jewish Publication Society. The attempt was made to allow for more congregational participation by the inclusion of joint readings by the leader and congregation, such as in the Adoration and the prayer in the Sabbath morning service "May it be Thy will." [34] Also, the order of the prayers was made uniform across the various services.

But several new portions included in this Revised Edition are of interest, as they call attention to the various thematic Shabbatot of the Jewish year which had been ignored in the 1894 edition. These new responsive readings and prayers were designated for Shabbat Shuvah prior to Yom Kippur, [35] for Shabbat Chol Ha-moed during Pesach [36] and Sukkot, [37] and for Shabbat Zachor preceding Purim. [38] Also of note is the more complete translation of the Pirke Avot in the Sabbath afternoon service. The new schedule of scriptural readings which appears in the back of the book

was more in accordance with the traditional sedras, with the weekly portions subdivided into two, three or four sections.

[39] Although the corresponding Haftarah passages still deviated from the traditional pairings, these changes reflected the desire of the Reform rabbinate to rekindle a sensitivity to the flow of the Jewish calendar year, and to harmonize to some extent Reform congregational activity with the larger community of Israel.

The second revision of the Union Prayerbook was published in 1940, and will be discussed in the next chapter. But as early as 1930, the general dissatisfaction with the Union Prayerbook on the part of the laity in the movement was becoming apparent. In his paper entitled "The Union Prayer Book in the Evolution of the Liturgy," Solomon Freehof speaks of a "widespread revolt against the Union Prayer Book coming from both laymen and rabbis." [40] He saw Reform Judaism and the Union Prayerbook languishing in a "negative phase" of development. His solution to the boredom and sameness complained of by the congregations was the invention of new, original piyyutim to serve the purpose of instilling the "living creativeness and the blessed variety" once provided by the literature discarded in the preparation of the Union Prayerbook.

Israel Bettan, Professor of Homiletics at H.U.C., believed that the problem stemmed from the lack of congregational participation in the service. Because the worshippers in Reform temples had been relegated to the

status of spectators, because they tended to listen to services rather than joining in, the laity soon grew tired of the liturgy. Bettan felt that if the congregations were schooled in the use of the book, and encouraged to participate joyfully in the worship services, then they would learn to love the book, and it would steadily become "more precious" in their sight. He suggested increasing the number of unison and responsive readings to permit the fuller participation of the entire congregation. [41]

But Bettan also raised a new issue which struck at one of the very foundations of the Union Prayerbook, namely, the need to strengthen the particularistic aspects of the Reform worship experience. While earlier leaders praised the book for its accessibility to Americans of all faiths, Bettan reminded the Conference that the Union Prayerbook "is more than a manual of public worship; it is a manual of Jewish public worship." A central purpose of communal worship, he declared, must be to reinforce the awareness of group identity, of common beliefs and shared experiences.

In fact, it is the function of the prayer book, among others, to strengthen in us the consciousness that we are a separate and unique group; that we are a religious people, held together by the ties of a common history and faith and destiny; that we are the direct descendants of the patriarchs, and the rightful heirs to the noble legacy of prophet and psalmist. To be sure, it teaches us to pray to the Master of all the worlds, the Creator of all men; but it insists that the Lord of the universe is none other than the God of the fathers, and the Father of all men is none other than the Shepherd of Israel. [42]

The question of the appropriateness of kol nidre in the

Reform observance of Yom Kippur was raised again in 1931 in a discussion regarding a revision of the Union Hymnal. Some members of the Conference wished to include kol nidre in the new edition of the Hymnal, either in its original Aramaic, a modern Hebrew version, or simply in musical notation. Those who were opposed, including David Philipson, cited the centuries of misery brought about by the misinterpretation of kol nidre. But Julian Morgenstern, who at that time was the President of H.U.C., voiced the desire to bring back kol nidre for the reason that "it is a part of the Jewish tradition, and for this reason should never be missing from any Jewish hymnal." [43] Rabbi Henry J. Berkowitz reported having chanted the kol nidre at the request of his congregation, Beth Israel in Portland, Oregon, and that "by the unthinking it was received with enthusiasm." [44]

Although the majority of Reform rabbis were still opposed to the reinstitution of kol nidre, one of the complaints now levelled at the Union Prayerbook was its "needless disregard of tradition." Writing in 1928, Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon argued that

classic prayers that have won their place into the heart of the Jewish people and that are wholly in keeping with the outlook of Reform have been omitted. We refer to the Hebrew texts of the Kiddush, the middle prayers of the amida in the Rosh Hashanah and of Yom Kippur Eve services, Vyeesoyh Kol L'ovdecho, Shofet Kol Ho'orets, etc. These liberties with the traditional liturgy do not tend to enhance the value of the Union Prayer-book as preserver of ancient landmarks. [45].

Cohon's complaint typifies his concern for re-

introducing into American Reform an appreciation for long discarded, traditional elements. Cohon was born in Russia and was the product of a traditional upbringing. He held a pulpit in Chicago from 1913-1923, and from 1923-1956 Cohon served as professor of Jewish theology at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Throughout his career, he cultivated the value of k'lal yisrael, and sought to impress his students and his colleagues with the beauty of the heritage of East European Jewry. [46]

As a part of his desire to recover some of the particularism characteristic of traditional Jewish worship, Cohon also raised his voice in favor of the return to more Hebrew in Reform services:

The accents of the ancient and hallowed tongue carry a stronger appeal to many minds than the prosy vernacular. They more effectively fill the emptiness of the heart with the consciousness of the Divine and more potently link the worshipper with the Keneset Yisroel. [47]

The validity of utilizing Hebrew in worship mainly for its affective impact was also supported by Max Reichler, rabbi of Beth Sholom, Peoples Temple in Brooklyn, New York, who affirmed that the Hebrew responses were more capable of "arous[ing] the soul" than were the English translations. Becoming knowledgeable of prayerbook Hebrew vocabulary and grammar became, for Reichler, an important goal of the Sunday School curriculum. [48] Indeed, a survey taken in 1924 showed that almost 70 percent of those congregations responding were currently offering Hebrew in their religious

school programs. And of the forty congregations which responded to the question of when Hebrew was first introduced, twenty-eight indicated that Hebrew instruction was begun in 1917 or later. [49] Many of the revisions which will appear in the Newly Revised Edition of the Union Prayerbook spring from this renewed emphasis on the use of Hebrew during public prayer.

However, no voices were raised in favor of a return to the previously discarded headcoverings for prayer. In fact, the Conference published two separate responsa on the question of the propriety of worshipping with uncovered heads. The first teshuvah, submitted in 1918 by Hebrew Union College professor Gotthard Deutsch, concluded that "There is no religious law requiring that one cover his head in the synagog or during worship. The existing practice is merely based on the oriental conception of public (not religious) decorum." [50] A lengthier exposition was in provided in 1928 by Responsa Committee Chairman Jacob Z. Lauterbach, who argued against the claim that bareheaded worship was an imitation of non-Jewish practice (chukkat ha-goyim), and in fact, it had precedents in the Jewish legal tradition. His conclusions were along the same lines as those of Deutsch:

The custom of praying bareheaded or with covered head is not at all a question of law. It is merely a matter of social propriety and decorum. As such it cannot, and need not, be the same in all countries and certainly not remain the same for all times.... We should realize that this matter is but a detail of custom and should not be made the issue between Orthodox and

Reform. It is a detail that is not worth fighting about. It should not separate Jew from Jew and not be made the cause of breaking of Jewish groups or dividing Jewish congregations. [51]

HOLIDAY AND LIFE-CYCLE OBSERVANCES

The anti-ritual disposition of the early Reform movement has already been reviewed with regard to the Pittsburgh Platform, and this attitude would continue to dominate through the first quarter of the twentieth century. Leaders such as Max Lilienthal, Samuel Adler, David Einhorn, Bernhard Felsenthal, and others who influenced the radical posture of early Reform, considered the traditional system of ritual and ceremony to be, in the words of Solomon Freehof, "a trivializing of the noble teaching of Judaism. Even the deep learning involved in the study of it was looked upon as a wastage of intellectual capacity, and an alienation from the broader culture of the modern world." [52]

But a certain moderation in this posture may be seen as early as 1896 in a paper delivered before the CCAR by Rabbi Israel Aaron titled "Our Shifting Attitudes." Aaron, a member of the first graduating class of the Hebrew Union College, advocated giving "full attention" to festivals and ceremonies which had been deemed worthy of retention. [53] Kaufmann Kohler echoed Aaron's concern in 1905, asserting the need for ceremonial practice in Reform Judaism, and acknowledging that ceremonies have the capacity to enrich

and embellish modern life. Kohler maintained that "Doctrine alone, however lofty, does not stir the soul and bring it in touch with the great Fountainhead of Holiness and Love. Religious acts do." [54]

This sentiment was also expressed by the New York rabbi, Irving Reichert, in his answer to the question: "Shall We Teach Ceremonies in the Religious School?" His affirmative response stressed the tremendous value of ceremonial observance for cultivating Judaism as a powerful, spiritual aspect of people's lives. "A religion void of ceremony, built up only upon rationalism, is a paradox, not a religion." [55]

One such ceremony considered as vital was the Passover seder, which was viewed as a tribute to the Jewish visions of justice and freedom. But the traditional Pesach haggadah was considered to be "obsolete and tasteless," and the modern Jew felt he could not abide the patchwork of "inane sophisticated discussions with the announcement of lofty precepts," the intermixture of psalms with "jingling rhymes," and the infiltration of particularistic concerns into the universalistic truths of the Passover festival. [56] Henry Berkowitz, chairman of the Committee on Pesach Haggadah, wrote in the Foreword to the Union Haggadah: "At times it disturbs the sense of devotion." [57]

In order to facilitate a renewal of the home observance of the Passover seder, and to standardize the practice among the Union congregations, the CCAR published its first Union

Haggadah in 1907. Prior to that time, Reform rabbis were on their own in preparing appropriate materials for their seder observances. The Haggadah committee reported in 1903 that various efforts had already been made "to reconstruct the ancient Seder and to conform it to the need of the present day." [58] Among the versions which greatly influenced the work of the Committee was that of William Rosenau, Rabbi of Oheb Shalom in Baltimore. [59]

The goal of the Committee's work was to "embody the quaint form and the traditional sentiment of the Haggadah, as far as this is consonant with the spirit of the present time." [60] With regard to the telling of the story of Passover in the seder, the material relating the story of the ten plagues was entirely omitted from the Haggadah because the primary lesson of the festival was no longer the miraculous nature of the Jews' redemption, but rather, the propagation of the Jewish ideals of freedom and liberty. The material which was felt to "disturb the devotion" of the hour was relegated to an appendix, the length of which surpasses that of the ceremony itself.

The passage, The Four Sons, is included in Hebrew, but only briefly paraphrased in the English. The Four Questions passage is omitted, as are the various Mishnaic passages which are interspersed in traditional versions. An abbreviated form of dayenu appears in both Hebrew and English, but Hillel's famous sandwich is not mentioned. The text presents the meaning of the three symbols, pesach,

matzah, and maror, much as in a traditional haggadah, and the questions asking of their meaning are phrased in the language of the Four Questions. Following the meal, the ceremony concludes with abbreviated forms of birkat ha-mazon and hallel, a meditation following the fourth cup of wine, and the English hymn, "Our Passover Hope." The seder contains no ceremonial door-opening for Elijah, no spilling of wine for the plagues on Egypt, and, of course, no plea for "Next year in Jerusalem."

The appendix presents modified versions in English and Hebrew of adir hu and echad mi yodea. Of note in the latter are the changes in the English from the original version, although in the music provided with the Hebrew version, it remained unchanged. In the English version, six "orders of Mishnah" became the six "days of Creation." The eight "days of circumcision" became eight "lights of Hanukah," and nine "months of pregnancy" became nine "festivals." [61] Also included in the appendix are English and Hebrew versions of chad gadya, an English adaptation of vayehi bechatzi ha-lailah, ein keloheinu, and a hymn set to the tune of "My Country 'Tis of Thee." The appendix concludes with passages explaining the symbols, rites, and history of Passover.

The desire to recover certain traditional elements which had been discarded in the preparation of the Union Haggadah led to the task of revising the work within ten years of its first publication. In 1919, the Committee on Revision of the Haggadah reported that, in order to "lend

color to the service," it had added the following traditional selections: The Four Questions, the passage beginning with metichila ovdai avodah zara, the Midrash beginning with tze ulmad and ending with the enumeration of the ten plagues, Psalm 114, the Hebrew text and translation of vayehi bechatzi ha-lailah, ki lo naeh, yeamartem zevach pesach, and adir hu as part of the miscellany of the appendix. Also, additions for responsive reading were made in the more complete versions of dayenu and in birkat ha-mazon. When the completed revised version was published in 1923, among its changes were also the reintroduction of The Four Sons in Hebrew and English, a ceremony of opening the door for Elijah, and Hillel's sandwich.

It is fascinating to notice that only sixteen years earlier, the Conference had indicted the traditional haggadah on account of its playfulness and composite nature, which tended to "disturb the sense of devotion." It is indeed a remarkable reversal in the movement's perspective that the introduction to the revised Union Haggadah views this mosaic of moods and sources as a positive feature, admitting that "The Seder service was never purely devotional.... In its variety, the Haggadah reflects the moods of the Jewish spirit. Rabbinical homily follows dignified narrative, soulful prayers and Psalms mingle with the Had Gadyo and the madrigal of numbers, Ehod Mi Yode'a."

[62] The influence of Samuel Cohon, who chaired the Committee on the Revision of the Union Haggadah, no doubt

loomed large behind this altered perspective.

The Reform rabbinate anticipated that the new Haggadah would encourage a revival of the Passover observance in the home, even as the institution of Confirmation had helped revive an observance of Shavuot in the synagogue. Attention was also given to the creation of some service to renew interest in the festival of Sukkot. The following is a description of a Children's Harvest Service which David Philipson claimed had helped to revive the observance of Sukkot in his congregation.

The pulpit and platform of the temple are decorated with fruits, vegetables and flowers appropriate to the season. A small sukkan is built on the platform and beautifully decorated. After the Sukkot evening service (our celebration usually takes place on the eve of the feast) all the children of the school enter the temple singing a processional hymn of praise. The procession is headed by four of the larger boys each one of whom carries one of the four traditional Sukkot plants, the etrog, the palm branch, the myrtle and the willow. These are followed by the children of the schools according to classes, beginning with the youngest. The children of each class carry an offering of some kind. One class apples, another pears, another corn, etc.,etc. The sight afforded by the children entering the temple singing and bearing fruits is inspiring and the effect is indescribable. [63]

Philipson asserted that celebrating the harvest festival was as important to modern, American Jews as it was to their ancestors in Israel, but that the ancient patterns of observance were no longer possible. He advocated changing the observance if that would encourage the retention of the Festival. [64]

A ceremony such as the one he depicts cannot be described as a "return to tradition" because his ritual had

never existed in traditional Judaism. But it does represent a desire to re-create interest in observing a holiday widely disregarded in Reform circles. It is also worth noting that the solution Philipson and others chose was not a ceremony which involved congregational participation. Rather, as was so often the case for the early Reform synagogue events, the holiday had beauty and impact only in being viewed by the congregational audience. Nonetheless, by 1934, almost ninety percent of large congregations and a considerable number of smaller ones observed some form of Harvest Festival, generally involving the children. [65]

During the early years of the twentieth century, Reform congregations also began introducing celebrations for Simchat Torah and Purim. The Simchat Torah observances tended to stress processionalists with the Torah scrolls, patterned after the traditional hakafot. This was often combined with a Consecration ceremony for children about to enter the religious school, thus identifying the experience with the transmission of Jewish learning. [66] Purim was frequently observed on the Friday night preceding the holiday, and many congregations also sponsored Purim carnivals, balls, dramatic performances, and charity drives. [67]

In 1935, the Conference intensified its demand that congregations observe festivals in the synagogue by passing a resolution urging congregations to make every effort to organize services on the evenings and mornings of Sukkot,

Shemini Atzeret, and the first and seventh days of Pesach. [68] Included in the resolution was the reminder that the proper time to hold Confirmation was the morning of Shavuot.

In an effort to determine the nature and extent of Jewish practice within the homes of congregational members, in 1928, the U.A.H.C. began conducting an extensive survey of Reform Judaism in eleven cities having a Jewish population of over fifty thousand. From this study, it is difficult to determine the amount of renewed interest in traditional observances for the home because it was the first such examination undertaken by the movement. Yet the differences reported between older and younger respondents are worth noting because they reflect the changing attitudes of the younger generation of Reform Jews. Men and women over the age of sixty placed greater emphasis on attending synagogue services on Shabbat and holydays than did those under the age of forty. But the lighting of Shabbat and Chanukkah candles, conducting a home seder on Pesach, and fasting on Yom Kippur were observances which were much more widespread among the younger men and women. Reflecting the renewed appreciation for Hebrew, it is interesting to notice that a majority of the younger group were in favor of teaching Hebrew in the religious school, while a majority of the older group opposed the teaching of Hebrew. [69]

The increased interest in traditional symbols and ceremonies on the part of the laity found expression in a resolution of the Thirty-Fifth Council of the Union of

American Hebrew Congregations, held in New Orleans in January of 1937:

WHEREAS, Reform Jewish Worship has allowed many symbols, customs, etc., of traditional Jewish Worship to fall into disuse; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Convention that many of these forms should be re-introduced:

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, That this Convention recommend to its constituent congregations, and to all Reform Jewish Congregations, that into its Sabbath Services be put, and made a part thereof, traditional symbols, ceremonies, and customs, such as the...singing or recitation of the Kiddush; the actual participation in every Service by laymen; the singing of traditional Jewish Hymns by the Congregation, and such traditional observances as are wise, practicable, and expedient in each congregation. [70]

One area of Reform practice which reflects no change during this period on the part of Reform's rabbinic leadership was the insistence that Confirmation on Shavuot had replaced Bar Mitzvah as the ceremony marking the acceptance of young Jews into the adult community. Although Philipson contended that, by the turn of the century, Confirmation had superseded Bar Mitzvah in Reform congregations, the attacks against the earlier institution continued well into the twentieth century. This is a clear indication that many congregations still provided for such a celebration. In the first volume of the CCAR Yearbook, Philipson condemned Bar Mitzvah as a "soulless ceremony without any signification." He asserted that, because in modern society a boy is not of legal majority at the age of thirteen, the ceremony had become a "dry formality" which had outlived its usefulness. He rejected the notion that

Bar Mitzvah and Confirmation can exist side by side in the same congregation and argued that the time had come for Bar Mitzvah to disappear entirely. [71] Similarly, as late as 1912, Joseph Krauskopf, rabbi of Temple Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, attacked the ongoing practice of observing Bar Mitzvah as an unintelligable act of formality which left "the heart and soul untouched, and the mind uninformed as to the fundamental facts and principles of the history and religion of Israel." [72]

Yet it appears that many congregations did not heed the rabbis, and continued holding Bar Mitzvah ceremonies. For as late as 1913, the Responsa committee under Kaufmann Kohler chided those congregations which continued the practice of Bar Mitzvah, which he viewed as inconsistent with the spirit of Reform. "I maintain that the Bar Mitzvah rite ought not to be encouraged by any Reform rabbi, as it is a survival of Orientalism like the covering of the head during the service..." [73] Kohler's responsum includes the admission that many congregations were still providing for this old ritual, despite such urgent pleas to cast off the observance of Bar Mitzvah. It would seem, therefore, that Bar Mitzvah was never totally removed from the Reform scene, and in fact, it was to grow in popularity throughout the twentieth century.

THE NEW "GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REFORM JUDAISM"

Whereas the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 may be seen partly as a reaction to the increase of traditional sentiments entering the American Jewish community with the East European immigrants and as a statement directed toward separating Reform from the rest of American Jewry, the Guiding Principles of 1937 was aimed at the Reform Jews themselves. As early as 1925, the rabbis of the Conference began to voice their concern about the widespread diversity of religious belief and practice among the rabbis and the laity of the Reform movement. In a paper delivered on the 500th anniversary of Albo's Ikkarim, Louis Binstock, of Temple Sinai, New Orleans, made the case for a code which would standardize Reform practice and belief. He lamented the current situation in which some congregations were conducting services on Friday night and Saturday morning, others Saturday morning and Sunday morning, and others Friday evening and Sunday morning. He voiced his distress that each Reform rabbi was teaching a different approach to Shabbat and holiday observance, and that each rabbi had his own conception of the proper religious garb for the synagogue. Binstock insisted that "Members of our congregations who are constantly admonished in vague general terms to observe the Sabbath have a right to know exactly what Reform Judaism--not Traditional Judaism but Reform

Judaism--teaches regarding proper Jewish worship and practice on the weekly day of rest." He also proposed that the movement's equivocation and diversity of opinion tended to "puzzle the layman and often destroy respect for Jewish tradition and practice, the neglect of which we rabbis have lately begun to lament." [74]

While some members of the Conference strongly objected to Binstock's position as being contrary to the foundations of Liberal Judaism, others agreed with the need for arriving at a consensus regarding certain priorities in religious practice. Samuel S. Cohon called for a "crystallization of thought as to what is primary and what is secondary" among the principles and precepts of Judaism. [75] Rabbi Cohon reiterated his sentiments in 1936, when he presented the report of the Commission on the Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism:

The time has come for us in this age of chaos, to take our Judaism seriously and instruct our people in the way they should follow and the things they should do. We should teach them that we believe in God, in Israel and in Torah, and show them how to revive prayer, ceremonies and other observances, whereby we can strengthen our lives. [76]

At the Columbus Convention of the following year, the product of the Commission on Guiding Principles was placed before the Central Conference for approval. There, the battle was waged among the rabbis. Max Raisin and James Heller, both members of the Commission, were among those who advocated adoption of the Commission's work. Others sided

with Barnett Brickner who still wanted no Platform whatsoever as an official statement of the Conference. Many agreed with Leo M. Franklin, who wanted to send it back to committee for further revisions, and still others wanted to consider a draft submitted independently by Samuel Schulman. The first vote was taken upon a motion to receive the report of the Commission but not to adopt a platform of principles, and this motion received a split vote of eighty-one to eighty-one! Following a brief recess and additional discussion, and upon the motion of Rabbi David Philipson, who at that time was the only survivor of the Pittsburgh Conference, the one hundred and ten members of the C.C.A.R. who remained for the vote overwhelmingly adopted the Declaration of Principles which has come to be known as the Columbus Platform. [77] (See Appendix B)

These Principles, endorsed by the membership of the C.C.A.R. in Columbus, bear witness to the dramatic shifts which had taken place within the movement since the articulation of the Pittsburgh Platform. In comparing the two documents, the continued presence of fundamental elements becomes clear. Both documents affirm the concept of an omnipresent God and of the immortality of the soul. Both documents assert the universality of Jewish ideals and ethics, although the notion is qualified in the Guiding Principles, commenting that Judaism is the unique "historical religious experience of the Jewish people." The Guiding Principles also reiterates the evolutionary

development of Judaism as a central element in progressive Judaism, even as the document restates the notion of Judaism's compatibility with scientific insights. Finally, the priority of working to achieve social justice as a Jewish obligation receives the same weight in the Columbus Platform as it had in the former description of Reform ideology.

However, gone from the Columbus Platform was the confidence in modernity and the optimism that the age of a united humanity was at hand. The renewed interest in ceremonial observance for the home and synagogue, the desire to remedy the perceived failures of the Reform system of religious education, and the profound impact of the immigrant community upon the outlook of the Reform population, had all led to the new religious inclination reflected in the Guiding Principles. The Columbus document does not focus upon the rejection of antiquated laws and customs, but in a tone even more positive than the Pittsburgh Platform it places emphasis on the obligations to be met by the Reform Jew which go beyond the realm of morality: the duty to adapt the teachings of Torah in every age; to pursue a broad, well-rounded Jewish education; to preserve the Sabbath and holy days; to aid in the rebuilding of Palestine as a center of Jewish life and culture; and to participate in public and private worship.

In the half-century which spans the two Platforms, advocates of Reform Judaism came to understand that a

rational theology needs the support of ceremonial expressions, that ritual acts have the power to inspire ethical behavior, and that there is profound value in promoting continuity with the people and history of Israel. These were ideas that had just begun to take root in Reform by the time of the Columbus Platform, and as they were to gain greater influence during the next half-century, they would increasingly motivate the return to tradition which has marked Reform Judaism's evolution since the first decade of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE--1885-1937

TEMPLE ISRAEL/UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATION
(Terre Haute, Indiana)

In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, Jewish life was transformed in Terre Haute, and throughout the state of Indiana, by the arrival of German immigrants attracted by good trading prospects along the inland waterways, by the successful establishment of Jewish businesses, and by the rapid acceptance of Reform ideology and practice. [1] The extant records indicate that the first Jewish congregation in Terre Haute was not formally organized until 1858, although the mention of Jewish settlers appears in the Terre Haute press as early as 1823. [2] Since 1849, a Jewish burial society had served the needs of the small enclave. As the community grew, the decision was made in 1858 to "employ a man who can carry out the functions of a chasan and shochet, and is capable of giving religious instruction to the children." [3] The society was renamed Terre Haute Zion Congregation, and being comprised of Jews from German descent, its minutes were recorded in both German and English. This Orthodox congregation maintained separate seating for men and women, required the presence of all members on Shabbat morning, and insisted on the strict maintenance of decorum during worship. [4]

Records of Congregation Zion are not available after June of 1859, but it seems to have continued to serve Terre Haute Jewry at least as a burial association until being consolidated with the Reform congregation, Temple Israel, in 1882. [5] Very little is explicit in the records concerning Temple Israel's ritual practices in its early years. Yet it seems clear that from the beginning, the congregation accepted the patterns of mainstream American Reform. They held services on Friday evenings, conducted services using an organ and choir, and worshipped with uncovered heads in mixed seating.

So it was in keeping with their established course that the congregation turned to the Hebrew Union College for liberal rabbinic leadership. In 1890, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College, Alexander Lyons, was installed as Temple Israel's first Rabbi by Isaac Mayer Wise. Rabbi Lyons served Temple Israel for six years, and under his leadership, the congregation agreed to adopt the Union Prayerbook in 1893. [6] When he accepted a call to serve a pulpit in the larger community of Albany, New York, Lyons was succeeded by Samuel Deinard in 1896. Deinard stayed on for only four years before moving to Chicago in order to pursue further academic interests. [7] In 1900, immediately following his ordination from the Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Emil W. Leipziger began his tenure at Temple Israel.

Along with the rest of the Reform movement in America, Temple Israel of Terre Haute must have been affected by the

waves of immigration of traditional, Eastern European Jews. In fact, in the twenty years between 1885 and 1905, the number of Jews living in Indiana increased eight-fold, from just over 3,000 to more than 25,000. [8] In Terre Haute, a second congregation was established in 1892 with the founding of the Orthodox Temple B'nai Abraham. Temple Israel also grew steadily during Leipziger's years, from fifty-six members in 1900 to more than eighty members within the decade. [9]

A copy of Leipziger's Annual Report to the Board and Members of Temple Israel from 1907 reflects the changes and innovations which were occurring through his guidance. Confirmation had been introduced immediately after Leipziger's arrival [10]. The rabbi reported that eight children had taken part in the ceremony in 1906, and that a class of five girls were preparing for the Confirmation ceremony for May of 1907. (The five girls were later confirmed along with two boys from the neighboring town of Mattoon, Il. [11]) He also described the recently inaugurated Sabbath morning services which were "marked by short talks to the children every week." Leipziger lamented that the services were not better attended by the adults of the congregation, but promised that the services would be continued "as long as the children can be benefitted by them." The rabbi, however, applauded the congregation on its fine attendance record on Friday evenings, when on the average, some sixty-five worshippers were present.

Leipziger's Annual report from 1907 indicates a distinct revival of religious interest occurring in the congregation which parallels that described above within the movement as a whole. He observed that twice as many people as in former years remained in the synagogue all day on Yom Kippur, that an increasing number of students stayed out of school for the High Holydays, and that the morning services on the various holidays were better attended each year. He mentioned that, for the first time, a sukkah had been erected in the Temple during the Festival of Booths, and acknowledged the renewed interest and participation in the seder observance. Leipziger maintained that "These are small things, but they are the straws which show the direction of the wind."

Leipziger left Terre Haute in 1913 in order to accept an invitation to serve the pulpit of the Touro Synagogue in New Orleans. His successor, Jacob Kaplan was elected as Rabbi the same year. Kaplan echoed his predecessor's praise for the excellent attendance on Friday evenings, proposing that no congregation in the country had a larger percentage of attendance than did Temple Israel. [12] Kaplan also detected and called attention to the steady rise in religious consciousness on the part of his congregation. In his Annual Report of 1915, Kaplan observed: "More people have respected themselves by closing their places of business on the High Holy Days than before, and there were almost none in the congregation who did not either

themselves hold Seder services or were invited by those who held them, thus evincing a greater interest in, and intelligent understanding and reverential feeling for, Judaism." [13]

For the next two decades, no change in the congregation's ritual practices appear which can be viewed as returns to discarded traditions. But a monumental change which was to affect the congregation's incorporation of traditional practices occurred in 1935 when, due to the large number of Jews leaving Terre Haute, the lack of new settlers, and the deaths within the community, Temple Israel merged with the Orthodox synagogue, Temple B'nai Abraham. A truly unique experiment in American Jewish communal life, the United Hebrew Congregation maintained both of the old synagogue buildings under a single Board of Directors. Friday night services continued to be held at 7:45 in Temple Israel, and morning services were maintained in B'nai Abraham's building. Holidays were celebrated in both synagogues, with the congregation's rabbi, at that time Rabbi J. Marshall Taxay, serving Temple Israel, and the shochet serving B'nai Abraham. Sunday school continued to be held at Temple Israel, but at the same time, Rabbi Taxay supervised the weekday Talmud Torah for B'nai Abraham.

From this point on, it becomes difficult to distinguish between what were actual returns to discarded traditions on the part of the Reform element, and what were the simply prominent expressions of the traditional members' opinions.

Nevertheless, the constituency of Temple Israel was being addressed and affected by appeals such as the following which appeared in the United Temple News in 1936:

Parents are urged to encourage their children to observe Jewish customs and ceremonies in the home: the reciting of Grace before meals, the night prayer, Kiddush, and the like. It is hoped that Sabbath candles will be kindled in every home of the pupils of our school. [14]

BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION

Rather than experiencing the beginning stages of a return to once discarded traditions, or a renewal in religious activities on the part of the laity during the years between 1885 and 1937, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation continued the move away from its Orthodox roots, establishing itself as a Reform congregation in every sense. Certain innovations were already introduced under the rabbinic leadership of Aaron S. Bettelheim, a well-educated rabbi from Hungary, co-founder of the Maimonides College in Philadelphia, who served the congregation from 1886-1890 following short-lived appointments in Richmond and San Francisco. [15] The most notable of these innovations was the resolution passed by the Board of Managers in 1886 to "abolish the services on the second days of Yom-tov" and to have regular services on the Eve of Sabbaths and Holidays. [16] But it was Bettelheim's successors who moved the congregation towards the mainstream of Classical Reform:

the German-born graduate of Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Adolf Guttmacher, who served from 1891-1915, and Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron, a native of Savannah, Georgia, and also a graduate of Hebrew Union College, who served from 1915-1946 (and later as Emeritus).

The progress towards Reform was slow but steady. On November 6, 1892, following the recommendation of Rabbi Guttmacher, the Board resolved to join the U.A.H.C. and to appoint a ritual committee to discuss the matter of procuring a new prayerbook to replace the Szold-Jastrow book. [17] For a number of years, the congregation had been steadily reforming its services by adding to the number of passages read in English and by abolishing repetitive portions. A sweeping set of such reforms was passed by the Board in December of 1891, following the recommendation of Rabbi Guttmacher. [18] And in February of 1893, the Board approved the elimination of the second paragraph of the shema, v'haya im shamo'a, and the third paragraph of the shema, which deals with the wearing of tzitzit. [19] Thus it was consistent with the course already being taken when, in May of the 1893, the congregation accepted the Divine Service Committee's endorsement, and adopted the Union Prayerbook for congregational worship. [20] The move toward Reform can be seen as complete when, in the 1909 revision of the congregation's constitution, the recast expression of the purpose of the congregation was "to maintain and promote reformed Judaism in all the relations of life..." [21]

For the other congregations in this study, one of the elements included as evidence of return to tradition will be the recovery of the Bar Mitzvah celebration. But for Baltimore Hebrew, although Confirmation was instituted for the sake of the girls, the practice of celebrating the occasion of Bar Mitzvah was never abandoned. In the final prayer offered in the old Lloyd Street Synagogue prior to the congregation's move to the Madison Avenue Temple in 1889, Rabbi Bettelheim made reference to those affiliated with the congregation who "were here confirmed and have first pronounced the blessing when being Bar Mitzvah." [22] As late as 1933, the Board concerned itself with the timing of the Bar Mitzvah services in relation to the childrens' birthdays rather than with the entire question of the propriety of the custom. [23]

Not until 1892 did the Board of Managers of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation begin formal deliberations on the question of removing the headcovering during worship. The matter was discussed at length at the quarterly meeting on May 22, 1892, but the Board unanimously agreed not to take any action at that time. [24] A special meeting of the congregation was called a year later to discuss the issue. The records indicate that the congregation took a lively interest in the debate, and that the gathering was well attended, although the participants agreed at that time to postpone any further consideration of the matter. [25]

Nonetheless, upon the petition of thirty-four members

of the congregation, the President again called a special meeting on May 29, 1894, again attended by an unusually large number of members. The following resolution was then adopted by a resounding majority: "Resolved that the members and seat holders of this Congregation shall have the privilege to remove their hats during divine Service and that the members and seat holders who desire to retain their hats upon their heads shall have the privilege to do so."

[26] A more radical stance was taken in 1923 when the Board instructed the rabbi and cantor to wear robes and tallitot, but to discard the pulpit cap which was then still in use.

[27]

Although these years were characterized by the ongoing reformation of the congregation's worship and ritual, the increased emphasis on ceremonialism on the part of American Reform was also evident at Baltimore Hebrew. The Synagogue Bulletin from October 11, 1929 invited the members to take part in the yearly Simchat Torah ritual, The Procession of the Scrolls, which had been instituted early in the decade. Based upon the traditional hakafot, the ceremony included three circuits with the scrolls, symbolic of Israel's past, present and future. The congregation also introduced a Processional of Palms and a modern version of simchat bet ha-sho-evah, complete with pitchers of water and bowls. As will be the case in the 1940's with the lighting of shabbat candles in the temple, these ceremonies were innovative rituals based on traditional practices, but should not be

seen as pure returns to tradition. Even the Synagogue Bulletin stressed this point:

These symbolic revivals of olden rituals are thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of Reform Judaism. Reform Judaism does not frown down upon ceremonials as such. It discards those ceremonies only which fail to stir the hearts of men and women today. Liberal Judaism believes that to retain an observance merely because of its antiquity is not only bad logic but bad practice. When, however, these ceremonies which indeed stir the imagination can be adapted to modern use, can be filled with poetry which appeals to our hearts and minds today, Liberal Judaism is then re-creating the values of the past. In this spirit we are preparing for the new Pageant of Palms with the confident belief that our Congregation will find joy and religious stimulous in it. [28]

Still, the minutes and bulletins from this period do not reflect the renewed interest in religious practice which was occurring in the smaller community of Terre Haute. In the President's annual message of 1900, he deplored the poor attendance of the male members for both Saturday morning and Friday evening services, [29] and a similar message was repeated for the next two years. In 1909, Rabbi Guttmacher voiced the concern about the "almost entire absence of the male members from the service on Sabbaths," [30] and in 1910, Guttmacher commented: "...I am again compelled to call attention to the lack of religious enthusiasm in our midst. It ought to be a sacred duty for every member to use his utmost efforts to contribute toward a more active religious life." [31] The congregational response must have been grudging, for in 1915, he again insisted that "There can be no healthy congregational life, unless services on Sabbaths and Holy days are well attended." [32] The same sort of

admonition by Guttmacher can be found repeatedly in the records through 1925, when the congregation instituted Sunday morning services "primarily in an effort to enlist the interest of the men of the congregation." [33]

The teaching of Hebrew reading skills in the religious school was seen as a potential solution to the problem of poor service attendance. Guttmacher reported in 1915 that "stress is being laid upon the reading of Hebrew so that, the children may grow up to take active part in the services." [34]

The Sunday morning services never became the primary worship service for the congregation, and they only continued until February of 1927. The congregation did, however, take great interest in the Sunday Evening Lecture series instituted shortly after the election of Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron in 1915. The program consisted of prayers, congregational hymns, a scriptural reading, an organ recital, and the lecture itself. [35] In 1919, Lazaron lamented the poor service attendance while, at the same time, applauding the crowd of several hundred regularly attending the Sunday evening lectures. [36]

Thus, we can discern no movement in the congregation's religious interests and practices which can be described as return to tradition. One reason may be that, in completing the transition into a Reform congregation only after the turn of the twentieth century, the congregation avoided the period of radical reform which did away with Bar Mitzvah,

traditional garb for prayer, and Saturday morning services. In certain respects, the congregation never joined the mainstream, for as late as 1914, Guttmacher was not allowed to give even a ten-minute sermon on Friday evenings, [37] and as late as 1921, the congregation refused to change from a 5:30 p.m. service on Friday evenings to the more common late evening service. [38]

Also, one may assume that the two Reform breakoffs which occurred in the early period of the congregation's history provided an outlet for the more radical element. The congregation maintained a more conservative posture because those who wanted the most change left the fold. Hence the retention of many traditional elements abandoned by other Reform congregations.

CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH (WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE)

In Chapter 2, the watershed date for Congregation B'nai B'rith becoming a Reform congregation was placed at 1884, with the hiring of the outspoken proponent of Reform Judaism, Emanuel Schreiber. Although B'nai B'rith did not join the U.A.H.C. until 1903, it had already adopted the Union Prayerbook by October, 1895. [39] As noted in Chapter Two, the congregation had been moving steadily towards the incorporation of more reforms of its ritual practices during the tenure of Rabbi Edelson, yet even after the introduction of the Union Prayerbook, it was not until 1888 that the

congregation first established the practice of bare-headed worship. According to the recollection of Schreiber, on Shavuot of that year, he officiated with uncovered head at the Confirmation of a large class of Sunday School pupils, "and soon the congregation voted in favor of worshipping with hats off." [40] To this day, the practice has never returned.

From the time of Schreiber, and especially during the tenure of Rabbi Sigmund Hecht beginning in 1899, Congregation B'nai B'rith moved to the extreme Reform characteristic of the Classical era. Originally from Hungary and educated in Vienna, Hecht had arrived in the United States in 1868 at the age of nineteen. [41] Following a brief period of service in Montgomery, Alabama, and eleven years in Milwaukee, Hecht came to Los Angeles in response to an advertisement appearing in Jewish newspapers in San Francisco, Cincinnati, and New York which stipulated the congregation's desire for a modern rabbi with a secular education. The notice specified that

None but a thorough English scholar, fully qualified as a lecturer and reader, and possessing a diploma either from the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati, or from a well known University in Europe need apply. [42]

Hecht was elected in August of that same year, [43] and he served the congregation until his death in June, 1925. [44] During those years in the pulpit, the reading of Hebrew in the service was reduced to a minimum, the practice

of Bar Mitzvah was almost entirely eliminated, [45] and the congregation became a member of the U.A.H.C.

These changes, in addition to other minor alterations in the congregation's patterns of observance, (such as the innovation of having the entire congregation rise for the recitation of kaddish, which was approved in 1917), [46] were accepted largely owing to the respect and authority which Hecht slowly earned during his tenure. The minutes clearly reflect Hecht's gradual accumulation of authority over ritual matters, especially during the first three or four years of his appointment. In 1902, the Board gave Hecht "full power to secure music and programs for Sabbath services," [47] and in 1903, he was again voted "full power" to make the necessary decisions regarding holiday services. [48] This was indeed a shift from the earlier attitude of the lay leadership which had taken a very active role in determining ritual practice. References to discussions of ritual and ceremony contained in the official minutes steadily diminish during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In gaining the trust and respect of his Board, and by capturing authority over his pulpit and over his congregation's approach to religious ceremonies, Hecht had also set the stage for the achievements of his successor, Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin.

Ordained by the Hebrew Union College in 1914, Magnin was installed as the Associate Rabbi of Congregation B'nai B'rith in 1915. Magnin was the son of a prosperous San

Francisco family, and he was raised in an atmosphere of traditionalism best characterized as Conservative. Although he gained the reputation of a staunch advocate of Reform Judaism, in his first few years at B'nai B'rith, he actually helped the congregation return to certain traditional practices. For example, he increased the amount of Hebrew utilized in public worship, within the confines of the Union Prayerbook. [49] He also reintroduced the blowing of a shofar on the High Holydays, whereas before, the congregation had been using a regular trumpet. [50] This innovation occurred sometime after 1924, seeing that a confirmation essay from that year describing the shofar betrays the student's unfamiliarity with the traditional object. "This [ram's horn] is still used in the Orthodox synagogues during the services on New Year's day and at the close of the Day of Atonement," concluded the student. [51]

The most notable return to tradition which occurred under Magnin was the reemergence of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony within the congregation. According to the recollections of Rabbi Schreiber, Bar Mitzvah was still being practiced in 1888, "but as time passed, the boys came to be more and more included in the Confirmation classes..." [52] Although records show that under Rabbi Abraham Blum two such ceremonies were held in the congregation in 1893, [53] Rabbi Hecht discouraged the practice in deference to Confirmation, [54] so that Bar Mitzvah had become obsolete by the time of Magnin's arrival. [55]

But in 1919, the Board passed a motion recommended by Magnin that Bar Mitzvah ceremonies be allowed for those families who so desired. [56] The next year, the Yearbook of the congregation contained the following pronouncement:

In most Reform congregations, Confirmation has taken the place of Bar-mitzvah, insomuch as it includes the recitation of the blessings over the Torah and requires a more thorough Jewish preparation. In cases where the parents desire to have their sons Bar-mitzvah, we are only too glad to encourage it, providing the boy has had a previous training in Hebrew and on the condition that he pledge himself to be confirmed later and continue his Jewish studies. [57]

The Bulletins of the congregation report the Bar Mitzvah of David Goldman on December 13, 1919, and another which took place in 1920. The practice gradually gained momentum, so that in 1933, the congregation celebrated seven Bar Mitzvahs, and in 1937, a year in which nineteen boys were confirmed, nine boys--approximately half of the eligible candidates--observed Bar Mitzvahs.

At the same time, the study of Hebrew became a priority for the religious school, and the weekly bulletin made an appeal for students, commenting that "No Jewish child should be lacking in some knowledge at least of the language in which the Ten Commandments were given to the world." [58] Following the appointment of Rabbi Maxwell H. Dubin as Director of Religious Education in 1925, the study of Hebrew was made compulsory from the fourth-grade on up, and it is interesting to note that the students learned conversational Hebrew in addition to prayerbook reading skills. [59]

Commenting in 1975, Magnin reported that there had been little change in the ritual of the services since 1916. [60] Although he brought back the shofar, Bar Mitzvah, and a little more Hebrew, he never returned to kipot and tallitot. [61] His complete authority over ritual practice assured him little opposition from the laity even if questions of ritual matters arose. He felt strongly that the rabbi, and no one else, should make decisions affecting the ritual life of the congregation. He insisted that "All the spiritual--the cultural, the music, and all that has to do with it belongs to the rabbi, if he has any sense. If not, he doesn't belong there." [62]

Magnin fashioned his congregation according to his vision of Reform, and as we will see in the next chapter, he wavered little in his views during the course of his long career. Yet Magnin had a good sense of the development of American Reform which was taking place in years leading to the Columbus Platform, as he indicated in an article describing the Jewish dietary laws, appearing in the Temple Bulletin in 1925:

[In our day,] the Jewish people do not seem to want to make many sacrifices for their faith. Unlike the Catholics, they seek the easy and comfortable way. We like a religion of convenience, which is one of the weaknesses of liberalism, a weakness that may grow to grave proportions if we are not careful. At the same time, in accordance with the spirit of the prophets, we are, or at least ought to be, more concerned with ethics and right living than ceremonialism. If modern Jews can make their religion something vital and potent without the aid of externals, all the better. But this remains to be seen. Reform Judaism is yet young. And the test will come in the next few years. [63]

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RISE OF CONTEMPORARY REFORM JUDAISM--1938-1976

THE NEW MOOD OF REFORM

The adoption of the Columbus Platform by the C.C.A.R. did not signal the beginning of a new phase in American Reform Judaism. Rather, the evolution of Classical Reform into the Neo-Reform of the mid-twentieth century was well underway by the late 1920's. And yet, the Guiding Principles of 1937 arose as the first official expression of the new era of Reform. As reflected by the Guiding Principles, the rabbinic leadership of the movement had already reversed its previous anti-Zionist stance, was placing greater emphasis on ritual and ceremony, was more ready to make religious demands of the laity in terms of Jewish education and practice, and was already engaged in the process of self-examination and internal criticism. In the years which followed the adoption of the Columbus Platform these tendencies were to continue and intensify.

The differences which distinguished the new mood of Reform from its earlier tendencies were already noticed as they occurred. Many rabbis themselves were well aware of the changes taking place which distanced them from the previous generations of Reformers. They acknowledged the failures of their predecessors and sought appropriate responses to the deficiencies of Reform Jewish life. Rabbi

Irving M. Levey, the Librarian at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, contended that the rebelliousness of the early reformers was in fact a weakness, and that their revolutionary approach to Reform, particularly in their denial of the validity of rabbinic tradition, detracted from the effectiveness of their cause. "There is little doubt," Levey stated, "that they would have achieved far greater success had they followed in the footsteps of Geiger and Zunz and other such philosophers of Reform, had they searched the Torah she'be'al peh for the roots of their movement." He asserted that his generation of Reform had the obligation to "correct this mistake" by promoting the beauty and richness of the rabbinic tradition, and by striving to harmonize Reform Judaism with the traditional segments of the Jewish community. [1]

In 1954, Eugene B. Borowitz, who at the time was serving as rabbi of The Community Synagogue, Temple Beth Am, in Port Washington, New York, observed that the American Reform movement was in its third stage of development. He identified the first stage as spanning the experimental period from the very beginnings of the movement until shortly after the death of Isaac M. Wise in 1900, during which time Reform practice became standardized. Borowitz saw the second stage as a period of unlegislated homogeneity which lasted until the late 1920's. He held that the current era was a third stage in the development of American Reform, characterized by a "deep-seated dissatisfaction with

the older pattern of Reform observance, with a return to many traditional forms and rites and by the continuing desire for a Code or Guide of Reform Jewish practice." [2]

Writing in 1973, the rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, Gunther Plaut, frankly acknowledged that the foundations on which the Reform movement was built--messianism, integrationism, and rationalism--no longer existed. [3] The entire scenario of Jewish life had changed. Instead of facing oppression from without and rigidity from within, Plaut saw the new challenge to Reform Judaism coming from affluence without and drifting within. [4] According to Plaut, the new spirit of Reform was very much the opposite of the old vision. "No longer does it try to adapt the Jew to the world, but rather to adapt the world to our vision." [5]

While realizing that great changes had taken place in the Reform movement since the time of the Pittsburgh Platform, many rabbis also recognized the deficiencies which still persisted. As early as 1938, the Committee on Synagogue and Community decried the "colorless[ness] and emptiness" which permeated Reform religious life. The Committee reported that "the feeling is now almost universal that too many warm, colorful, helpful ceremonies and disciplines were discarded by the former generations of Reform Jews." [6] As noted in Chapter Four, many of the attempts made in the synagogue to reintroduce holiday observances were aimed primarily at the children, with

little or no ritual participation for the adult congregation. William B. Silverman, the rabbi of Temple B'nai Jehudah in Kansas City, voiced the concern of many when he wrote: "Our 'tree of life' has become a Torah for tots and our festivals a religious pabulum for infantile consumption." [7] And recognizing the lack of religious observance by the Reform laity, Gunther Plaut lamented the fact that Reform Jews had adapted themselves so successfully to American life that "they have forgotten what it is they left behind." [8]

The call for the articulation of clear standards for Reform observance which began in the years preceding the Columbus Platform grew continually louder as Reform rabbis asserted the centrality of ritual for a meaningful religious life. In 1946, Solomon Freehof, rabbi of Congregation Rodef Shalom in Pittsburgh, and who one decade later began his tenure as the Chairman of the Responsa committee, described the tension in a modern Reform movement which had begun to stress ritual as a Jewish obligation:

To deny the validity of ritual practice is Paulinian. To accept the validity of all the inherited practice is Orthodox. To declare that practice has some religious validity and to seek to establish a suitable foundation and structure for it is our concept of the present duty of Reform. [9]

Joshua Loth Liebman, rabbi of Temple Israel, Lafayette, Indiana, was expressing the same notion when he wrote:

No religion can survive with vitality unless it presents to its worshippers a minimum code of conduct which binds the group

together into a disciplined fellowship. We do not want a creed of belief so much as a pattern of action. We desire not coercion, but persuasion--wise, self-chosen discipline which will make Reform Judaism understandable and meaningful in the realms of worship, study, and action. [10]

Along with this renewed stress on ritual obligations and religious discipline, the term mitzvah begins to appear in the discussions and publications of the Reform rabbinate in the latter part of the twentieth century. Plaut argued that ritual and ethical obligations arose out of the Sinaitic Covenant, and that the disciplines of Jewish life were imposed by God, by Jewish history and tradition, and by a fundamental concern for the unity of the Jewish people. [11] In 1973, Plaut stated that

...we have outlived the exaltation of the antinomian both in society at large and in our family relations. We are beginning to rediscover the importance of discipline, and in our movement we must proceed from custom and ceremony to the concept of mitzvah. [12]

The return to ritual and the reemergence of the idea of mitzvah was not seen as a return to orthodoxy, because the obligations were still products of free choice and creativity, and did not arise from the demands of the Shulchan Aruch. [13] Thus, when the Reform rabbis utilized the term mitzvah, they did not understand it as a Divine mandate expressed through the process of rabbinic authority. The Introduction to the C.C.A.R.'s Tadrich L'Shabbat summed up this new usage of the term mitzvah:

Mitzvah (plural, mitzvot) is what a Jew ought to do in

response to his God and to the tradition of his people. This response comes from personal commitment rather from unquestioning obedience to a set of commandments which past tradition thought to be the direct will of God. By making choice and commitment part of our plan of life, we willingly and purposefully strengthen our bonds with the God of Israel and with His people.
[14]

As the desire to establish religious obligations and standards for Reform Jewish living increased, guides for suggested norms of religious practice began to be published. Freehof's two-volume work Reform Jewish Practice and Its Rabbinic Background was a descriptive work completed in 1952. Other, more prescriptive guides included: A Guide for Reform Jewish Practice by Frederic A. Doppelt and David Polish, published in 1957; Morrison David Bial's Liberal Judaism At Home: The Practices of Modern Reform Judaism, published in 1967; the C.C.A.R.'s Tadrich L'Shabbat: A Shabbat Manual, published in 1972; and Gates of Mitzvah, also published by the C.C.A.R., which was completed in 1979. Although these works never assumed authoritative status, they reflected the desire for the establishment of norms, and they captured, from a variety of angles, the current picture of major trends in Reform evolution.

It would, of course, be an error to assume that the rabbis of the movement were unanimously in favor of the changes which had occurred. Even as a large percentage of the C.C.A.R. membership had initially opposed the adoption of the Guiding Principles in 1937, there remained those voices, albeit a diminishing number, which lamented the

passing of Classical Reform. Harry Essrig, rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Grand Rapids, Michigan, warned the Conference in 1949 of the danger that "we may mistake the ritual shadow for the substance of faith." [15] He felt that the future strength of American Reform depended upon strengthening the congregations, not upon individual observance. Essrig remarked that "Ceremonies alone will not quicken the spiritual impulse of our people until they are better grounded in a rationale for such observances, until they are given a cogent and coherent interpretation of the realities behind the symbolic acts and utterances." [16]

Also voicing his concern over the "thinning ranks of classical Reform rabbis," Albert S. Goldstein of Tremont Temple in New York, listed a number of recovered traditions in the areas of life-cycle celebrations and public worship which, in 1953, reflected the retreat from Reform ideals. "From glass-breaking at weddings to ribbon-cutting at funerals, from hat-wearing at two-day Holyday observances to Conservative prayerbooks at Slichos and Tisho b'Ov revivals; from yizkor on Sh'mini Atseres and Shavuos to Bar-Mitzvah-- there has been capitulation all the way." [17]

The lament of these rabbis over the decline of Classical Reform were also expressed by some leaders among the Reform laity. Leo Kaul, who had been a contributing editor of The Reform Advocate for nearly a half-century, expressed his distress over the current tenor of Reform Judaism in 1951: "... today Judaism is dead. In Orthodox

synagogues the knowledge of Hebrew and ritual cooking is of greater importance than Ethics, while in the Reform Temples, Romanticism is rampant." [18]

Still, like the great majority of Reform rabbis, the general tendency of the U.A.H.C. membership was towards an increase in traditional expressions of Judaism. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Biennial Convention of the U.A.H.C. in 1937 had issued a resolution calling for a return to "traditional symbols, ceremonies, and customs" which had fallen into disuse. In order to facilitate the incorporation of traditional and innovative ceremonies into home and synagogue observances, the U.A.H.C. Commission on Synagog Activities joined with the C.C.A.R. in the establishment of a Joint Committee on Ceremonies in 1938. Its purpose was to "enrich Jewish life and worship in synagog and home by the utilization of drama, pageantry and ceremonial." [19] The Committee produced ceremonial leaflets for use in the home and synagogue, in addition to ceremonial objects meant "to enhance the charm and beauty of the rituals." [20] Examples of the ceremonial leaflets included the preparation in 1940 of an abridged megillah in English along with a ritual to accompany its reading, as an attempt to revive the holding of services on Purim. [21] In 1950, the committee printed a Ceremonial for Opening the Door for Elijah which included the musical score for the traditional song, eliyahu hanavi. [22] The committee also created ceremonies for special Sabbaths during the year,

which included the themes of Peace, Thanksgiving, Rebuilding of Palestine, Parent's Day, and Tisha B'av. [23] The Committee on Ceremonies also produced innovative rituals such as the Ceremony for Induction of New Congregational Members. [24] These and many other ceremonies were inspired by or taken over from the creative activities of individual rabbis around the country, which included hundreds of services, rituals, and ceremonies developed during the middle decades of the twentieth century. [25]

In the area of ceremonial objects, the Committee commissioned the production of Chanukkah menorahs, an atarah to adorn the rabbinic robe, an edition of the abridged megillah printed on parchment, and certificates for the commemoration of important occasions in Jewish life, such as b'rit milah, Confirmation, marriage, etc. One of the unique ventures of the committee, which actually met with a fair degree of success, was the invention of the "Shofar-with-Mouthpiece," designed to revive the traditional blowing of the shofar on the High Holydays. The origin of this trumpet-shofar hybrid is described in the 1940 Yearbook:

It came to our attention that many rabbis were desirous of restoring the blowing of the shofar as an impressive ceremony in the Rosh Ha-shonah morning service. Owing to the difficulty of finding an expert who could blow the shofar acceptably, many congregations had relegated the shofar, or more accurately, a simulation of the shofar tones to the choir gallery, using a trumpet or cornet or reproducing the trumpet notes on the organ. The Committee undertook to restore the shofar ceremony to the altar and to give it significance and dignity. To overcome the difficulty of securing an expert to blow the shofar, we experimented with the possibility of fitting a mouthpiece to the shofar which would lighten the difficulty of blowing it without

interfering with the traditional tone...The Union office will be prepared to supply a shofar fitted with the type of mouthpiece described and also to fit such a mouthpiece on any shofars now owned by the congregations. [26]

Within the first seven years after its introduction, more than two hundred congregations had purchased a Shofar-with-Mouthpiece. [27]

WHAT HAPPENED TO AMERICAN REFORM?

Among the most delicate and complicated issues that here need to be addressed are the reasons behind the major transformation of American Reform during this period. As we have seen, the process of returning to discarded traditional elements began as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, but certainly the process moves much faster and is more widespread in the years following the Columbus Platform.

Many writers and historians point to the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel as major impetuses for American Reform to recapture some of its abandoned historical ties to the Jewish people. Robert I. Kahn, then President of the C.C.A.R., wrote:

These two events produced in the Jewish community a determination, unprecedented in recent history, not only to survive but to survive as Jews. And whatever could express that determination, including religious practice and religious symbols, was authorized, by spontaneous consensus, to lay claims and impose obligations on the contemporary Reform Jew. [28]

In addition to rekindling an appreciation for the

unique peoplehood of the Jewish people, the Holocaust also shook to its very foundations the trust in reason and the inevitable progress of humanity, upon which stood much of the optimistic universalism of Classical Reform. Following the horrors perpetrated by Hitler's professors and intellectuals, the sovereignty of reason could no longer be accepted. The rabbi of The Temple in Cleveland, Daniel Jeremy Silver, thus contrasted the modern Reformers with their predecessors:

We do not define Judaism simply as a religion of reason. Judaism is nothing if it does not speak to the heart. The early Reformers effectively used reason to dissolve a tangle of folkways and superstitions; but reason proved too corrosive an acid which burned away not only superstition but every trace of the sacred.... It is no longer enough to be reasonable. The world is fundamentally unreasonable. After Auschwitz and the Arab wars we accept the ambiguity of our existence, alienation--and know that we need God's help.... The new synagogue must provide a redeeming vision for a twentieth century man who feels himself burdened and trapped by life's ambiguities. It will necessarily place more emphasis on the specifically religious; sacred acts, sacred moments, and sacred learning. It will be more concerned with Torah than with archeology, more with the history of Jewish thought than with lists of Jewish notables, more with the immediacy of a worship experience than in knowing all there is to know about the origin of our customs and rituals.
[29]

Renewed interest in classical texts and ceremonial expressions was not only a manifestation of the Jewish community, but it reflected the appreciation in twentieth-century American society for the search for one's ethnic roots, a trend described by H.U.C. - J.I.R. Professor of Liturgy Lawrence Hoffman as "intellectual romanticism."
[30] Observing this trend, Jack Stern, Jr., a member of the

Committee which composed the 1976 Centenary Perspective, wrote that "Contemporary culture highlights ethnicity and a self-assertive return to ethnic roots, the very kind of ethnicity that is expressed in the traditional practice which emerges out of the Jewish historic experience." [31] Hoffman's point of view was similar:

If one can talk of Hispano-Americans, Black-Americans, Italian-Americans, and so on, one can surely talk of Jewish Americans, where the definition of 'Jewish' is not limited to religion. So without in any way denying an essential religious component of Judaism, American Reform Jews have expanded their sense of self to include also a group ethnicity, a family tie that makes all Jews responsible for each other. [32]

Taking a cue from Marshall McLuhan, the American sociologist and media expert who asserted in the late 1960's that visual-print media were no longer the primary means of communication in an increasingly "electrified" world, Michael Stroh, the rabbi of Har Zion in Thornhill, Ontario, realized the impact of the tactile experience on the new generation:

It would seem that a great need for the visual no longer exists, and that a boy who wears beads around his neck wants a Talit around his neck.... Judaism is filled with the possibility of tactile experiences. The whole Torah ceremony--hakafa, aliyot, havdala, the lulav and etrog, the shofar--provides all we need if we make use of them in services which are participatory... [33]

Reform rabbis also heeded the psychology of the day which began to stress the basic human need for ritual and emotional expression. Ariel Goldberg, the rabbi of Temple Beth Ahabah in Richmond, Virginia, admitted his fear at

first that the foundations of reason and rationality would be weakened by the return to symbolism and ceremony, and he spoke out against the innovations which were spreading in various Reform communities. Yet he described how "...reluctantly I began to admit to myself that the charges of coldness, formalism and a deadly decorum which prevailed in so many of our Reform synagogues were valid. I began to pay more attention to the findings of psychologists who stressed the value of emotion." [34]

Joshua L. Liebman argued along similar lines that

...we must recognize (as Reform Judaism in the past has not sufficiently understood) that a rich ceremonialism is essential for a healthy psychic existence, and that some collective discipline is indispensable for a vital religious life. We who understand the need of emotion in religion do not base our richer ceremonialism upon supernatural revelation, but upon human and Jewish group-need.... More Hebrew, more poetry, more congregational singing, more lay participation in the service: these are emotional techniques dictated by the discoveries of individual and social psychologists--practitioners of reason in our day. [35]

In addition to contemporaneous world history and societal trends, one must also look to the changing composition of the Reform movement as a further explanation for the changes within. Theodore Lenn's Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism in 1972 pointed to the different "background flavor" of present-day Reform rabbis compared with the founders of the movement. Only recently had the Reform rabbinate stopped recruiting mainly first-generation Americans. Also, prior to 1941, only twenty-five percent of the Reform rabbis were raised in

Reform households, and more than half of the rabbis came from Orthodoxy. By 1972, the percentage of traditionally raised rabbis had dwindled to less than ten percent, with more than one-half growing up in Reform congregations. [36]

Similarly, the laity of the movement followed a pattern of steadily diminishing numbers of first-generation Americans. According to Leonard Fein's study from 1972, the Reform population at that time was largely second and third generation Americans, [37] although just slightly more than one-third of the respondents were raised in Reform households. [38]

The importance of these figures must be viewed in human terms. Prior to the time of the Columbus Platform, the lion's share of Reform rabbis had rejected the religious patterns of their childhood and were attempting to adjust their lifestyles to a society different from that of their parents. By the middle of the twentieth century, Reform rabbis were often rediscovering traditions which they had never experienced, and what they rejected was the cold formality of their parents' patterns of religious life.

For the individual Jew living in America in the middle to late twentieth century, the problems of social acceptance and Americanization were no longer high on the agenda. Jews felt freer to experiment with their Judaism. According to Herbert S. Rutman, the rabbi of Har Sinai in Baltimore, "Part of the experimentation is in the area of ritual and custom, often a 'playing at' being traditional without

accepting the assumptions and beliefs of the tradition, often a sincere expression of a desire to identify with Jews who have been or are traditional." [39]

Finally, the breakdown of the homogeneity of American Reform Judaism must be included as a factor in the changing patterns of Reform practice. The Conference's Committee on Liturgy and Music reported in 1968 that "We are perhaps more diverse now than we have ever been as a religious body. We differ liturgically, we differ theologically, and these differences go deep." [40]

The differences within the movement also included a wide variety of theological viewpoints. Robert Kahn observed:

Our seminary faculties, our rabbinate, and our laity, too, are theologically divided. There are theists, deists, naturalists and humanists. There are rationalists and mystics, traditionalists and modernists. There are those who treasure freedom from authority, and others who would develop a Reform halachah. [41]

In his review of Gates of Prayer, H.U.C. - J.I.R. Professor of Rabbinics and Jewish Theology Jakob J. Petuchowski also brought attention to the complex reality of a divided Reform movement:

...it is clear that Reform Judaism itself has now become the most heterogeneous grouping within American Judaism. Not only can one find within its framework the most diverse points of view on any given issue (e.g. for and against mila and tevilah for proselytes; for and against intermarriage, for and against more Hebrew in the worship service), but the differences of belief and opinion run the whole gamut on such questions as the nature and destiny of Israel and the existence or non-existence of Israel's God. Indeed, such differences as have surfaced within the Reform

camp in recent years are often no longer differences within the same frame of reference, but, rather, antithetical positions which in reality invalidate one another. [42]

One effect of the increase in diversity was the opportunity for greater latitude for congregations and rabbis who wanted innovation in the various areas of religious expression. Some congregations opted for minimal change, and to this day, small numbers of Reform congregations still continue to practice their Judaism along the lines of Classical Reform. But with the majority opting to incorporate increased ritual and other traditional elements, the total picture of the movement is one of widespread return, even though the specifics may have differed from rabbi to rabbi and from congregation to congregation.

THE UNION PRAYERBOOK--NEWLY REVISED

Volume One of the Newly Revised edition of the Union Prayerbook appeared in 1940. Like the earlier revision of the Union Prayerbook published in 1918, it contains substantial changes in content and some minor alterations of English wording, but its overall format was left unchanged from the previous edition. Like the Revised Edition of 1918, it reflects the tendency of the movement to incorporate previously discarded traditional elements and to allow for creative liturgical expressions. Like its predecessors, the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook is an

excellent gauge for measuring the course of the Reform movement of its day. Yet it must be noticed that although the new edition was issued shortly after the adoption of the Columbus Platform's positive statement on the rebuilding of a Jewish homeland in Israel, the only passage clearly articulating that attitude appears in the service designated for the rare, fifth Shabbat of the month. The prayerbook contains only a few more Hebrew passages than the Revised Edition, such as elohay n'tzor l'shoni opposite the English rendering following the silent prayer. [43]

The inclusion of five different Shabbat evening services was clearly meant to address both the growing diversity of the movement and the complaints by both rabbis and congregants of the monotony of the services. The Torah service which now appears in the Shabbat evening services reflects the increasing centrality of the late Shabbat service in American Reform congregations, which led many congregations to include a Torah reading in their most widely-attended service.

In response to the congregations' demand for increased ritual activity, as expressed in the U.A.H.C. resolution of 1937, the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook included ceremonies for the lighting of Shabbat candles in the synagogue and for the public recitation of Shabbat and festival kiddush. These were received quite well by the congregations, for by 1956, ninety percent of Temples surveyed had adopted the kiddush service on Friday nights, and an even greater

percentage incorporated a candle-lighting service. [44]

Another innovation of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook was a special Torah service for Shemini Atzeret which included hakafot (based on the traditional practice of Simchat Torah), followed by the new ceremony of Consecration for children beginning religious school. [45] Also appearing for the first time is a Yizkor service for the seventh day of Passover. [46] No Yizkor service is provided for Shavuot however, probably because the ceremony of Confirmation already demanded a joyful mood for Shavuot, even as it guaranteed excellent synagogue attendance for the festival.

Indeed, the candle-lighting and kiddush for Shabbat evening services can be seen as a return to a neglected, if not discarded, traditional practice, although its placement as a part of synagogue ritual displaced the ritual from its traditional home setting. So too, the reintroduction of hakafot with the Torah scrolls and the holding of Yizkor on the last day of Pesach are traditional synagogue practices which were absent in the earlier stages of Reform. However, their addition was not simply intended for the purpose of reintroducing traditional practices. The desire of the Liturgical Committee was rather to increase synagogue attendance on the two occasions which were the most poorly attended in many congregations, and to "create a better balance" in the entire religious year. With the inclusion of the new services, the Memorial Service in the autumn

during Yom Kippur complemented the springtime Yizkor, even as the early summer Confirmation services for those completing their formal religious training balanced the Consecration service in the autumn for the religious school's newest students. [47]

Volume Two of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook, appeared in 1945. The new High Holyday edition contains a great deal more Hebrew than the previous revision, as can be seen in examples such as the expanded Hebrew in the amidah, [48] the Hebrew blessings included before and after the Haftarah portion, [49] and the shofar blessings appearing in Hebrew as well as English. [50] Other changes include expanded versions of avinu malkenu for Rosh Hashanah [51] and Yom Kippur, [52] the much lengthened shofar service, [53] and a short version of birchot ha-shachar on Yom Kippur morning. [54] The kiddush for the New Year appears in both Hebrew and English, [55] paralleling the inclusion of a kiddush ceremony for the Friday evening service, as discussed above.

Of particular significance is the indication of the chanting of kol nidre on Erev Yom Kippur. The words "kol nidre" appear in Hebrew, and below in small print and parentheses are the words "The Kol Nidre Chant." [56] Neither the text of kol nidre nor a translation is included, but apparently an earlier draft had included the text, for in 1945, the Yearbook reports that "It was moved and adopted that the action of the Executive Board in authorizing the

removing of the Hebrew text of kol nidre from the Union Prayerbook Volume II, newly revised, be approved." [57] This approach appears to be a compromise of sorts in the ongoing struggle over kol nidre. Perhaps the feeling of the Conference was that they could no longer ignore the public demand for the inclusion of the chant, but they were nonetheless unable to find a suitable text or translation, or to abide the presence of the original text. At the very least, here is an admission that by this time, the chanting of kol nidre was considered acceptable--if not normative--practice in Reform congregations.

The first volume of Solomon Freehof's book, Reform Jewish Practice and Its Rabbinic Background, published in 1944, preserves a picture of the overall norms in Reform synagogue practice at the time of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook. Freehof assumes that Reform congregations still do not observe Bar Mitzvah because the rite was associated with tefillin and aliyot, practices which were irrelevant in Reform Jewish life. He describes the modern Reform custom of Torah reading as a combination of the yearly cycle and of the Palestinian triennial cycle. As listed in the final section of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook, three selections from each sedra were coupled with three different Haftarah readings, [58] and Freehof indicates that most congregations would read the portions over three successive years. [59] Under the heading of "Bareheadedness", Freehof states unequivocally that "The congregation and the rabbi

worship with uncovered head." [60]

We have already noted, however, that many Reform congregations continued to hold Bar Mitzvah services, and this trend was to continue and become more widespread as the century wore on. And perhaps there were indeed congregants who wanted to wear kipot during services, for in 1955, a question was addressed to the Committee on Responsa regarding the propriety of using discarded practices in Reform services. At that time, the Committee issued a vigorous statement of opposition to the wearing of kipot, stating that "...we should think it an act of wilful and useless self-isolation when an American Jew chooses to make of the skull-cap an important symbol of Jewish piety." [61] But the fact that, in 1956, twenty-five percent of Reform rabbis reported wearing kipot during services, and that two out of three congregations permitted the wearing of the tallit and kipah at services, [62] may indicate that the practice of donning these traditional articles was beginning to resurface in Reform congregations.

A NEW UNION PRAYERBOOK

As was the case with the previous editions of the Union Prayerbook, within only twenty years, dissatisfaction with the siddur began to be expressed within the circles of the Reform rabbinate. However, in the late 1960's and 70's, the complaints struck at some of the principal foundations

underlying the composition and structure of the Union Prayerbook. The theology of the prayerbook, its treatment of the relationship between Hebrew and English, and its approach to the traditional structure of Shabbat and daily worship, along with its currency vis-a-vis the modern State of Israel, the rest of the Jewish world and the growing diversity within the Reform movement itself, were all causes of displeasure for many Reform rabbis and laymen.

Although the amount of Hebrew contained in the Union Prayerbook had increased with every new edition, the fact that Hebrew had become the living language of more than two million Jews living in Israel gave it still further importance and relevance in the decades following the establishment of the State. According to Jakob Petuchowski, already by the time of the Columbus Platform, the movement had "outgrown whatever theoretical objections the pioneers of Reform Judaism may have raised against the use of Hebrew." [63] He interpreted the fact that many Reform congregations were still conducting services largely in English as reflecting the faulty educational system of the Reform movement, and a laity which was unable to follow the Hebrew portions of the service. [64]

More than ever, "the importance of Hebrew in effecting Jewish unity despite ideological and geographical differences among the Jews of the world" [65] was being recognized by a Reform movement increasingly responsive to issues of Jewish unity. Louis J. Sigel, the rabbi of Temple

Emeth in Teaneck, New Jersey, proposed that "a book that purports to be a seder t'filot yisrael should not minimize that very tool which can make for a feeling of k'lal yisrael." [66] Likewise, Joseph Klein, the rabbi of Temple Emanuel, Worcester, Mass., wrote that "to have validity and meaning the Union Prayerbook must be basically a Hebrew prayer book with English translation rather than a vernacular creation with some Hebrew prayers thrown in for sentimental reasons." [67] Rabbi Dudley Weinberg, of Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, suggested that serious consideration be given to reversing the direction of the prayerbook, to make it open from right to left "as a sefer should." [68]

Aside from wanting more Hebrew in the prayerbook, some rabbis began voicing opposition to the tendency of the Union Prayerbook to present creative translations of Hebrew passages, translations which often distorted the true meaning of the original text. They felt that such mistranslations were meant to purposely mislead congregants as to the true meaning of the Hebrew, [69] and Klein went so far as view the mistranslations as "an impetuous kind of arrogance--as if to prove that we can do a better job of rendering prayers in English than the original authors were capable of doing in Hebrew." [70]

During the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, much discussion was devoted to the question of what further additions of traditional material should be included in the

next edition of a Union Prayerbook. Beryl D. Cohon, rabbi of Temple Sinai, Brookline, Mass., suggested the retranslation and restoration of the original Mishnah units of Pirke Avot, so that congregations could read as much or as little as they wished, particularly during the traditional period of reading Pirke Avot between Pesach and Shavuot. [71] Lawrence Hoffman proposed that new piyyutim be composed for the hakafot during Simchat Torah, which "...would draw on the traditional content--the blessings bestowed on the twelve tribes--but they would be couched in contemporary poetic idiom." [72] Dudley Weinberg favored the restoration of the birchot ha-shachar to all morning services, either in full or in part, as was done with the Newly Revised Yom Kippur morning service. [73] He also urged that the new prayerbook include a mincha liturgy for Sabbaths, festivals, and weekdays. [74] Weinberg even requested that an appropriate recasting of tachanun be restored to the liturgy, pointing out in an allusion to the Holocaust that "contemporary man has overwhelmingly experienced the sinfulness of which human nature is capable and needs a controlled opportunity for confession..." [75]

But while rabbis continued to voice their concerns about the Union Prayerbook's outdated theistic language, the use of the kaddish only as a death-prayer, the absence of divisions between the various sections of the service, and a variety of other issues, we should observe in retrospect that the laity may have been rather satisfied with the Newly

Revised Union Prayerbook. In Leonard Fein's extensive survey of U.A.H.C. membership, published in 1972, two-fifths of the respondents indicated that they "like[d] the services very much", and of the remainder, most were not dissatisfied, but neutral. Fein reports:

Indeed, in reviewing the responses regarding services, one is impressed at the low level of dissatisfaction. In rabbinic circles, and among intellectual critics, the typical Reform worship service comes in for more than its fair share of lumps. But here, though we find no great enthusiasm in endorsement, we find still less a massive groundswell of discontent. Is there too little participation in the service, as is so commonly alleged? Not in the view of eight to ten respondents. Should more Hebrew be used? Eighty-two percent find the present pattern about right. Even the Union Prayerbook, traditional target of much criticism, is endorsed in its present form by almost half of all respondents, and most of the rest think it could use relatively modest revision. Indeed, slightly over a third of our respondents find worship services 'inspiring', while only nine percent find them 'meaningless and dull.' [76]

Nonetheless, Lenn's study indicated that far less than one-half of the Reform rabbis reported using the Union Prayerbook without any changes or additions, and this led Lenn to conclude that "...it can easily be deduced that the Reform prayerbook is not meeting the complete needs of Reform rabbis and their congregations." [77] By 1973, Chaim Stern, who helped to write and edit the English Liberal movement's Service of the Heart, having returned to the United States to edit the New Union Prayerbook, had already sent out for critical appraisal the first half of Volume I, containing the services for Sabbath eves and mornings. [78] After three years of discussion and drafting, the report of the Committee on Liturgy from the 1975 C.C.A.R. convention

outlined the contents of the final form of the new prayerbook:

Gates of Prayer will now include an Introduction; an Index to psalms; a selection of meditations and readings; extracts from Pirkei Avot; weekday, Shabbat, and Festival services; prayers for special Sabbaths; five Orders for the Reading of the Torah; a service for Tish'a be-Av and Yom Hashoa; a service for Yom Ha-atzma-ut; a section of concluding prayers, in which are thirteen meditations before the Mourner's Kaddish; two Havdalah rituals; a service for the House of Mourning; a section of Special Themes; seventy songs and hymns; transliterations of a number of recurring passages. The volume will have eight hundred pages. [79]

A radical departure from the Union Prayerbook, the New Union Prayerbook, given the Hebrew/English title of Shaarei T'fillah/Gates of Prayer, was published by the Conference in 1975. Like earlier liturgies of the Reform movement, Gates of Prayer may be used as an accurate barometer of the condition and attitudes of American Reform Judaism of the day. According to Stern's introduction, the purpose of publishing a new liturgy was two-fold: First, to respond to the tremendous "material and intellectual changes" of most recent times, including historical events such as the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, and cultural issues such as the changing status of women in American society; and second, to unite in worship the vastly diversified American Reform movement. [80]

Regarding the first objective, the Gates of Prayer no doubt succeeded to a large measure in providing for the increasing traditionalism of the movement (as discussed below), and in capturing the contemporary sentiment of the

Jewish community living a generation after the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. But in no way did the Gates of Prayer unify the American Reform movement in worship. Rather, with its great variety of ritual and theological options, Gates of Prayer reflects the end of a common worship pattern in American Reform. Although it was created for the sake of unity, in the words of Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The unity it feigns is an artificial unity. It is the result of the workmanship of the bookbinder, not the product of a unity of hearts." [81]

When compared to the Union Prayerbook, the increased traditionalism of the Gates of Prayer is indeed striking. In his review for Conservative Judaism, Sefton Temkin remarked:

'Return to Tradition' is a hackneyed phrase where the recent development of Reform Judaism is concerned, but Gates of Prayer is a visible symbol of that change. No longer do islands of Hebrew survive in lonely isolation the onrush of English waves, but areas of reclaimed land confront the seas on a basis of equality; texts formerly discarded have been restored, and rituals are provided which an earlier generation had discarded. [82]

As Temkin has observed, the most striking visual element of Gates of Prayer is the uninhibited union of Hebrew and English as equal co-partners in the liturgy. The "mechitza" which has divided the two languages in previous Reform prayerbooks disappears in the face of symmetry and interchangeability.

In addition to providing substantially greater amounts

of Hebrew, Gates of Prayer also restores many traditional thematic elements in the Hebrew prayers which had been omitted or altered for theological reasons in previous Union Prayerbooks. In most of the versions of the amidah, mechayeh ha-kol has replaced the previous wording in Hebrew, noteyah b'tochenu chaye olam, as the alteration of the traditional form, mechayeh ha-metim. Yet in Gates of Prayer, mechayeh ha-metim reappears, albeit in only one example, in the service for Yom Ha-atzma-ut. [83] The traditional Ashkenazi version of the Haftarah blessings is provided in one of the Torah service rituals, [84] and likewise the traditional, particularistic form of alenu is the first of the four different versions of alenu from which to choose. [85] In fact, the only traditional theme which does not reappear in Gates of Prayer is the plea for the restoration of the sacrificial cult, for even the Davidic Messiah is present in the fully restored version of l'cha dodi, [86] in the song ani ma-amin, [87] and in the traditional Haftarah blessings previously mentioned.

In an article exploring Gates of Prayer from an historic, critical perspective, Eric J. Friedland, Associate Professor of Judaics at Wright State University, listed fourteen separate traditional items which had been absent, abbreviated, or substantially altered in the Union Prayerbook and which were reinstated in more than one service of Gates of Prayer: ha-ma'ariv aravim; hoda-ah, or modim with chatimah; closing retzeh with vetechezenah.

alternating with she-otechah levadechah beyirah na-avod as chatimah; most of ahavah rabbah (e.g., minus mikol am velashon, cf., however, attah vehartanu below); tzur yisrael for morning services; hashkivenu (both Ashkenazic and Sephardic renditions); vayechullu and veshamru; vezot ha-torah, along with hagbahah; birkat ha-chodesh; attah vechartanu in the Festival amidah; netilat lulav with its berachah (but no shehecheyanu); a fuller hallel with the introductory berachah; mikrah megillah; and havdalah. [88]

The formal divisions of the service which had been blurred in the Union Prayerbook are highly evident in Gates of Prayer, perhaps even more so than in a traditional siddur. The donning of tallit and tefillin--the very presence of which testifies to the changed attitude toward ritual and dress--emerges as a section distinct from the body of the weekday morning service. Similarly, the closing sections, aleynu and death/kaddish are physically removed from the preceding material regardless of the ritual being used, as was the arrangement in the Friday evening services in the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook. For the first time, the amidah is distinguished as a separate section of the service, and as printed in Gates of Prayer, it seems to have been sub-divided into three distinct parts: avot through kedushah (at which point the gloss advises the congregation to be seated), the remainder of the t'fillah, followed by a silent meditation.

The staunch universalism of the early Reform movement

is balanced in the new prayerbook with particularistic allusions, as evidenced by the traditional alenu, services for Yom Hashoah, Yom Ha-atzma-ut, and Tisha B'av, as well as by the inclusion of a number of meditations in remembrance of Jewish suffering and triumphs, and prayers on behalf of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. The contemporary ambition to allow for diverse ritual practice manifests itself in the options to wear tallit and tefillin during prayer, and in the service for the observance of havdalah. The companion volume, Gates of the House (published in 1977), will expose these same trends, even to the extent of including a ceremony of ushpizin for the home sukkah! [89]

THE NEW UNION HAGGADAH

The appearance of Gates of Prayer in 1975 did not mark the first publication which represented a radical departure from previous Reform documents. The same can be said for the new Reform Haggadah which was first published in 1974. The editor of A Passover Haggadah, Herbert Bronstein, admitted that the work was not meant as a revision of the previous Union Haggadah. "It is an attempt at renovatio ab origine," he wrote in the Preface, "a return to the creative beginning so as to bring forth what is utterly new from what was present in the old." [90] Similarly, Bronstein wrote in the C.C.A.R. Journal that "Indeed, one purpose (though not the only one) of this Haggadah is to allow the genius of the

original to speak to us again..." [91] Most of the rubrics of the traditional Haggadah do appear in A Passover Haggadah, even the passage enumerating the ten plagues, which was absent in the previous Union Haggadot.

As is the case with Gates of Prayer, the leader is given a great number of options and significant latitude as to the content of the seder, including the placement of the ceremonial eating of matzah and maror. Bronstein admits that the Haggadah is not intended to be read in its entirety at any one sitting. Rather, the basic text is interspersed with interpretive readings and songs from which the leader may choose "depending upon circumstance and mood."

Along with the inclusion of many previously discarded traditional materials, this new Haggadah also reflects the overall mood of American Reform by including directions for the week-long observance of the festival of Pesach. The introductory materials specify that "different foods, dishes, and utensils that should be set aside and used only during Passover, will recall the special sanctity of the time..." The suggestion that each family make a common decision as to the ritual practice to be observed emphasizes the importance of dietary restrictions during Pesach. A ceremony for bedikat chametz based on the traditional ritual is suggested in Gunther Plaut's introductory essay as a means of transforming the home into a "Passover sanctuary," and step-by-step instructions are included as follows:

By the morning of the Seder, the house must be ready for the Passover week and hametz removed from use. Thus, the rite of 'searching for the hametz' (a dramatic and even compelling experience, particularly for children) takes place on the night before the first Seder night. At various places in the home, a parent hides pieces of bread wrapped in paper. In the dark, the children, with flashlights or other illumination, search them out. They are gathered in a bag or paper container and are disposed of. Some follow the literal practice of burning hametz in the fireplace or outside. The disposal of the hametz is accompanied with this brief prayer:

Baruch atah adonai eloheynu melech haolam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al bi-ur chametz.

As we prepare for Passover, and observe the rite of the removal of hametz, leaven, we praise You, O God, who hallows our lives with commandments. [85]

SHABBAT OBSERVANCE AND LIFE CYCLE CEREMONIES

Along with Gates of Prayer and the New Union Haggadah, the shower of ritually-oriented publications by the C.C.A.R. in the 1970's included the creation and publication of Tadrich L'Shabbat: A Shabbat Manual. In 1966, the Committee on the Sabbath reported that it had been able to come up with many questions, but few answers to the problem of recovering Shabbat observance as a meaningful part of Reform religious life. The Conference began a pilot program at a dozen congregations in an effort to "strengthen the meaning of the Sabbath for our laymen." [93] The effort culminated in 1972 with the publication of the Tadrich, which was intended as "a major attempt of the Reform rabbinate to deal directly with Reform Halachah in specific form, with guidelines responsive to the needs and realities of Diaspora life." [94]

The Tadrich proposed that purposeful goals of Jewish

activity on Shabbat should be to "reflect upon the marvel of the universe which God has created," to "remind us of our historic commitment to freedom and justice," to "deepen the unique historic fellowship of the Jewish people," to enhance personal life with kedushah, menucha, and oneg, and to create a "foundation for human reconciliation." [95]

The Tadrich provides a listing of "What to Do (Mitzvot Aseh).\" Included in this list is the duty for family preparation for Shabbat, lighting of Shabbat candles with the appropriate blessing, recitation or chanting of kiddush, blessings before and following the meal, joining a congregation for worship, maintaining the quality of Shabbat throughout Saturday afternoon, and reciting havdalah. Also provided is a catalogue of "What Not to Do (Mitzvot Lo Ta'aseh).\" This list forbids engaging in gainful employment, performing mundane housework, shopping (except in an emergency), participating in public, social events, and participating in "all public activity which violates or gives the appearance of violating shemirat shabbat." The catalogue concludes with the admonition: "As Israel preserves the Shabbat, so the Shabbat preserves Israel." [96]

The Tadrich encourages the reader to begin with any mitzvah, and to make Shabbat more meaningful, "observe as much as you can." [97] Here then is a fine example of how the Reform movement, having failed to save "the spirit of Shabbat" by shifting Shabbat to Sunday, or by persuading

businessmen from the pulpit to keep their establishments closed on Saturday, or by composing lofty liturgy to complement impressive musical arrangements, changed their emphasis to a mitzvah-system of practice and behavior. The Tadrich L'Shabbat was another illustration of the attempt to introduce the notion of obligation as a central component of Reform Jewish life in the last half of the twentieth century.

As noted above, by time of the publication of Reform Jewish Practice and Its Rabbinic Background, Solomon Freehof assumed that the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah was not being observed in Reform congregations because Bar Mitzvah was associated with tefillin and aliyot, issues not relevant in the Reform community setting. But the steady reemergence of Bar Mitzvah in Reform congregations could be neither disregarded nor stemmed by those Reform rabbis who continued to be opposed. Albert S. Goldstein published an article in the October, 1953 C.C.A.R. Journal entitled "Let's Bar Bar Mitzvah," in which he argued that Bar Mitzvah in a Reform synagogue represented a concession to the superficial sentimentality of those members who were raised in more traditional settings. [98] Bernard Martin, the rabbi of Mt. Zion Hebrew Congregation in St. Paul, concurred with Goldstein that the rationale behind the early Reformers' negative attitude towards Bar Mitzvah was still valid. Martin went on to propose that Bar Mitzvah tended to weaken rather than to strengthen the institution of Confirmation.

[99] The Responsa Committee in a 1954 report agreed with Goldstein and Martin that the rite was simply nostalgic, "devoid of substance," but submitted nonetheless that the interest in the Hebrew language which might come from Bar Mitzvah preparation was a positive by-product of the trend. [100]

By 1960, the acceptance of Bar Mitzvah as a viable option for Reform families had clearly become the norm. Doppelt and Polish's Guide for Reform Jewish Practice suggests that a child may mark the occasion of becoming an active participant in congregational life through the ceremony of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, provided that the student complete specific requirements of Hebrew and religious school. [101]. Similarly, the Revised Edition of the C.C.A.R. Rabbi's Manual, published in 1961, admitted that, "for reasons of historical association," some Reform synagogues continue the Bar Mitzvah rite in addition to Confirmation. [102] In fact, a survey completed in May, 1960, revealed that the percentage was far greater than the Manual would lead one to believe. Out of 336 rabbis who responded to the survey, 324, or 96.4 percent reported having Bar Mitzvah in their synagogues. [103] In discussing the results of their survey, Benjamin Efron and Alvan D. Rubin conclude that "no one writing about Reform Judaism today can say, if he studies the available figures, that the Reform movement has eliminated Bar Mitzvah. One can only say that it is practiced in all the regions of the country,

whether we will it or not." [104]

Bial's work of 1967, Liberal Judaism at Home, devotes several pages to the history, service, and current meanings of Bar Mitzvah, testifying to the widespread acceptance of the custom. [105] Voicing the arguments of what had become a majority opinion, Jack Stern, Jr. pleaded the case for Bar Mitzvah in Reform Synagogues in a 1962 C.C.A.R. symposium. He agreed with the detractors that the impetus to recover Bar Mitzvah derived from the demand of those of traditional backgrounds who were newcomers to the movement, as well as from the internal re-appraisal of the earlier anti-ceremonial attitude. He suggested that despite its impressiveness, Confirmation was a poor substitute for Bar Mitzvah, for while Confirmation was a group experience, Bar Mitzvah was a celebration of the uniqueness of the individual. And even though modern social realities were contrary to the statement "today I am a man," the sexual and biological validity of Bar Mitzvah at age thirteen remained vital. Stern reasoned:

Our faith has tried to endow every significant life experience with a measure of Kedusha, and a sense of identity with the am kadosh. Soon after birth we speak of Torah, chupah, uma-asim tovim. At marriage we say harei at mekudeshet li. At death we say vitgadal veyitkadash. At the threshold of maturity should we then be silent--when we could have so much to say? [106]

The return of Bar Mitzvah and the concurrent introduction of Bat Mitzvah as a fundamental life-cycle event in American Reform did not necessarily coincide with a

recovery of aliyot to the Torah or of the widespread return to the use of tefillin. As they had been for the early Reformers, these issues remained largely obsolete through the middle of the 1970's for most Reform congregations. Rather, the return of Bar Mitzvah can be attributed to several causes: nostalgia for an increasingly distant, distinctively Jewish past and an attempt to link with that past, a longing for continuity between the generations, and the ability to invest old ceremonies with modern meanings.

These causes were behind the recovery of many traditional rites during the latter half of the twentieth century, for example, the use of the huppah and the breaking of a glass during a wedding ceremony. Freehof stated in 1944 that a huppah or similar canopy of flowers may have been used at elaborate weddings, but that at small weddings, it was dispensed with entirely, along with the long-discarded custom of breaking a glass. [107] The Committee on Responsa also dismissed the breaking of a glass, stating that "the crude dramatic performance tends to distract rather than to inspire, to mar rather than to enhance the impressiveness of the occasion." [108] Doppelt and Polish agreed that the breaking of a glass had no religious significance and should be discouraged. But they suggested that the huppah could be spiritually meaningful--not as a symbol of the marriage chamber in which the couple would consummate the legal act--but as a symbol for the centrality of the Jewish home. [109]

Similarly, new meanings for the breaking of the glass allowed for the return of this custom as well. Ignoring its superstitious origins, modern couples came to understand the custom in terms of its symbolizing the need to repair a fragmented society, or as representing of the fragility of the marital bond, or as a reminder of the link between the couple and the Jewish people in times of joy as well as sadness. [110]

Here was another area of Jewish life where the laity appeared to be more eager than the rabbis to include these traditional practices. The Brotherhood survey of 1953 reported that twenty-four percent of the laymen--four times the number of rabbis!--would insist upon a huppah for a wedding ceremony, and the forty percent of the laymen who would ask that a glass be broken compared with only twenty percent of the rabbis who expected it to be done. [111] By the time of the Lenn report of 1972, only two percent of the C.C.A.R. rabbis still refused to permit the use of a huppah, perhaps on the grounds that, as a symbol of the groom's acquisition of the bride, it was contrary to the principle of the woman's equality. Only six percent of the rabbis would still not allow the breaking of a glass. Meanwhile one out of four Reform rabbis would have required the use of both huppah and glass-breaking, while the majority response was to leave the decision to the bride and groom. [112]

Nonetheless, the simple desire for greater ceremony in religious life continued to lead rabbis and congregants to

adopt traditional customs at face value, with little or no alteration in meaning proposed. Pidyon ha-ben, which is not mentioned in Freehof's Reform Jewish Practice, having been replaced by the participation of all children in a synagogue naming ceremony, was revived by some Reform Jews in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In addition to the traditional ceremony, a variation of the original ceremony also appeared, called Kidush Peter Rechem, the Sanctification of the First-born Child, which was intended for all first-born children, regardless of the sex of the child. [113] Similar then to the introduction of Bat Mitzvah, Kidush Peter Rechem came about as something of a hybrid: a traditional ceremony which reflected a modern, egalitarian ethic. A further example of this can be seen in the ceremony appearing in the 1977 publication, Gates of the House, entitled "Brit Chayyim", an eighth-day ceremony for baby girls modeled after brit milah. [114]

THE CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE OF 1976

As Reform Judaism entered the 1970's, the feeling once again began to spread that the time was ripe for a new statement of principles. Because the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the U.A.H.C. was to be celebrated in 1973, and two years later, H.U.C. - J.I.R. would also celebrate its centenary, it seemed to be an appropriate time to produce such a comprehensive statement which would

embody the major changes which had occurred in the movement since the Columbus Platform of 1937. In 1972, the Committee on Guiding Principles reported agreement on certain issues, including the commitment to "make specific recommendations which will throw us once again back into the arena of Halacha." [115] But by the time of the Union centennial convention in 1973, little had been accomplished, and with the work still uncompleted for the College's celebration of 1975, the committee ceased to function. [116]

By the time of the 1975 convention in Cincinnati, the diversity within the movement had led to internal dissension of crisis proportions. Fueled by the decision of the Conference two years earlier calling upon Reform rabbis to refrain from performing intermarriages, the discord had risen to a level of intensity that threatened to split the movement. [117] In his President's report of 1975, Robert Kahn commented that "this mood of passionately expressed differences reminds me of the stormy debates of a century ago, when Reform and Orthodox leaders spoke and wrote of each other in terms of violent disagreement." [118] Kahn stressed the need for an "affirmation of the principles of Reform Judaism" which could testify to the unity of the movement. [119] The ad hoc Committee on the President's Message was appointed in November, 1975. It consisted of ten rabbis under the chairmanship of Eugene B. Borowitz, Professor of Education and Jewish Religious Thought at H.U.C. - J.I.R. The committee held three working meetings

in January, February and April of 1976, and following each session, sent drafts to members of the Conference for comments and suggestions. The document was presented before the Conference in San Francisco on June 24, 1976, and following a brief discussion, the Centenary Perspective carried the approval of approximately eighty percent of those assembled. [120] (See Appendix "C")

Borowitz characterizes the document as "rigorously dialectical." [121] It attempts to retain the "individual-ethical-universal theme" of the earlier Reform movement, and in addition, it is also concerned with the "communal-traditional-particular side of being a Jew." [122] The Centenary Perspective as well as the Reform movement struggled to balance these two sets of commitments; hence Borowitz's characterization of the Perspective as dialectical.

The Perspective describes many of the differences between earlier generations of Reform and the present one. The impact of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel are mentioned throughout the document as experiences which changed the outlook of the movement. The value of Jewish survival is placed at a premium, and despite the attempt to balance universal and particular obligations, the shift from universalism to particularism in the movement is very evident. No reference is made to the mission of Israel, rather, "The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth..."

The Perspective's approach to tradition bears no similarity to the stance of disaffirmation so characteristic of the Pittsburgh Platform; rather, it accentuates the positive approach of 1937, adding to it renewed emphasis upon ritual obligation:

The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; life-long study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogue and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.

The ultimate source of the commandments is left intentionally vague, yet the Perspective equates the demand for ethical conduct with the other aspects of religious life such as home study, public and private devotion, life-cycle events, holiday observance, and participation in Jewish communal life. Religious inspiration is no longer the purpose behind the observance of Jewish rituals and participation in religious ceremony; rather, it is the "survival of the Jewish people." The emphasis on particularism demands that the Reform Jew explore his or her tradition, and encourages personal expressions of ethnic ties and cultural inheritance. These obligations are given as broad areas of practice, and the autonomy of the individual, engendered by Reform Judaism, allows for a

variety of responses to tradition within each area.

The adoption of the Centenary Perspective by the C.C.A.R. just one decade ago did not mark any sort of turning-point in the development of American Reform. Although the stated objective of the Perspective was to record the sense of unity within the Reform movement, the characteristic disunity of American Reform is every bit as evident today as it was in 1976. Still, the variety of publications, such as the new machzor, Gates of Repentance, and the guides for holidays and life-cycle ceremonies which the movement has produced during the years since the Centenary Perspective, bear witness to the ongoing concern within American Reform to provide its constituency with a wide array of ceremonial options for home and synagogue, some traditional and others innovative. Reform Judaism continues to incorporate discarded traditions in the various arenas of Jewish life as a means to personal enrichment and historical continuity, and to insure the ongoing survival of the Jewish people.

CHAPTER SIX
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE--1938-1976

BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION

For the individual Reform congregation, as was the case in the movement as a whole, the period between the Columbus Platform and the Centenary Perspective was characterized by the steady introduction of previously abandoned traditions. This generalization held true for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation as well, however to a somewhat lesser extent, in that the congregation, in the late 1930's, still retained a more traditional stance than most. Perhaps this fact is most clearly substantiated by the reluctance of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation to switch their Friday evening service from 5:30 p.m. to a later time, as was the general custom in American Reform congregations. In response to a questionnaire sent to the membership regarding worship services, the most popular response (77 out of 193) indicated a desire to hold the late Friday evening service. Only a slightly smaller percentage (68 out of the 193) wanted to maintain the 5:30 service, and it should be noted that these were mainly the "older members," (who we might expect to prefer the maintenance of the status quo). [1] Even fewer congregants indicated a preference for Sunday services. At the end of the year, the Board discussed the possibility of instituting a four-month trial period for the late service,

to begin following the High Holidays in the fall. [2] However the experiment never came about, and in October 1939, the Board adopted the recommendation of the Divine Service Committee to retain the 5:30 service on Friday evening, but to add a ten-minute sermon and to have a somewhat more flexible ritual. [3]

On certain, special occasions in the life of the congregation, services were moved to the later time. One such example was a late-evening service on October 1, 1937, when Rabbi Morris Lieberman was installed as Associate Rabbi. [4] He had come to the congregation in 1937 following one year of teaching at the Hebrew Union College and a short term as rabbi of Congregation Emanuel in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Another late-evening service was the Special Anniversary Service held on Friday evening, January 26, 1940 at 8:30, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rabbi Lazon's association with the congregation. [5]

The complete move to a late Friday evening service began in the Fall of 1945, [6] when the later services were held on the Shabbat following Simchat Torah and so they continued through Passover. A few years later, they were continued until after Shavuot. [7] Beginning in 1955, the 8:15 service had become so successful that it became the practice year-round, and the early service was discontinued entirely. [8]

Although the congregation continued to utilize the

Conference liturgy, rapidly making the switch to the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook, with regard to adopting the practice of late-evening services on Erev Shabbat, Baltimore Hebrew lagged behind the majority of Reform congregations. No doubt that the traditional roots of the congregation, still comparatively undisturbed due to the transplanting of the more radical off-shoots, delayed the erosion of certain communal traditions. But those roots may also explain why, in certain cases, the congregation anticipated the increasing traditionalist tendencies of the Conference liturgy. One example of such anticipation was the ceremony for the Procession of the Scrolls on Simchat Torah, as described in Chapter Four, which did not appear in the Conference liturgy until the publication of the Newly Revised Union Prayerbook. Likewise, the kiddush was introduced on Friday evening services as early as 1938, [9] and the chanting of kol nidre was deemed important enough that, in 1962, the Divine Service committee printed the kol nidre text on a separate page, and inserted it in the prayerbooks. [10] No C.C.A.R. liturgy would include the text of kol nidre until the publication of Gates of Repentance in 1978.

In 1948, Rabbi Lieberman introduced an expanded "kaddish service" in which the congregation gave Hebrew and English responses, and he also began a program by which to teach the congregation how to chant the appropriate kiddush melody along with the cantor on Friday evenings. [11] This

effort was part of Lieberman's large-scale campaign to encourage greater congregational participation in the services, including the congregational singing of hymns and the promotion of greater fluency in prayerbook Hebrew. [12] To help facilitate this goal, he successfully argued for the purchase of Union Hymnals "to be used in the Temple for congregational singing as a regular part of our service," [13] and Bibles for the pews "to enable the congregation to follow the Haftorah readings." [14]

In 1950, Rabbi Lieberman introduced a home service for the observance of the Yahrtzeit, [15] and during his many years as Senior Rabbi of the congregation (1946-1970), he continued to encourage greater religious practice on the part of his congregants. He was among the group of C.C.A.R. rabbis who felt the need for a uniform code of practice for Reform Jews, and he made his views known to his congregants. [16] The congregational minutes from March 3, 1952 record his suggestion for a "Religious Emphasis Campaign" in terms of an internal missionary effort. His suggestion was that a group of people be trained as leaders who would work within the congregation "to develop wider interest in Temple attendance, home observances, and all religious aspects of Jewish life." [17]

We noted in Chapter Four that, unlike many Reform congregations, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation never abandoned the practice of Bar Mitzvah, even while incorporating Confirmation into the life-cycle of its members. In the

academic year 1937-38, there were fewer than a half-dozen Bar Mitzvah celebrations in the congregation, yet considering that the Confirmation class that year had eleven members, [18] it would seem that many of the eligible boys were taking part in the traditional ceremony. As the congregation grew steadily, especially in the early 1950's, so did the number of Bar Mitzvah celebrations. In January of 1957, the President reported that the religious school that year boasted an enrollment of almost 1200 pupils. He added that "the weekday Hebrew classes have shown an unprecedented increase in attendance indicating an awareness of the educational values of Hebrew. The requirements and standards for Bar Mitzvah have been raised to a high level in an effort to make the ritual a meaningful religious experience." [19] The congregation announced that beginning in June, 1955, it would no longer be possible to hold only one Bar Mitzvah per Shabbat, the demand being so great. [20]

Apparently, Bar Mitzvah began to have a pre-emptive effect on Confirmation, as students completing the Bar Mitzvah program would often withdraw from the Religious School prior to Confirmation. A lengthy article in the Bulletin of November 10, 1961 stressed the centrality of Confirmation in the ritual life of the congregation:

The main goal and objective for both boys and girls in our Religious School is the achievement of Confirmation at the end of the tenth grade. Whenever parents wish to have their son brought to the altar for the Bar Mitzvah ritual, it is with the understanding that the first commitment arising out of the occasion is the continuation of attendance in Religious School

through Confirmation. [21]

The increasing participation in religious life on the part of the laity continued into the 1960's. In 1963, the Brotherhood instituted a weekday evening worship service conducted by its members. [22] At that time, there were only about twenty Reform congregations in the country which were holding daily services, [23] so once again, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation emerged as a forerunner of the movement. Along similar lines, the congregation instituted a Music and Meditation service for the afternoon of Yom Kippur "in order to fill a long-felt need for continuous worship on an adult level." [24]

In the decade of the 70's, the congregation continued to take on both new and traditional rituals and modes of worship under the rabbinic leadership of Rabbi David S. Goldstein, who began serving Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in August, 1968, after three years of service as a Navy Chaplain, and Rabbi Herbert N. Brockman, who was hired in July, 1970, immediately following his Ordination. [25] The New Union Haggadah was adopted for use at the congregational Passover seder in 1974, [26] and workshops were offered the following year to familiarize congregants with its contents, and to teach them how to use it effectively in their own homes. [27] Monthly havdalah ceremonies were introduced in 1969 for the young children, in which "a special Sabbath story is told, Havdolah hymns are taught, and sweets distributed." [28] In 1972, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

was chosen as one of eighteen congregations to test and report on Gates of Prayer, [29] and in 1975, the new prayerbook was purchased for congregational use. [30]

We can see, therefore, in the years immediately following the Columbus Platform, how Baltimore Hebrew Congregation still remained somewhat more inclined to incorporate traditional elements in the ceremonial life of the congregation than most Reform congregations. The reluctance to surrender long-standing communal traditions, such as the 5:30 p.m. Friday evening service, was balanced by the desire to incorporate traditional rituals into the life of their modern congregation. This inclination ultimately placed Baltimore Hebrew Congregation at the forefront of the movement towards greater traditionalism in Reform life, which gained momentum throughout the decades preceding the Centennary Perspective of 1976.

UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATION (Terre Haute, IN)

During the years following the adoption of the Columbus Platform by the C.C.A.R., the United Hebrew Congregation continued to function successfully as a merger between Orthodox and Reform groups, with the party from Temple Israel deviating little from the mainstream of Classical Reform. So, for example, while the Orthodox B'nai Abraham would have two days of Rosh Hashanah, and would continue to observe traditions such as tashlich, Temple Israel

nonetheless observed only one day holidays and did not participate in tashlich. [31] For the rabbi of the congregation, the need to serve a dual-role as rabbi to both groups proved to be a complex task, and as we shall see, it tended to affect Temple Israel's recovering of traditional practices during the decades between the Columbus Platform and the Centenary Perspective. The complexity of the job as rabbi of this unique congregation was expressed in this extract from the congregational President's letter to incoming rabbi, Leonard J. Mervis, who was completing service at Temple Beth-El, Pensacola, Florida:

We were very pleased to receive your letter...expressing confidence in your ability to meet the requirements of our community, both Reformed and Conservative, and to supervise and conduct the Sunday School and also the Talmud Torah, in spite of the fact that we all tried to make it seem as difficult to you as possible. [32]

In the previous chapter, we noticed how the Reform movement was profoundly affected by the incoming population of Eastern European, traditionally-raised congregants. As the United Hebrew congregation grew to more than five hundred members in the early 1950's, similar forces may have been shaping the religious complexion of Temple Israel. Although the traditional group attracted its share of new members, according to the President's Message of 1952, the overwhelming majority of those who attended the Orthodox services on the High Holidays felt more at home at Temple during the remainder of the Jewish year. [33] An

unspecified committee report from 1955 described the situation in which the members of both contingents participated in the religious life of the other:

When we worship in the synagogue, our heads are covered; when we worship in the Temple, almost all of us uncover.... We observe a more rigid form of Kashruth here and a less rigid form in the Temple. What we have achieved is purely American in its stress upon practical and harmonious cooperation rather than upon the adjustment of irreconcilable theologies.... Children of Reform families learn something at first hand of the usages of traditional Judaism, and children of traditional families come to appreciate something of the newer ways. [34]

Temple Israel continued to utilize the Union Prayerbook, and to incorporate the innovative and traditional rituals found therein. So in the autumn of 1949, Temple Israel held a Consecration and Harvest service, and a few years later, they added a kiddush and candle-lighting ceremony to the Friday evening service. [35] Temple Israel also had reintroduced the chanting of kol nidre by 1953. [36]

While the custom of Bar Mitzvah had continued unbroken in the traditional camp, the practice returned to Temple Israel's pulpit in the late 1950's. A Hebrew program was instituted at the Sunday School in the fall of 1950, [37] and the study of Hebrew became mandatory for children in the sixth grade and up who had no previous Hebrew training. [38] The first mention of Bar Mitzvah for the children of Temple Israel can be found in the rabbi's annual report of 1957, when the current rabbi, David Raab, noted that several Bar Mitzvahs had been held both at Temple Israel and at B'nai

Abraham. [39] The president's report of the following year reported three Bar Mitzvahs which were to take place in 1958. [40] That same year, a separate class was added to the expanding Hebrew school "for the boys whose parents desire a Bar Mitzvah ceremony." [41] In 1959, the Board of Temple Israel unanimously approved the institution of Bat Mitzvah ceremonies for qualified girls. [42]

In the early 1960's the Reform congregation instituted several changes in their worship practices. In 1962, the Pulpit committee reported on several "improvements" made over the previous year, including "the wearing of the pulpit hat and talis by the Rabbi and the optional dress in like manner by our congregants." [43] Of particular interest is an article which appeared in the January 27, 1963 issue of the Terre Haute Star Tribune entitled "A Day in the Life of a Clergyman." The current rabbi of United Hebrew, Bernard Cohen, was there pictured conducting services in a pulpit cap, robe, and tallit. He is also shown giving Bar Mitzvah instructions to a student who is also wearing a kipa and tallit.

A steady decrease in membership in the late 1950's and early 1960's forced the congregation to institute joint worship services between the progressive and the traditional factions. The congregation was suffering from an exodus of the youth seeking professional options in larger communities. [44] In 1961, the combined membership of United Hebrew had dropped to only 169 members, down from 220

the year prior. [45] Of the total membership, only fifteen men and women between the ages of twenty and forty years belonged to the congregation, with sixty-six members older than sixty years.

A United Religious Service Committee was appointed by the president in March, 1962, in an effort to establish a form of service acceptable to most of the community, for with membership dwindling, separate services were becoming less and less feasible, and the building of B'nai Abraham could no longer be afforded by the congregation. The recommendations of the committee were approved by the board, and while adopted out of necessity, they became a crucial factor behind further returns to tradition for Temple Israel. Along with the reiteration of the policy that the rabbi always wear head-covering and tallit during services, the policy that the wearing of kipot and tallitot be optional for congregants was reestablished. In addition, morning services were held on Mondays, Thursday and Saturdays, while the late Friday evening service was also maintained. The policy became that all Bar and Bat Mitzvahs were held on Shabbat mornings, and that religious services were held on the precise date of the festivals.

This blending of the traditional congregation with the Reform produced the form of worship which still remains in United Hebrew Congregation. The majority of members practiced according to the Reform style, as evidenced by the small number of men who opted for the wearing of kipot

during services. [46] Still, the congregation returned to the two-day observance of Rosh Hashanah and other holidays and incorporated more Hebrew in the service, as further gestures for the sake of "sh'lom bayit."

CONGREGATION B'NAI B'RITH (WILSHIRE BLVD. TEMPLE)

In Chapter Four, we noted how Wilshire Blvd. Temple, comparatively early in the century, reintroduced Bar Mitzvah, the blowing of the shofar, and a greater amount of Hebrew in the ritual of the congregation. Exploiting much of the authority to dictate ritual matters won by his predecessors, Rabbi Magnin felt that these changes were in accordance with the spirit of Reform Judaism, and hence belonged in the Temple. But as American Reform congregations continued to add once discarded rituals to their services, and to emphasize the ethnic components of Jewish life, Magnin remained firm in his understanding of what was proper for Reform Judaism. He believed that the Reform movement was in a period of confusion and lack of direction, and that most temples suffered from an inability to define themselves. [47] Magnin claimed that "there should be one real Reform Temple," [48] and Wilshire Blvd. Temple was to be that Temple for those who desired authentic Reform Judaism. Hence, despite the returns to tradition in the early part of the century, very little change whatsoever was evident between 1937 and 1976.

Magnin felt that the transformation of Reform in America was simply a result of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. He commented:

I think since the so-called holocaust, there's been a lot of this sort of reaction, back to at least if not Conservative practice, Conservative feeling. It's been the result partly of Israel and partly of the tragedy in Germany, but I personally feel that we should use common sense and be human about all these things.... I'm sick and tired of this overemphasis on the ethnic. It's overdone, and it's caused violence, and hatred, and everything else, and so I don't like it; and that doesn't mean we have to assimilate and try to be like everybody else. We should try to be like ourselves whatever we are in this world. [49]

It is thus no surprise that the wearing of kipah and tallit never returned to Wilshire Blvd. Temple, and those who wanted to wear them were made to feel uncomfortable doing so. For Magnin, the kipah was a remnant of "ghettoism," and he stated that the "yarmulka comes from Poland to Brooklyn to LA. It's Brooklynese and Polish. Since the founding of the State of Israel, it's become kind of a badge to some Jews." [50] Likewise, little Hebrew was added to the fundamental elements of the worship service, which for Magnin were the barechu, the shema, the mi-chamocha, the adoration, the kaddish, and the kiddush. [51]

New liturgies published by the C.C.A.R. had little impact on the practices of Wilshire Blvd. Temple, and even when Gates of Prayer was introduced, Magnin expressed little interest. He felt that the major problem with the Union Prayerbook was that few knew how to read it aloud properly,

and that the younger rabbis lacked the voice training which equipped them for correct pulpit reading. [52] Instead of adopting a new prayerbook, Magnin would simply make emendations in the Union Prayerbook, especially in passages which he felt were typical of the "third-rate poetry" of the first period of Reform Judaism. [53] "You don't need another prayerbook," he insisted. "You have to know how to read the old one, and add or subtract or leave it alone. Now, they're going to spend a fortune and get a prayerbook that isn't worth reading. Really, it's terrible." [54] The Gates of Prayer was not introduced at Wilshire Boulevard Temple during the lifetime of Rabbi Magnin.

As was the case in Baltimore and Terre Haute, Bar Mitzvah became increasingly popular at Wilshire Blvd. Temple. In 1949, the congregation instituted a weekly hour of Bar Mitzvah training for eleven to thirteen-year olds [55], and ten years later, the President of Wilshire Blvd. Temple reported that "...our Bar Mitsvo and Bas Mitsvo program has grown now to the point where we will have one or two children participating in this sacred service for the next two years..." [56] In 1960, there were one or two Bar Mitzvahs observed each week, and the Temple Bulletin carried photographs and short biographies of the children to promote the event. In 1976, there were 90 Bar Mitzvah candidates, with 175 projected for 1977! [57]

In terms of Festival celebrations, again there was little change or innovation. Perhaps because the congre-

gational seder, a service on the Eve of Shemini Atzeret, and a yizkor on the last day of Pesach had existed in the congregation since the 1930's, they felt little need for additional holiday events. And as the Jewish community of Los Angeles grew during the 1950's and 60's, other Reform congregations, such as Temple Israel of Hollywood, Temple Isaiah, Leo Baeck Temple, and the University Synagogue offered a wide variety of Reform expressions for the newly arrived Angelino. In other words, even as the presence of local alternatives may have stabilized Baltimore Hebrew Congregation on its course of greater traditionalism, the growing number of newer congregations allowed the membership of Wilshire Blvd. Temple to continue as a force for a Classical Reform Judaism, shaped by the impressive figure of Edgar F. Magnin.

CONCLUSION

The tendency of the Reform movement in America to reclaim abandoned traditional practices did not begin simply as a product of late-twentieth century, post-Holocaust romanticism. The process of return to tradition began not long after the ink was dry on the Pittsburgh Platform itself. Although the radical faction of the early Reform movement, upheld by rabbis such as Kohler, Berkowitz, Krauskopf, and Hirsch, emerged victorious in the adoption of the Platform, this radical sway appears to have halted by the time that the C.C.A.R. voted against changing the Weekday Service in the Union Prayerbook to a Sunday Service in 1914.

In the early decades after the turn of the century, the complaint was often sounded against the cold formality of Reform religious life. By the 1920's and 1930's, the desire to infuse greater warmth and color into the ritual life of Reform congregations was one of the major factors in the reinstatement of previously discarded traditions. This was the major motivation behind some of the alterations in the Revised Union Haggadah of 1923, which put back into the seder service some of the playful, poetic, and symbolic elements which the editors of the earlier version had considered to be distractions from the proper mood of devotion. The impulse to recover some of the pageantry

which had been absent in Reform synagogues led to innovative holiday celebrations such as the Harvest Festival and Consecration. Such creative celebrations must be viewed in terms of a return to ceremonialism, for which traditional practices were simply among the options. At the same time, the preference for greater congregational participation in services and ceremonies was accommodated by these new festivities, and the first revision of the Union Prayerbook in 1918 also encouraged greater congregational participation through the incorporation of unison and responsive readings.

But it was the changing composition of American Jewry, including the Reform constituency, which must be seen as the major impulse behind the re-establishment of discarded traditional practices. The Reform community in America reacted in two different ways to the massive influx of Eastern European immigrants which began in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. One reaction was the attempt to convert the newcomers to the principles of Reform Judaism, and to establish boundaries between their style of Judaism and the proper expressions of American Judaism. But clearly, the exposure to the immigrant perspective deepened the Jewish consciousness of the Reform community, making Reform Jews more aware of their heritage and of their accountability to the non-Reform Jewish world. In addition, as the twentieth century unfolded, many Jews of Eastern European descent joined Reform congregations, so that by the beginning of the 1930's, almost one-half of the movement's

membership claimed Eastern European ancestry. Therefore, some of the recovered traditions of the Revised Union Prayerbook, such as the increased use of Hebrew, the return to a more traditional schedule of weekly Torah portions, and the consideration of special Shabbatot during the year, such as Shabbat Shuvah, Chol Ha-moed Pesach, and Shabbat Zachor, reflected the desire of the Reform rabbinate to rekindle a sensitivity to the flow of the Jewish calendar and to harmonize their congregational activities with the larger community of Israel.

Leaders of the movement such as Samuel S. Cohon, who was himself born in Russia and raised in a traditional atmosphere, advocated placing increased emphasis on recovering traditional practices. He supported the expanded use of Hebrew in services and a greater concern for the value of k'lal yisrael. Many lay members shared Cohon's concerns, for in 1937 the U.A.H.C. passed a resolution calling for a return to many of the traditional symbols, ceremonies and customs which had been forsaken by Reform. Despite the frequent objections coming from the rabbis of the Conference, congregations continued to hold Bar Mitzvahs, even in places where the custom of Confirmation was firmly established.

The Guiding Principles of 1937 reflect many of these new perspectives which had developed in the changing Reform movement. The Columbus Platform shows a renewed interest in ceremonial observance and the desire to remedy the perceived

failures of the Reform system of religious education. The Platform differed from the Pittsburgh document mainly in its emphasis on Jewish obligations beyond the realm of morality. Reform Jews were called upon to adapt the teachings of Torah in their own era, to seek a broad, well-rounded Jewish education, to preserve the Sabbath and holydays, to aid in the rebuilding of Palestine as a center of Jewish cultural life, and to participate in the realms of public and private worship.

During the years prior to the Columbus Platform, the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation lagged somewhat behind most of the movement's congregations, as only slowly were the patterns of mainstream Reform accepted in Baltimore Hebrew. The more traditional leanings were due mainly to the constituency of the congregation, where a more radical stance was unable to gain a foothold due to the two liberal break-off congregations which were formed early in the history of Baltimore Hebrew. By the same token, as the Reform movement in America continued its return to greater traditionalism in the years following the Columbus Platform, Baltimore Hebrew preceded many other congregations by maintaining practices which other congregations had discarded, and by anticipating in its own congregational life returns to tradition which were to come only later to the movement as a whole.

Whereas in Baltimore the tendencies and make-up of the congregation's membership were the major factors determining

their approach to traditional practices, at the Wilshire Blvd. Temple, the inclination of the rabbis carried the greatest weight in causing or preventing returns to tradition. As the rabbis won complete authority over ritual matters by the turn of the century, some discarded traditional practices returned to the congregation quite early. But after these initial returns, especially those during the early years of Rabbi Magnin's tenure, little further change occurred, for by then Magnin had already shaped congregational practice to conform with his image of Reform Judaism. His congregants were quite satisfied, and the wide variety of Reform congregations in Los Angeles provided other options for those who may have wanted greater emphasis on traditional practice.

Temple Israel in Terre Haute was very much in the mainstream of Classical Reform prior to its merger with the Orthodox congregation and the formation of a United Hebrew Congregation. Following the merger, the members of the Reform faction changed along with the movement, but certain traditional elements entered their religious lives due to the ongoing exposure to their Orthodox co-congregants. The process gained greater momentum when the services themselves were merged in the 1960's, and so returns to discarded tradition were allowed and encouraged for the sake of sh'lo m'bayit.

The trend towards greater traditionalism and richer ceremonial expressions in the movement as a whole escalated

during the years following the Columbus Platform. Central among the forces behind this trend were the historical experiences of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. The Holocaust gave to American Jews a renewed determination, not just to survive, but to survive as Jews. The rise in particularistic expressions of Jewish ethnicity and culture was further stimulated by the varied influences of Israeli culture upon American Jewish life, as seen in the continued interest in Hebrew education, the increased presence of Jewish and Israeli folk-songs and dance, and the exposure to a wider variety of customs and practices from Jewish communities around the world. In addition, the contemporary society encouraged Americans to search out and identify with one's ethnic roots, and this held true for Jews as it did for black, Italian, and Japanese Americans. The problems of Americanization and social acceptance were no longer high on the agenda for the Jewish community in the middle to late twentieth century, and Reform Jews felt freer to search out traditions which, as second, third, and fourth-generation Reform Jews, they had never experienced or rejected.

The Centenary Perspective of 1976 emerged as an accurate description of the American Reform movement which was continuing to stress obligations in areas of ritual and study. No longer was religious inspiration the main purpose of Jewish practice. Rather, participation in the mitzvot of Shabbat, life-cycle events, communal study and prayer,

support for Israel, and private devotion, was primarily to ensure the survival of the Jewish people. Numerous guides for Reform practice were published during these years, including the Conference's own Shabbat Manual. Especially during the decades of the 40's and 50's, the ceremonial life of Reform congregations grew ever richer through the efforts of the Joint Committee on Ceremonies which produced ceremonial objects for home and synagogue, and which also issued a variety of leaflets to be used for special, thematic services, for innovative observances at congregational events, and for traditional ceremonies in the home.

The Newly Revised Edition of the Union Prayerbook (1940, 1945) played an important role in reintroducing traditional practices and encouraged the congregations to institute the lighting of Shabbat candles and the recitation of kiddush during Friday evening services. The Newly Revised edition also included a special Torah service for Simchat Torah based on the traditional hakafot with the scrolls, and a yizkor service for the seventh day of Pesach, which were intended both to bring back the abandoned customs and to increase synagogue attendance. Both volumes of the new prayerbook utilized a great deal more Hebrew in the services, and the High Holyday volume indicated the proper location for the chanting of kol nidre. The Gates of Prayer (1975) continued these trends by expanding the liturgy to include substantially more Hebrew as well as traditional

versions of many elements of the service not present in earlier Reform prayerbooks, such as the Haftarah blessings and the alenu. Gates of Prayer also provided blessings for the wearing of tallit and tefillin, netilat lulav, and havdalah.

The years between the Columbus Platform and the Centenary Perspective also witnessed the widespread return of Bar Mitzvah as a central event in the life-cycle of a Reform Jew; many rabbis and some congregants began to wear head-coverings and tallitot during worship. These restored practices indicate a nostalgia on the part of America's Jews and a longing for continuity between the present and an increasingly distant, yet distinctively Jewish past. The practices were successfully integrated into Reform life without sacrificing long-held Reform ideology because of the ability to redefine terms such as mitzvah, and to invest old symbols and ceremonies with new, modern interpretations.

During the decade which has elapsed since the Centenary Perspective, the trend towards the incorporation of discarded (or rediscovered) practices has not abated, and the trend will likely continue into the foreseeable future. The Conference publications are replete with innovative rituals, such as Pidyon Peter Rechem, Brit Banot, and a ceremony upon leaving for college, as well as traditional observances such as ushpizin, keriah, and the Tu Bishvat seder. The emphasis in today's ever more heterogeneous Reform movement is upon making informed choices from a wide

variety of ritual options as a means to enrich Jewish life
and to strengthen Jewish identification.

APPENDIX A

THE PITTSBURGH PLATFORM OF 1885

1. We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the infinite, and in every mode, source, or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the god-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers, in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended, midst continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation, this god-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.

2. We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as the priest of the one God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domain of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age, and at times clothing its conception of divine Providence and Justice dealing with man in miraculous narratives.

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palaestine, and to-day we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

5. We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

6. We recognize in Judaism a progressive religion,

ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason. We are convinced of the utmost necessity of preserving the historical identity with our great past. Christianity and Islam being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and therefore we extend the hand of fellowship to all who operate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

7. We reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul is immortal, grounding this belief on the divine nature of the human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism, the beliefs both in bodily resurrection and in Genenna and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward.

8. In full accordance with the spirit of Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.

APPENDIX B

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REFORM JUDAISM (Columbus, 1937)

In view of the changes that have taken place in the modern world and the consequent need of stating anew the teachings of Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis makes the following declaration of principles. It presents them not as a fixed creed but as a guide for the progressive elements of Jewry.

1. JUDAISM AND ITS FOUNDATIONS

1. Nature of Judaism. Judaism is the historical religious experience of the Jewish people. Though growing out of Jewish life, its message is universal, aiming at the union and perfection of mankind under the sovereignty of God. Reform Judaism recognizes the principle of progressive development in religion and consciously applies this principle to spiritual as well as to cultural and social life.

Judaism welcomes all truth, whether written in the pages of scripture or deciphered from the records of nature. The new discoveries of science, while replacing the older scientific views underlying our sacred literature, do not conflict with the essential spirit of religion as manifested in the consecration of man's will, heart and mind to the service of God and of humanity.

2. God. The heart of Judaism and its chief contribution to religion is the doctrine of the One, living God, who rules the world through law and love. In Him all existence has its creative source and mankind its ideal of conduct. Through transcending time and space, He is the indwelling Presence of the world. We worship Him as the Lord of the universe and as our merciful Father.

3. Man. Judaism affirms that man is created in the Divine image. His spirit is immortal. He is an active co-worker with God. As a child of God, he is endowed with moral freedom and is charged with the responsibility of overcoming evil and striving after ideal ends.

4. Torah. God reveals Himself not only in the majesty, beauty and orderliness of nature, but also in the vision and moral striving of the human spirit. Revelation is a continuous process, confined to no one group and to no one age. Yet the people of Israel, through its prophets and sages, achieved unique insight in the realm of religious truth. The Torah, both written and oral, enshrines Israel's

ever-growing consciousness of God and of the moral law. It preserves the historical precedents, sanctions and norms of Jewish life, and seeks to mould it in the patterns of goodness and of holiness. Being products of historical processes, certain of its laws have lost their binding force with the passing of the conditions that called them forth. But as a depository of permanent spiritual ideals, the Torah remains the dynamic source of the life of Israel. Each age has the obligation to adapt the teachings of the Torah to its basic needs in consonance with the genius of Judaism.

5. Israel. Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body. Living in all parts of the world, Israel has been held together by the ties of a common history, and above all, by the heritage of faith. Though we recognize in the group-loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition, a bond which still unites them with us, we maintain that it is by its religion and for its religion that the Jewish people has lived. The non-Jew who accepts our faith is welcomed as a full member of the Jewish community.

In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also as a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life.

Throughout the ages it has been Israel's mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.

2. ETHICS

6. Ethics and Religion. In Judaism religion and morality blend into an indissoluble unity. Seeking God means to strive after holiness, righteousness and goodness. The love of God is incomplete without the love of one's fellowmen. Judaism emphasizes the kinship of the human race, the sanctity and worth of human life and personality and the right of the individual to freedom and to the pursuit of his chosen vocation. Justice to all, irrespective of race, sect or class is the inalienable right and the inescapable obligation of all. The state and organized government exist in order to further these ends.

7. Social Justice. Judaism seeks the attainment of a just society by the application of its teachings to the economic order, to industry and commerce, and to national and international affairs. It aims at the elimination of man-made misery and suffering, of poverty and degradation, of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife. It advocates the promotion of harmonious relations between warring classes on the basis of equity and justice, and the creation of conditions under which human personality may flourish. It pleads for the safeguarding of childhood against exploitation. It champions the cause of all who work and of their right to an adequate standard of living, as prior to the rights of property. Judaism emphasizes the duty of charity, and strives for a social order which will protect men against the material disabilities of old age, sickness and unemployment.

8. Peace. Judaism, from the days of the prophets, has proclaimed to mankind the ideal of universal peace. The spiritual and physical disarmament of all nations has been one of its essential teachings. It abhors all violence and relies upon moral education, love and sympathy to secure human progress. It regards justice as the foundation of the well-being of nations and the condition of enduring peace. It urges organized international action for disarmament, collective security and world peace.

3. RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

9. The Religious Life. Jewish life is marked by consecration to these ideals of Judaism. It calls for faithful participation in the life of the Jewish community as it finds expression in home, synagogue and school and in all other agencies that enrich Jewish life and promote its welfare.

The Home has been and must continue to be a stronghold of Jewish life, hallowed by the spirit of love and reverence, by moral discipline and religious observance and worship.

The Synagog is the oldest and most democratic institution in Jewish life. It is the prime communal agency by which Judaism is fostered and preserved. It links the Jews of each community and unites them with all Israel.

The perpetuation of Judaism as a living force depends upon religious knowledge and upon the Education of each new generation in our rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Prayer is the voice of religion, the language of faith and aspiration. It directs man's heart and mind Godward, voices the needs and hopes of the community, and reaches out after goals which invest life with supreme value. To deepen the spiritual life of our people, we must cultivate the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and synagog.

Judaism as a way of life requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular, in our worship and instruction.

These timeless aims and ideals of our faith we present anew to a confused and troubled world. We call upon our fellow Jews to rededicate themselves to them, and, in harmony with all men, hopefully and courageously to continue Israel's eternal quest after God and His kingdom.

APPENDIX C

REFORM JUDAISM, A CENTENARY PERSPECTIVE (San Francisco, 1976)

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has on special occasions described the spiritual state of Reform Judaism. The centenaries of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seem an appropriate time for another such effort. We therefore record our sense of the unity of our movement today.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS: WHAT WE HAVE TAUGHT

We celebrate the role of Reform Judaism in North America, the growth of our movement on this free ground, the great contributions of our membership to the dreams and achievements of this society. We also feel great satisfaction at how much of our pioneering conception of Judaism has been accepted by the Household of Israel. It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; and that change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality in Jewish life. Moreover, though some still disagree, substantial numbers have also accepted our teachings: that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; that women should have full rights to practice Judaism; and that Jewish obligation begins with the informed will of every individual. Most modern Jews, within their various religious movements, are embracing Reform Jewish perspectives. We see this past century as having confirmed the essential wisdom of our movement.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

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

and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching. We have learned again that the survival of the Jewish people is one of our highest priorities and that in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment.

DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY, THE HALLMARK OF REFORM

Reform Jews respond to change in various ways according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual. However, Reform Judaism does more than tolerate diversity; it engenders it. In our uncertain historical situation we must expect to have far greater diversity than previous generations knew. How we shall live with diversity without stifling dissent and without paralyzing our ability to take positive action will test our character and our principles. We stand open to any position thoughtfully and conscientiously advocated in the spirit of Reform Jewish beliefs. While we may differ in our interpretation and application of the ideas enunciated here, we accept such differences as precious and see in them Judaism's best hope for confronting whatever the future holds for us. Yet in all our diversity we perceive a certain unity and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together.

I. GOD

The affirmation of God has always been essential to our people's will to survive. In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways. The trials of our own time and the challenges of modern culture have made steady belief and clear understanding difficult for some. Nevertheless, we ground our lives, personally and communally, on God's reality and remain open to new experiences and conceptions of the Divine. Amid the mystery we call life, we affirm that human beings, created in God's image, share in God's eternality despite the mystery we call death.

II. THE PEOPLE ISRAEL

The Jewish people and Judaism defy precise definition because both are in the process of becoming. Jews, by birth or conversion, constitute an uncommon union of faith and peoplehood. Born as Hebrews in the ancient Near East, we are bound together like all ethnic groups by language, land, history, culture and institutions. But the people of Israel is unique because of its involvement with God and its resulting perception of the human condition. Throughout our long history our people has been inseparable from its religion with its messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed.

III. TORAH

Torah results from meetings between God and the Jewish people. The records of our earliest confrontations are uniquely important to us; yet Torah continues to be created even in our own time.

IV. OUR OBLIGATIONS: RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by which we strive to achieve universal justice and peace. Reform Judaism shares this emphasis on duty and obligation. Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; life-long study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogue and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.

V. OUR OBLIGATIONS: THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA

We are privileged to live in an extraordinary time, one in which a third Jewish commonwealth has been established in our people's ancient homeland. We are bound to that land and to the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties. We have been enriched by its culture and ennobled by its indomitable spirit. We see it providing unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression. We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security and defining its Jewish character. We demand that Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized there.

At the same time that we consider the State of Israel vital to the welfare of Judaism everywhere, we reaffirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue. It leads us beyond itself to cooperate with other Jews, to share their

concerns, and to assume leadership in communal affairs. We are therefore committed to the full democratization of the Jewish community and to its hallowing in terms of Jewish values.

The State of Israel and the diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.

VI. OUR OBLIGATIONS: SURVIVAL AND SERVICE

Early Reform Judaism, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism, regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in terms of Jewry's service to humanity. In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism. The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic expectations.

Until the recent past our obligations to the Jewish people and to all humanity seemed congruent. At times now these two imperatives appear to conflict. We know of no simple way to resolve that contradiction. We must, however, confront it without abandoning either of our commitments. A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations.

HOPE: OUR JEWISH OBLIGATION

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbounded confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have lived through terrible tragedy and been compelled to reappropriate our tradition's realism about the human capacity for evil. Yet our people has always refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, on being granted life, seized it, nurtured it, and, rising above catastrophe, showed human kind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope.

We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny. We dedicate ourselves as did the generations of Jews who went before us, to work and wait for that day when "They shall not hurt or destroy in

all My holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the
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