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"Synagogue Transformation and Change Issues, with a Focus on the Introduction of Screen/Projection Technology in Worship Spaces"

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Rabbinic Ordination

By:
Cookie Lea Olshein

Advisor:
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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
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Table of Contents

I. Introduction to the Project 1
II. How We Can Understand Synagogue Change 2
III. An Overview of Changes in Jewish Worship Practices 4
a. The Evolution of Early Israelite Worship Practices as a Response to Outside Worship Practices – From Human Sacrifice to Animal/Food-based Sacrifices 4
b. Early Changes to Israelite Ritual – Moving from Sacrifices to the "Prayers of the Heart" 8
c. Modern "Reform" Innovations/Adaptations to Jewish Worship Practice 12
i. Liturgy 12
1. Removal of Repetition from the Service 13
2. Praying in the Vernacular 13
3. Theological Changes to the *Siddur* to Meet The Theology of Modern Life 15
ii. The Reformation of Worship Space 17
1. Traditional Worship Space Design 17
2. Changes to Worship Space by the Reformers 18
a. The Innovation of Mixed Seating 18
b. Moving the *Bimah* Closer to the Ark 19
IV. Introduction of Technology in Jewish Worship Spaces 20
a. Instrumentation and Sound Amplification 20
i. The Introduction of the Organ 21
ii. The Introduction of Microphone Technology 23
iii. The Introduction of Electric Musical Instruments 23
b. The Effect of Lighting Technology on Worship Spaces 24
c. Architectural Elements within a Synagogue 25
i. Technological Innovations with Respect to the Ark 25
ii. Technological Innovations with Respect to the *Ner Tamid* 26
1. Introduction of the Electric and Gas *Ner Tamid* 27
2. Modern Innovation: Introduction of Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs for the *Ner Tamid* 28
3. Modern Innovation: Introduction of Solar Technology for the *Ner Tamid* 28
V. Focus on Screen/Projection Technology in Worship 30
a. Earliest Located Example: Hillel 30
b. Lack of Early Adoption of Screen/Projection Technology By Synagogues 32
c. Case Study of the "Mega-Church" Phenomenon: Saddleback Church 33
d. Case Studies Regarding the Introduction of Technology In Jewish Worship Spaces 36
i. Examples of Adapting Existing Space 36
1. Leo Baeck Temple 36

2. Kehillat Israel 41
ii. The "Mega-Church" Example in a Jewish Context 43
1. Biennial Usage During *Shabbat* 43
2. Experimental *Ma'ariv* Service at the 2007 URJ Biennial 44
iii. Technology Available in a Newly-Constructed Facility: Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada 46
VI. Analysis of "Screen-Projected Service" I Wrote and Used at Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada 46
a. Goals for Creating This Type of Service 47
b. Goals for Creating the Liturgy 48
c. Issues Surrounding Using the Technology 50
i. Software Issues 50
ii. Projector Issues 52
iii. Aesthetic Issues 52
iv. Changing Slides Between Prayers 54
d. Feedback from Staff 54
e. Feedback from Congregants 55
i. Expected Feedback from Congregants 56
ii. Unexpected Feedback from Congregants 59
f. Plan for Using the Technology in the Future 59
VII. Conclusion 60
VIII. Bibliography 61

I. Introduction to the Project

The practice of Judaism as a religion is much like a living organism. Practices emerge, change, adapt, mature, and, occasionally, die. Often, these activities are rooted in a synagogue. Understanding how and why changes have taken place over time can help us understand the direction(s) the practice of Judaism and, more particularly, practice of Judaism within a synagogue community may take in the future.

This "capstone project" grew out of seeing technology being integrated into progressive Jewish worship practice, just as new technology is constantly being integrated into everyday life. Consequently, several questions emerged. What is the historical basis for understanding how Judaism has changed over time? What are the *halachic* bases/arguments that occurred to allow generally accepted practices to change? How have Jews, and especially progressive Jews, adapted Jewish worship (and especially worship spaces) to incorporate modern conveniences and technology? And, finally, what was my experience in introducing a modern worship experience using screen/projection technology?

To answer these questions, the initial purpose of this paper is to provide a background regarding basic change theory as it applies to the practice of Judaism. Because, in order to understand how Jewish practiced changed over time, one must first understand from where Jewish practices originate. Therefore, to exemplify the application of some of these ideas with respect to basic change theory, this paper will next include a historical overview of some of these changes. Continuing this idea with a more specific application, this paper includes a discussion of the introduction of technology in worship spaces, followed by a deeper focus on the introduction of

screen/projection technology in worship. Applying these ideas, this paper will present an overview/analysis of the screen/projected service I wrote and led at my student pulpit, followed by my conclusions based on this research.

II. How We Can Understand Synagogue Change

The synagogue as an institution was likely created in response to the Israelites being in exile, away from their primarily location for worship.[1] Thus, because their ritual needs could not be met in their usual, former location, a substitute was created which would enable their worship practices to be adapted to the worshippers' current living situation.

Over the past 2,000 years, synagogues have continually changed, "adapting themselves to fit the social and political milieu in which Jews have found themselves."[2] It is this ability to meet the needs of an organization's membership (whether membership is formalized or not) which determines whether its success in fulfilling one overarching purpose of a synagogue: "group survival."[3]

The question that comes up time and again is the management of change. One of the primary theses of Isa Aron's book, "The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life," is that for a congregation to become self-renewing, it is preferable for change to be conscious over inadvertent.

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1 Kaufman, David E. "The Synagogue as a Mediating Institution." Re-envisioning the Synagogue. Ed. David E. Heller. Hollis, New Hampshire: Hollis Publishing, 2005. 7.

2 Aron, Isa. The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2002. 11.

3 Kaufman, David E. "The Synagogue as a Mediating Institution." Re-envisioning the Synagogue. Ed. David E. Heller. Hollis, New Hampshire: Hollis Publishing, 2005. 9.

In order to do this, the organization must both evaluate its history to identify areas of concern and look forward to create plans for change.[4]

Aron discusses the concept of considering change through four lenses or "frames" in order to evaluate whether proposed change can be successful and how to overcome resistance to that proposed change. While this is only one model for evaluation, these four frames as identified by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal[5] are a helpful tool. The "frames" are: the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, and the cultural and symbolic frame.[6] Applying the structural frame to a situation means understanding the roles and responsibility individuals play in the structure of an organization. Application of the human resource frame requires consideration of the needs of the individuals involved and how the organization can help those people reach excellence in their positions. Applying the political frame requires an understanding of how resources are distributed and the possible conflict that may result based on competition for those resources. Finally, application of the symbolic frame requires one to consider how the organization's values are embedded within its symbols and rituals.[7] By considering an organization's practice and potential change to that organization within these frames, this model can help the examiner fully appreciate the likely responses by different constituencies. One should be careful to note that evaluation through each of the four frames will not always produce helpful information in that not all constituencies may be affected by a proposed change.

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[4] Aron, Isa. The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2002. 24-80.

[5] Based on: Bolman, Lee, and Terrence Deal. Reframing Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

[6] Aron, Isa. The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2002. 68-72, 214-216.

[7] Aron, Isa. The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2002. 68-69.

In addition to suggesting one way of evaluating change through the application of the four frames, Aron also discusses how one makes actually should make change and the necessity of balancing tradition and change, stating that an organization must be thoughtful about honoring its past.[8] In other words, organizational upheaval can occur when one "throws the baby out with the bathwater." This appears to be the key to successful transition, and one that Jews have not always been good about honoring. Throughout this paper, changes will be examined considering the needs of the organization/community at particular times, any outward influences pushing the need for change, and how the synagogue responded to these pressures. We begin with a historical overview of some examples of how Judaism has changed over time.

III. An Overview of Changes in Jewish Worship Practices

While some may believe that "traditional" Jewish liturgy has remained fixed over time, Jewish liturgical rites have always evolved, even from the earliest Israelite practices. This chapter will discuss selected aspects of the evolution of Jewish liturgical practices from early Israelite worship to the Reform Movement of the present day.

a. The Evolution of Early Israelite Worship Practices as a Response to Outside Worship Practices – From Human Sacrifice to Animal/Food-based Sacrifices

While it is widely believed that human sacrifice was accepted as a form of worship in many ancient civilizations, some argue whether this is actually myth or truth based on a lack of archeological evidence to support this belief.[9] Regardless of its

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[8] Aron, Isa. The Self-Renewing Congregation: Organizational Strategies for Revitalizing Congregational Life. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2002. 185-220.

[9] The word "sacrifice" comes from the Latin word, *sacrificium,* from *sacer* meaning "sacred" and *facere* meaning "to make," and is defined as: "an act of offering to a deity something precious;

truth, however, as the Israelites began to develop their own religious practices, the sacred story of the Israelite people came to condemn human sacrifice by others and by the Israelite people themselves.

The plain language of Deuteronomy 18:9-10 exemplifies this separation from generally accepted worship practice of others as follows: "When you enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abhorrent practices of those nations. Let no one be found among you who consigns his son or daughter to the fire ... ."[10] Considering this command, one must look to the portrayal of God's negative reaction to human sacrifice occurring in the book of Jeremiah, this time in response to the Israelites' and Judah-ites' *own* behavior. When prophesizing regarding the sins the Israelite and Judean people committed by not following God's ways, Jeremiah speaks the word of God, saying:

> They have turned their backs to Me, not their faces; though I have taught them persistently, they do not give heed or accept rebuke. They placed their abominations in the House which bears My name and defiled it; and they built the shrines of Baal which are in the Valley of *Ben-hinnom*, where they offered up their sons and daughters to *Molech* – when I had never commanded, or even though [of commanding], that they should do such an abominable thing, and so bring guilt on Judah.[11]

In this case, the Israelites had apparently moved back to human sacrifices, and were being chastised by none other than God for these behaviors.

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especially: the killing of a victim on an altar." http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sacrifice. February 13, 2008. For an example of the controversy regarding whether the Phoenicians practiced child sacrifice, see http://www.phoenicia.org/childsacrifice.html. February 13, 2008. For a brief discussion of human sacrifice around the world, including a discussion of human sacrifice in antiquity, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice#_note-9. February 13, 2008.

[10] _____. JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 414.

[11] See Jer. 32:33-35. JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 1094. See also Leviticus 20:2-5 for another discussion of sacrificing one's children to "Molech" and the express societal responsibility to put to death anyone who does so in God's name. 253-254.

Reference to the separation between the emerging Israelite culture and "outside" culture is again found in 2 Kings 3:27, where an attacking Moabite king was trounced by the Israelites so badly that he offered his firstborn son (and successor) as a human sacrifice in an attempt to appease the singular God of the Israelites. Instead of the expected Moabite response, however, the Israelite God's violent reaction to the human offering was so harsh that the king withdrew his troops from fighting the Israelites and returned to his own land.[12]

Thus, through the use of God's "voice"/actions in each example, these references show how Jewish sacred texts supported the Israelites' cultural shift from the otherwise accepted practice of human sacrifice as a way to influence/show support of one's deity (or deities), to a practice of worship not involving human sacrifice.

In place of the human sacrifices other worshippers performed on behalf of their deities in the ancient world,[13] the *Torah* provides that the Israelites would instead perform sacrificial rituals involving animal slaughter[14] and provisions of food[15] to show

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[12] JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 781. For a slightly different version of this story, see also: Whiston, William, trans. The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus: The Learned and authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated Warrior ... to which are added Seven Dissertations Concerning Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, James the Just, God's Command to Abraham, etc. "Antiquities of the Jews." Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1957. 279.

[13] One should be mindful that one of the seminal moments for the creation of the Israelite people occurs when God tells Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him to show his commitment to God. (Gen. 22:1-18.) While this sacrifice does not occur, in Judges 11:29-40, the story of the human sacrifice of Jephtah's unnamed daughter being burned is told with respect to her father keeping a vow he makes that he make a burnt offering of whatever comes out of his door upon his arrival home if he is victorious in war. He keeps his promise and sacrifices the daughter that came out of his house to greet him upon returning. However, it is important to note that this human sacrifice was made per the requirement that one keep a vow and not because it was the accepted sacrificial practice of the Israelite people. Further, it should be noted that this event occurs historically before Jeremiah's speech whereby God denounces human sacrifice.

[14] It is said that over 200 of the 613 *mitzvot* deal with the concept of sacrifices. For an example of the ritual process surrounding the making of animal sacrifices, see Leviticus 1:2-9, which states: "Speak to the Israelite people, and say to them: When any of you presents an offering of cattle to the Lord, he shall choose his offering form the herd or from the flock. If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall make his offering a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,

their commitment to and relationship with their singular God.[16] The burning of these provisions is said to have provided "a pleasing odor to the Lord,"[17] thus validating the new Israelite belief that the sacrifice of human life was not necessary in order to further the Israelites' relationship with their God.

As the Israelites matured as a "nation," the sacrificial rite became fixed, with morning and evening rituals supplemented by an afternoon ritual occurring when the sacrifices were too numerous to complete during the other two scheduled times.[18] However, upon the destruction of the Second Temple, there was no place left for the ritual sacrifices to be performed and a new methodology for worship had to be developed.

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for acceptance in his behalf before the Lord. He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, that it may be acceptable in his behalf, in expiation for him. The bull shall be slaughtered before the Lord; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall offer the blood, dashing the blood against all sides of the altar which is at the entrance of the Tent of meeting. The burnt offering shall be flayed and cut up into sections. The sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and lay out wood upon the fire; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall lay out the sections, with the head and the suet, on the word that is on the fire upon the altar. Its entrails and legs shall be washed with water, and the priest shall turn the whole into smoke on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord." JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 207.

[15] For example, Leviticus 2:1-2 states: "When a person presents an offering of meal to the Lord, his offering shall of choice flour; he shall pour oil upon it, lay frankincense on it, and present it to Aaron's sons, the priests. The priest shall scoop out of it a handful of its choice flour and oil, as well as all of its frankincense; and this token portion he shall turn into smoke on the altar, as an offering by fire, of pleasing odor to the Lord." JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 208.

[16] The Hebrew word for sacrifice is *korban*, from the root *kuf-resh-vet*, meaning "to draw close," implying that one makes a sacrifice in order to come closer to God.

[17] Leviticus 1:9.

[18] For a detailed discussion of the sacrificial cult, see: Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. 39-55.

b. Early Changes to Israelite Ritual – Moving from Sacrifices to the "Prayers of the Heart"

Initially, one should note that Israelite worship always included private prayer, even while the Temple sacrificial cult existed.[19] However, formalized "worship" centered on the sacrificial rites, rather than establishing a particular methodology or requirements of the private prayers of the individual.

Upon the First Temple's destruction and exile from Israel, it is likely that the exiled peoples came together informally in search of support and comfort. While together, "they would encourage each other in their faith and in their hope of a speedy restoration. The makeshift, informal gatherings in small domestic settings – never planned as worship meetings – ultimately developed into a permanent religious institution."[20] Millgrom further states:

> The people who participated in these religious gatherings, and especially their children, who were raised as participants at these meeting houses, gradually came to regard public prayer as official religious ritual and the gatherings at the prayer houses as religious requirements. Thus a basic institution of Judaism was born, and with the passage of time this institution became a normal part of the religious life of the Jews. In later years, when the Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple, many of them continued to attend the prayer meetings. As time went on the prayers began to assume definite forms, and a synagogue liturgy began to develop.[21]

One should note that, even after the First Temple was destroyed, some sacrifices continued until the building of the Second Temple, where sacrifices could properly be performed again. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple, the rabbis

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[19] Examples of private prayer experiences are found within the *Tanakh*. For example, see Solomon's prayer upon dedicating the Temple in 1 Kings 8:23, 27-30, which consists of his prayer which is similar to how one might pray today: praising God, thanking God, confession, and requesting God's intercession. Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 56-57.

[20] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 64.

[21] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 67.

realized that the sacrificial format of worship needed to be replaced, likely due to the political situation of the time, and created a formalized worship experience as a replacement for the now-impossible ritual prescribed in the *Torah*.[22] This obligation to pray, not only privately, but also communally,[23] was based on the rabbinic interpretation of the Biblical verse, "and [you shall] serve God with all your heart."[24]

Because the laws of sacrifice contained in the *Torah* could not simply be nullified at will by the rabbis, they had to apply one of the two primary ways to change laws presented in the *Torah*: (1) reinterpretation, and (2) creation of a legal fiction.[25] In this case, "creation of a legal fiction" was not necessary since the concept of reinterpretation easily allowed the rabbis to abrogate the laws of sacrifice, i.e., because the Temple site was the only place where sacrifice could be carried out to meet the requirements found in the *Torah*, these laws could physically not be carried out until the rebuilding of the Third Temple.[26] Thus, the laws of sacrifice were suspended until the Temple could be rebuilt. As a substitute for the idea of sacrificing the tangible items required within the *Torah*, the rabbis analogized that the worship of the heart was a suitable substitute, noting that the command to do so was already found within the sacred text. Thus, the

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[22] One should note that, even after the First Temple was destroyed, some sacrifices continued until the building of the Second Temple, where sacrifices could properly be performed again. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple, the rabbis realized that the sacrificial format of worship needed to be replaced, likely due to the political situation of the time. See Guttman, Alexander. The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature During the Last Century and a Half. Jerusalem: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977. xxii.

[23] Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Jewish Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 5.

[24] Deuteronomy 11:13.

[25] Guttman, Alexander. The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature During the Last Century and a Half. Jerusalem: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977. xxii.

[26] This argument led to the inclusion of prayers for the rebuilding of the Temple in traditional liturgy, which have since been removed from reform liturgy in light of the theological challenges to be discussed later.

laws were reinterpreted to meet the needs of the people in light of the changing political landscape.

Once the sacrificial service was replaced by the "service of the heart," the so-called standard Jewish liturgy began to take shape. However, the liturgy by no means was stagnant. Rather, it was constantly evolving according to the needs of the community using the liturgy. Numerous examples of changes that have occurred in "standard" Jewish liturgy over time exist, so the focus of the examination here will be limited to just a few.

According to Yoel Kahn, there were three blessings which have made people uncomfortable for over 2,000 years. These are the blessings for (1) not making a man a gentile, (2) not making him a slave, and (3) not making him a woman. While it is believed that these blessings have been a part of the standard liturgy since at least the 8th century, Kahn states that these three blessings did not originate using this language.

In support of this, Kahn relies on Rabbi Meir's statement in the Babylonian Talmud (Men. 43b) that, "A person must recite three blessings every day, and they are: [Praised are You ...] who has made me an Israelite, who did not make me a woman, who did not make me an ignoramus." [27] (Brackets in original.) Further, Kahn notes that pre-printing press editions of the Talmud do not contain the same exact language regarding the affirmative statement of "making me an Israelite," and instead refer to

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[27] Kahn, Yoel H. "On Gentiles, Slaves, and Women: The Blessings "Who Did Not Make Me: A Historical Survey." My People's Prayer Book: Volume 5: Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings). Ed. Hoffman, Lawrence A., Rabbi. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2001. 17.

thanking the God "who did not make me a gentile," believing that the change in Talmudic language is due to church censorship beginning in the 15th century.[28]

Finally, Kahn states that these three prayers were likely slogans originally affirming the believers' status, which were later incorporated into the liturgy. In fact, he believes that these three prayers were "a response to similar sayings that Jews living in late antiquity heard from their Greek neighbors."[29] Thus, inclusion of these prayers are further example of "borrowing" or adapting the outside culture to suit the needs of the rabbis with respect to local culture.[30]

Focusing further only on the gender-based example, since it has been the one that has been adapted even by a majority of "traditional" Jews, one can consider most closely the blessing for "not making me a woman," found within the *Birkhot haShachar*, the morning blessings. As early as the thirteenth or fourteenth century, evidence is found that an additional blessing was recited by women since it would be inappropriate for a woman to recite "thank you God for not making me a woman." While we do not know who initiated the alternative, it appears that many women chose to instead recite:

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[28] Kahn, Yoel H. "On Gentiles, Slaves, and Women: The Blessings "Who Did Not Make Me: A Historical Survey." My People's Prayer Book: Volume 5: Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings). Ed. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2001. 17.

[29] Kahn, Yoel H. "On Gentiles, Slaves, and Women: The Blessings "Who Did Not Make Me: A Historical Survey." My People's Prayer Book: Volume 5: Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings). Ed. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2001. 18.

[30] Kahn, Yoel H. "On Gentiles, Slaves, and Women: The Blessings "Who Did Not Make Me: A Historical Survey." My People's Prayer Book: Volume 5: Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings). Ed. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2001. 19. Kahn compares *geniza* fragments with Hellenistic texts to support his argument that the language of the three blessings being considered. With respect to a Greek document, he cites "Diogenes Laertius, 'Thales,' I. 33, as stating: "[I] was grateful that I was born a person and not a beast, I was born a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian" (brackets in original). By comparison, he quotes "Genizah Fragment, TS NS 121:5" as providing a non-Talmudic example of a medieval Jewish practice of Cairo, stating: "Praised are You ... who made me a person and not a beast, a man and not a woman, an Israelite and not a gentile." As Kahn states, there appears to be a strong relation between the two formulas, with the Geniza fragment differing slightly from the Talmudic formula.

"Thank you God for making me according to Your will." In modern traditional *siddurim*, this blessing is found alongside the men's version.[31]

c. Modern "Reform" Innovations/Adaptations to Jewish Worship Practice

i. Liturgy

David Philipson writes:

> The Jew has always been susceptible to the influences at work in the environment in which he has chanced to be. His mind is singularly open to the thought-waves that permeate his intellectual surroundings. The keen inquirer can learn often the leading cultural *motifs* of the various civilizations in whose midst the Jew has dwelt by familiarizing himself with the remains of Jewish literary achievement. From early times this has been the case.[32]

This has never been truer than after Emancipation, when Jews became more able to participate in life outside of their often-closed communities. Interaction with "the other" resulted in the modern concern that too many Jews were being lost to secular life,[33] resulting in a desire to adapt the traditional way of worshipping God to a way that felt more modern and relevant for their lives.[34] One way this desire manifested itself was through the desire to modernize Jewish liturgy, three of which will be discussed here: removal of repetition from the service, praying in the vernacular, and the changing of some theological elements in the liturgy.

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[31] Landes, Daniel. "On Gentiles, Slaves, and Women: The Blessings "Who Did Not Make Me: Halakhic Analysis." My People's Prayer Book: Volume 5: Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings). Ed. Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2001. 31.

[32] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 3. Citing: Bousett, *Die Religion des Judenthums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, 448-492. Berlin, 1903.

[33] Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 101-102.

[34] In 1820, David Caro argued that the German rabbinate needed to be transformed into rabbis modeled after rabbis in the *Talmud* who could interact with the local society, which the traditional rabbis of his day could not do in light of having received no secular education. Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 101-103.

1. Removal of Repetition from the Service

Traditionally, one could always add to the service, but nothing was ever taken away. As such, the rubric for morning and evening worship became lengthy. Reformers in Germany sought to minimize this by removing repetition and anything "superfluous," resulting in the worship service being substantially shortened, retaining only those things deemed "the most solemn portions."[35]

What was the "legal" means by which the liturgy was shortened? Millgrom states that shortening the standardized prayer was not unprecedented in that the "rabbis of the *Talmud* provided for the abridgement of a number of prayers for people who were pressed for time."[36] While Millgrom provides the example of the abbreviated *Tefillah* allowed by the rabbis, he is careful to state that the rabbis approved this abbreviation in times of emergency, instead of the intention of the early reformers to make this commonplace practice.[37]

2. Praying in the Vernacular

One of the earliest proponents of praying in the vernacular, rather than the "holy language of Hebrew" was David Friedlander, a student of Moses Mendelssohn. He defended the German Jews' right to pray in the vernacular in an "Epistle to the German Jews" (written in response to a traditional rabbi in Prague who declared praying in the vernacular to be a sin), by "set[ting] forth the necessity of the people understanding the prayers, and denounced the obscurantism that finds in the mere use of the Hebrew

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[35] Zola, Gary P. "The First Reform Prayer Book in America: The Liturgy of the Reformed Society of Israelites." Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism. Ed. Dava Evan Kaplan. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 100.

[36] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 587.

[37] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 587.

some saving power, even though what is prayed in that language be unintelligible."[38] Thus, he was one of the earliest reformers to attempt to balance the needs of the community in light of its circumstances – lacking Hebrew language skills while desiring to maintain Jewish tradition and a connection to God.

In the early days of reforming Judaism in Germany, the rabbis of the day debated whether it was necessary to continue praying in Hebrew, deciding at the 1845 Frankfurt Rabbinical Conference that "there was no *objective legal necessity* for retaining Hebrew in the service."[39] Richard Levy states that this "was in keeping with the passages in the Mishnah (*Sotah* 7:1) that clearly state that one may offer the major prayers in any language one understands."[40]

A further innovation by the Reformers was the addition of a sermon in German, in that sermons were given in traditional communities only to explicate the applicable laws on the *Shabbat* before Passover and *Shabbat Shuvah*, and then apparently usually in Hebrew or a Hebrew-German jargon.[41] (This was actually a return to ancient practice where a rabbi would explain the *Torah* portion in the vernacular, Aramaic, as the portion would be read.) Praying and preaching in the vernacular spread throughout Germany.

As German Jews emigrated to the United States, however, it is interesting to see the debate over the appropriate language to use in sacred space begin again. In 1890,

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[38] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 15. Citing: *Sendschreiben an die deutschem Juden.* Berlin, 1788.

[39] Levy, Richard N. Vision of Holiness. New York: URJ Press, 2005. 106. For a discussion regarding the early reformers who opposed moving away from Hebrew language, see: Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 88.

[40] Levy, Richard N. Vision of Holiness. New York: URJ Press, 2005. 106. See also: Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 15. Citing: *Sendschreiben an die deutschem Juden.* Berlin, 1788.

[41] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 23.

when discussing the past dissension among American reform rabbis, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise said at the first convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis:

> Then a point of controversy was made of the language; one party wanted more and the other less Hebrew in the prayer-books and the religious schools; one party insisted upon making both synagogue and school purely English, and the other was no less zealously determined to preserve in them the German language.[42]

Thus, it appears that while praying in German had been reasonably accepted among the immigrant Jews in their home country of Germany, the idea of praying in the "local language" was not settled in earnest. Instead, the earliest American Reform Jews appear to returned to their "comfort zone" of praying in German, without considering the reason why German was used. As the immigrants learned English and became more assimilated into American society, this became less of an issue and it became universally accepted that Hebrew and English (primarily English)[43] would be the language of prayer of the earliest reform Jews in the United States.[44]

3. Theological Changes to the *Siddur* to Meet the Theology of Modern Life

Based on changes to the liturgy made by early reformers in German, Millgrom discusses the further theological changes made by American reformers in the late 1800s:

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[42] _____. Year Book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis: 5651-1890-91. Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing and Printing, 1891. 13.

[43] A survey of American reform congregations in 1906 indicated that over 100 were praying exclusively in English. Levy, Richard N. Vision of Holiness. New York: URJ Press, 2005. 106. Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 107. Citing: Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 230.

[44] Rabbi Richard Levy relates a story from his childhood regarding the use of Hebrew on the right-hand side and the English on the left of the Union Prayer Book, as follows: "Indeed, as a little boy attending High Holy Day services with my parents for the first time, I asked what the strange writing was on the opposite page in the prayer book, to which my father replied, 'Oh, that's for people who don't know English.'" Levy, Richard N. Vision of Holiness. New York: URJ Press, 2005. 106. Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 107.

> To understand the motivation and the reasoning that led to the radical surgery performed on the *Siddur* one must grasp some of the guiding principles which were formulated at a number of rabbinical conferences and especially at the Pittsburgh Conference in 1885. Israel's destiny, it was decided, is not tied to the Holy Land or the national restoration under the Messiah or the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem. Indeed, Israel is not in exile.[45]

The results of the reformers' theological shift were many-fold. In seeming furtherance of a more universalist vision of the world, all references to Jews being in a state of exile were removed. Likewise, if we are not in exile, there is no need to pray for restoration of the Temple and sacrifices[46], so these were removed as well. Furthermore, all references to resurrection of the Messiah were removed and were instead replaced by social justice-oriented references to seeking the creation of a Messianic era.[47] Finally, references to Deuteronomic "reward and punishment" theology, resurrection of the dead, and angelology were removed from the liturgy.[48]

One should note that in true reform fashion, each of these has been re-examined in an academic fashion when preparing the new Reform *siddur, Mishkan T'fila.* Some of

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[45] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 586.

[46] Because references to offering sacrifices were removed, the entire *Musaf* service was either severely abrogated or removed from reform liturgy in light of its focus on restoration of the Temple and sacrifices. Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 588.

[47] Richard Levy writes: "The nineteenth century Reformers did not believe that this vision [of the repair of the world] would be accomplished by the reestablishment of the Israelite monarchy, but they were moved by the vision itself. Indeed, the 1885 Pittsburgh Reformers saw the vision beginning to unfold in their own time:

> 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 acknowledge that the spirit of brad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and, therefore, we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

Levy, Richard N. Vision of Holiness. New York: URJ Press, 2005. 106. See also: Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 162.

[48] Knobel, Peter. "The Challenge of a Single Prayer Book." Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism. Ed. Dana Evan Kaplan. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 160.

these more traditional theological concepts have now been included in the liturgy as an option during prayer.[49]

ii. The Reformation of Worship Space

1. Traditional Worship Space Design

In Biblical times, men and women worshipped together, however, seating for men and women evolved during Talmudic times.[50] From this time forward, seating was generally separate, with men sitting closest to the Torah and the Ark, and women, if they were present at all, were relegated to separate galleries, often behind curtains or upstairs and occasionally on the perimeter of the main prayer space separated by full walls.[51]

With respect to the layout of the worship space in a traditional synagogue, seating generally surrounds the placement of the *bimah* (a raised platform from which *Torah* is read) meaning that the *Torah*-reading table which was most often placed in the center of the room, with the Ark being placed at one end of the worship space, most often the eastern-most wall. Regarding the location of the service leader, in a Sephardic synagogue the leader would be stationed on the *bimah.* However, in a traditional Ashkenazi synagogue, the leader may sometimes be found at a lectern to the right of the Ark, facing the Ark.[52]

Interestingly, to avoid the appearance that either the Ark at the end of the room or the *Torah*-reading table on the raised platform in the center of the room was more

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[49] See http://urj.org/mishkan for a full range of educational resources describing the return to tradition found in the Reform Movement's new prayer book. February 18, 2008.

[50] See *Sukkah* 51a-52a

[51] The *Ault-Neu Shul* in Prague, built in the 11th century offers a gallery on the outer rim of the main prayer space with "portholes." Wigoder, Geoffrey. The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. 50.

[52] Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 71.

important than the other, some Italian architects moved the Torah-reading table to the other end of the room from the Ark. Thus, all worshippers were the same distance from both the housing of the *Torah* (i.e., the Ark) and the place where its reading would take place.[53] Consequently, because of the decisions made regarding the placement of the Ark and the *bimah*, seating was generally inward-facing (not forgetting the upstairs seating for the women) ... until the Reformers.[54]

2. Changes to Worship Space by the Reformers

a. The Innovation of Mixed Seating

In the reform rabbinic conferences of the early/mid-1800s, much discussion occurred regarding the possibility of seating men and women together; however, this did not come to pass.[55] In 1907, Philipson writes with respect to the beginnings of "mixed seating" by the reformers:

> The gallery, to which woman [sic] was relegated, was a survival of the Oriental notion of woman's inferiority. Yet although woman was excluded from all active participation in public religious functions, and had to content herself with being a silent spectator and auditor in the gallery, still in the Jewish home her sway was supreme. But this contradiction between woman's position in the synagogue and in the home was unnatural under Occidental conditions. The segregation of the women in a gallery was repugnant to the ideas and ideals of an age of emancipation and strivings after equality. Here again the Orientalism of the synagogue had to give way to the stress of the new thought and the new life. The truth of the matter was that the Jewish woman had entered a new kingdom. She as

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[53] Guttman, Alexander. The Struggle over Reform in Rabbinic Literature: During the Last Century and a Half. Jerusalem: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977. 39, 44. See also: Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 71. See also: Wigoder, Geoffrey. The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. 36.

[54] One should note that Joseph Karo, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch* (1488-1575), opined that "placing the *bimah* in the center of the worship space was not required and that in small synagogues it is more attractive to have the *bimah* on the side than in the center." Guttman, Alexander. The Struggle over Reform in Rabbinic Literature: During the Last Century and a Half. Jerusalem: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977. 44.

[55] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 353-354.

> well as the man was affected by her surroundings. To her as well as to her father, her husband, and her brother, the new voices were calling and she desired to take active part in the forward movement. To refuse to heed this desire was to extend the already wide breach between the synagogue and life in this regard.[56]

Clearly, reconciling the newly-egalitarian views of the emancipated woman with tradition[57] was difficult and the early German reformers were not quite ready to take this step. Instead, it appears that the first mixed seating was instituted with the introduction of "family pews" by Rabbi Issac Mayer Wise in Albany, New York, in 1851.[58]

b. Moving the *Bimah* Close to the Ark

Early Reformers moved the *bimah* from the center of the worship space to the end of the room with the ark and moved the seating to the facing the bimah. This was done against orthodox cries that the Reformers were emulating churches, which it was considered a grave sin.[59] (Apparently, even a minority of newly-constructed traditional German synagogues had moved their *bimoht* to be near the Ark as had the Reformers in the 1800s.) Many *t'shuvot* (legal opinions) were written about the propriety of moving the *bimah*, even into the mid-1960s, with the primary question appearing to be whether its placement was law or custom. The great majority of traditional rabbis held that moving the *bimah* was forbidden according to law.[60]

One of the benefits of moving the *bimah* was that the focus of the service was now on the Ark, rather than when the seating faced inward. Second, the *Torah*-reading

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[56] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 355.

[57] It appears that the first recorded separate room for women to pray in was not added until the 13th century in Worms. Mirsky, Jeannette. Houses of God. New York: Viking, 1965. 111.

[58] Philipson, David. The Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907. 355, 509.

[59] Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 194.

[60] Guttman, Alexander. The Struggle over Reform in Rabbinic Literature: During the Last Century and a Half. Jerusalem: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977. 39-45.

table and the Ark could now be located on the same raised platform. A third benefit was additional seating since there was not a large hole in the middle (i.e., the location of the *Torah*-reading table).[61] Finally, the redesign of the synagogue space allowed the Reformers to make new synagogues "appeal to to Jews attracted by the general culture, including Christianity, and who were in danger of becoming lost to Judaism."[62]

Consequently, as shown in this chapter, Jewish liturgical practices have adapted to meet the needs of its practitioners throughout history. From human sacrifice to animal and food-based sacrifices and then to the sacrifices of the heart, the "modern" theology of the particular time has required adaptation and innovation, even with respect to the language of prayer and where the different pray-ers pray. Even for those who object, this has occurred while "traditionalists" state that change should not be allowed to occur.

IV. Introduction of Technology in Jewish Worship Spaces

Once changes began with respect to "modernizing" worship space, the "door was open" to allowing the introduction of technology. Three areas of technological innovation will be discussed below with respect to innovation in synagogue worship spaces: (1) instrumentation and sound amplification; (2) the effect of technology on lighting; and 3) changes to architecture as a result of the introduction of technology.

a. Instrumentation and Sound Amplification

One effect of Emancipation was that Jewish worshippers had access to non-liturgical music, resulting in an appreciation of the aesthetics of prayer in a way that was

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[61] Wigoder, Geoffrey. The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. 169.

[62] Wigoder, Geoffrey. The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. 169.

different than Jews had experienced before. A pre-1775 Christian description of Jewish worship in Amsterdam discusses the difference between synagogue and church music of the time:

> At my first entrance, one of the priests [sic] was chanting part of the service in a kind of ancient *canto firmo*, and responses were made by the congregation, in a manner which resembled the hum of bees. After this, three of the sweet singers of Israel, which [sic] it seems are famous here ... began singing a kind of jolly modern melody, sometimes in unison, and sometimes in parts, to a king of *tol de rol*, instead of words, which to me, seemed very farcical. One of these voices was a falset [sic], more like the upper part of a *vox humana* stop in an organ, than a natural voice. ... The second of these voices was a very vulgar tenor, and the third was a *baritona*. The last imitated, in his accompaniment of the falset, a bad bassoon. ... At the end of each strain, the whole congregation set up such a kind of cry, as a pack of hounds when a fox runs for cover. It was a confused clamour [sic], and riotous noise, more song than prayer. ... I shall only say, that it was very unlike what we Christians are used to in divine service.[63]

Apparently, Jewish worship of the time left something to be desired with respect to solemnity, resulting in the newly-Emancipated Jews to seek worship that reflected the norms of the outside society: order, beauty, and decorum.[64]

1. The Introduction of the Organ

The earliest known introduction of the organ into Jewish worship appears to have taken place in Seesen, Westphalia, from 1809-1813. Through governmental backing, Israel Jacobson introduced "Protestant-style worship," including the organ, a choir, hymns, and German prayers; however, the reforms were short-lived in light of the

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[63] Goldberg, Geoffrey. "Jewish Liturgical Music in the Wake of Nineteenth-Century Reform." Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian ExperienceNotre Dame, Eds. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton. Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1992. 60. Citing: Charles Burney, The Present State of Music in German, the Netherlands, and the United Provinces (London, 1775), vol. 2, pp. 229-230.

[64] Goldberg, Geoffrey. "Jewish Liturgical Music in the Wake of Nineteenth-Century Reform." Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian ExperienceNotre Dame, Eds. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton. Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1992. 60.

political upheaval of the time.[65] One of the many initial complaints regarding the quality of the music included that, even though the choir was composed of Jewish boys, most melodies were written by non-Jewish German composers and played by non-Jewish organists.[66] Non-Jewish organists were likely used for one of two reasons: there were not enough Jewish organists, or because of the traditional notion that playing instruments on *Shabbat* is prohibited.[67]

Reform Jewish worship was hailed by more traditional Jews as blasphemous in light of the prohibition of using musical instruments in Shabbat worship. However, the use of the organ met the needs of the "modern" reform worshipper with respect to "fitting in" with his churchgoing neighbors, resulting in the organ not only becoming a centerpiece in the architecture of Jewish worship spaces in the late 1800s, but also becoming a hallmark of early reform worship. (Interestingly, the use of the organ was also adopted later by some conservative synagogues). The spread of the organ became so accepted in Reform congregations that a 1972 study of Reform congregations commissioned by the Central Conference of American Rabbis exemplifies its pervasiveness. When asked whether musical instruments other than organ were used in worship, 34% responded "rarely or never," 55% responded "sometimes," while only 11% responded "regularly" or "often."[68] While the trend in recent Jewish practices has moved away from the organ, it is still used regularly by some congregations (most notably, Temple Emanu-El in New York City), but is also

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65 Goldberg, Geoffrey. "Jewish Liturgical Music in the Wake of Nineteenth-Century Reform." Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian ExperienceNotre Dame, Eds. Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton. Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1992. 61.

66 Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 57.

67 See Tractate *Beitza* 36b.

68 Theodore I. Lenn, Ph.D, and Associates. Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism. West Hartford, Connecticut: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1972. 120.

found in use for special services with historical significance, such as those in the style of "Reform Heritage Shabbat" services.[69]

2. The Introduction of Microphone Technology

Sound amplification technology became available in the early 1900s through the inventions of Alexander Graham Bell and members of his company. Soon thereafter, Microphone/amplification technology was installed in synagogues as early as the 1930s. For example, in 1935, "a microphone system was installed" at Congregation Adareth El, an orthodox congregation in New York City (although it is unknown whether the synagogue used this technology on Shabbat).[70] Since the 1950s, sound amplification systems have become standard in synagogues. One should note that there is even amplification technology that is approved for Shabbat worship in modern orthodox synagogues.[71]

3. The Introduction of Electric Musical Instruments

Once the introduction of the organ became accepted as a "standard" in reform Jewish practice, further change caused much less of an uproar. Indeed, when worship began to move into more creative spaces, such as camp settings, the impracticality of using an organ was solved with the introduction of guitar, which became popular during the "folk music" era of the 1970s. This portable instrument met the needs of the masses well and was easily adapted when the need for sound amplification arose in the form of either an acoustic electric guitar (or, in the alternative, a "rock"-style electric guitar).

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69 http://bethhatephila.org/Braun/Founders%20Weekend/HeritageShabbat.html. February 27, 2008.

70 http://www.aderethel.org/20070619/about_history.htm. February 21, 2008.

71 See description of two modern orthodox synagogues merging: "As modern Orthodox congregations, both congregations use microphones or sound systems that have been approved for use on the Sabbath, when Jews are expected to refrain from doing work." http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-md.ci.bethjacob11aug11,0,1374123.story. February 26, 2008.

b. The Effect of Lighting Technology on Worship Spaces

Lighting has always been an issue within Jewish worship spaces. Before the advent of electricity, synagogues were lit with individual oil lamps, usually hanging from the ceiling, which gave off an intimate glow in the worship space. However, the introduction of installed gas lighting within synagogues allowed increased brightness and ease of use. One early example was Temple Emanu-El in New York City, which had over 500 gas-powered jets installed in 1868.[72]

Later, with the installation of electricity, synagogues had the ability to introduce "spot" lighting to create a particular mood or to highlight particular pieces of art or architecture within the sanctuary. Furthermore, with the advent of dimming technology, the ability to lower the lights in a subtle way allowed for "lighting choreography" such as during *Kol Nidre*, when the lights may be lowered to create a somber atmosphere, separating the holiness day of the year from the remaining days.[73] Lastly, barring concerns for safety, windows have traditionally been incorporated into sanctuary design. As technology has improved, large electronically-controlled shades made it possible to have larger windows in synagogues since the amount of light flowing in could now be controlled in an aesthetic manner.[74]

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[72] Wigoder, Geoffrey. The Story of the Synagogue: A Diaspora Museum Book. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. 184.

[73] One example where this dimming custom is practiced is at Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[74] See the walls of windows incorporated into the sanctuary space at Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada. Because electronic window shades were incorporated into the rooms design, two entire walls able to be made of windows.

c. Architectural Elements within a Synagogue

1. Technological Innovations with Respect to the Ark

Originally, the Holy Ark (which housed a congregation's *Torah* scrolls) consisted a box into which the congregation's *Torahs* would be placed lying down. However, from the Middle Ages onward, the Ark was often made in the shape of a cabinet which allowed the *Torahs* to remain upright when the Ark's doors were opened. (Sometimes, the Ark was actually a tall niche in the eastern wall of the worship space. This was done so the congregants face Jerusalem when they face the Ark).[75]

Because the Ark in a synagogue was meant to emulate the portable Ark described in the *Torah* which carried the Ten Commandments,[76] in Ashkenazi synagogues, these stationary Arks generally have a curtain in front of the scrolls called a *parochet*. This curtain is included in the design based on a reference in Exodus 40:20-21, which states:

> He [Moses] took the Pact [the Ten Commandments] and placed it in the ark; he fixed the poles to the ark, placed the cover on top of the ark, and brought the ark inside the Tabernacle. Then he put up the curtain for screening, and screened off the Ark of the Pact – just as the Lord had commanded Moses.[77]

In addition to the curtain prescribed in the *Torah*, the Ark usually has some sort of doors covering the *Torah* scrolls placed inside. There is no particular legal requirement regarding the size/shape of the Ark and its doors and, consequently, doors have followed the style of the times with respect to their design. For example, in American

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[75] Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 338.

[76] See *generally*, the book of Exodus which provides detailed descriptions of how the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant were to be made.

[77] _____. JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 204. See also: Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synaogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 70. Millgrom, Abraham. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971. 338.

synagogues until the 1840s, the predominant style was neo-classical, with a convex curved front, with sliding doors.[78] As American architecture styles changed so, too, did the predominant designs of Arks. In the 1850s and 1860s, Moorish architectural was in vogue, and the application of the style included the Ark as well.[79]

In recent years, innovations have been made to the standard box or closet into which the *Torah* scrolls are placed. For example, at "The Temple" in Atlanta, Georgia, the Ark's "door" is constructed of a single panel of wood. When someone pushes a button, the door covering the *Torah* scrolls moves down mechanically/automatically to remove the scrolls from the Ark. To close the door, another button is pressed and the "door" shuts.

Additionally, in new synagogue structures like Congregation Ner Tamid in Las Vegas, Nevada, Arks are being constructed entirely of a curtain, without any regards for a solid structure often than shelves upon which the *Torah* scrolls sit. In this case, the curtain is on a motorized track often activated by something akin to a garage door opener: press one button and the Ark door (i.e., curtain) opens, press it again and it shuts. Thus, without the introduction of technology, the Ark could not be designed in this way.

2. Technological Innovations with Respect to the "Ner Tamid"

Exodus 27:20-21 states:

> You shall further instruct the Israelites to bring you clear oil of beaten olives for lighting, for kindling lamps regularly. Aaron and his sons shall set them up in the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain which is over [the

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[78] Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synaogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 70.

[79] Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synaogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 70.

> Ark of] the Pact, [to burn] from evening to morning before the Lord. It shall be a due from the Israelites for all time, throughout the ages.[80]

As a result of this passage, one might assume that synagogues have always had a *ner tamid* ("eternal light") found within their worship spaces. However, the introduction of the *ner tamid* in synagogue worship space is an innovation of sorts since the first recorded reference to one being regularly found there is not found until the 17th century, with Michael Meyer stating that the lamp's introduction was "likely was taken over from similar lamps which hung in Catholic churches.[81] Inclusion of these lights began to become commonplace in the 18th century in what one now categorizes as "traditional" synagogues. This is interesting since the tradition apparently mirrored that of the gentiles, which was generally considered by traditionalists to be a sin.[82]

i. Introduction of the Electric and Gas *Ner Tamid*

Based on the biblical text referenced above, the initial *ner tamid* was an oil-based lamp, usually lit with olive oil.[83] However, as technology developed, it became common to see gas-powered flames in use, and then soon thereafter, electric lights as of the turn of the 20th century.[84] (As electric lights became the norm, battery backup systems were later often installed in case of a power failure, i.e., to keep the *eternal* flame just that, eternal.)

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80 _____. JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh: The Traditional Hebrew Text and The New JPS Translation – Second Edition. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 172.

81 Meyer, Michael. Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism. New York: Oxford, 1988. 8.

82 Posner, Raphael, Uri Kaploun, and Shalom Cohen, eds. Jewish Liturgy: Prayer and Synagogue Service through the Ages. New York: Leon Amiel, 1975. 70.

83 See article from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia on the "Perpetual Lamp" as found in the synagogue. http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=33&letter=L&search=ner%20tamid. February 25, 2008.

84 One of the earliest known uses of electricity for a *ner tamid* is found at Congregation Beth Ahabah in Richmond, Virginia. The electric *ner tamid* in its sanctuary is original to 1904 and was considered an innovation when it was installed. http://www.bethahabah.org/the-synagogue.htm. February 26, 2008.

ii. Modern Innovation: Introduction of Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs for the *Ner Tamid*

As a sign of environmental awareness, some synagogues have undertaken to replace the light bulb in their eternal flame with a Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL). Sometimes this is a symbolic act,[85] although other synagogues have done this as part of their energy-saving campaigns. These campaigns result not only in "saving the planet" but also a cost-saving move when implemented on a larger scale through the facility.[86]

iii. Modern Innovation: Introduction of Solar Technology for the *Ner Tamid*

The first synagogue to install a solar-powered *ner tamid* was likely Temple Emanuel in Lowell, Massachusetts, when Rabbi Everett Gendler climbed up on the roof for the installation of the congregation's solar panels in 1978. "Rabbi Gendler claimed that the idea came to him one autumn day, when he realized that the *ner tamid*, when it was fueled by olive oil, a renewable resource, was truly perpetual. But powered by electricity, with its sometimes finite and questionable sources, the flame had lost some connection with its symbolism."[87]

Solar power for the *ner tamid* has more recently become fashionable as the awareness of environmental issues surrounding limited natural resources increases. Multiple synagogues have now installed them, including a recent installation at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York City. In doing so, B'nai Jeshurun used the

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[85] Another symbolic example is using CFLs to light a *Chanukiyah* at a public lighting ceremony. http://www.associated.org/page.html?ArticleID=160651. February 12, 2008.

[86] See the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life for additional information regarding "greening" synagogues through the use of environmentally-friendly products. http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/greensyn/index.php. February 25, 2008.

[87] Ulman, Jane. "How Green in My Shul? Environmental Activism Blossoms as More Congregations Focus on the Issue." Los Angeles Jewish Journal. Published February 10-2006. http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/preview.php?id=15394. February 12, 2008.

installation of its solar *ner tamid* to promote environmental awareness by hosting its dedication during *Chanukah*, the festival of lights, and combining the event with an environmental expo. Thus, the symbolic nature of the holiday (celebrating one day's oil lasting for eight days) was magnified even further by having literally no oil in the lamp, with the light lasting indefinitely.[88] Other examples of congregations that have installed solar-powered sanctuary lamps include Temple Emanuel of Maryland in Kensington, Maryland[89] and Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, Maryland.[90] Most of these installations are done in conjunction with educational "greening" campaigns focusing on Jewish texts regarding stewardship of the earth.

The introduction of solar technology into worship space, and more particularly with the *ner tamid*, has become institutionalized of late. For example, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the reform rabbis' organizational arm, passed a resolution in 2000 entitled, "National Energy Policy." Within this resolution was a multi-faceted plan for educating Jews within reform congregations about energy issues as well as calling on Congress and the then-current administration to support legislation for a reduction in non-renewable energy usage nationwide. Additionally, the document called upon "all Reform households, schools, synagogues, and camps to ... consider installing solar Ner Tamids, Eternal Lights, for our religious sanctuaries."[91]

Another example of how this idea has become institutionalized is via the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs (the organizing body of brotherhood organizations

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88 http://www.bj.org/environmentalhevra.php. February 12, 2008.

89 Temple Emanuel's solar *ner tamid* is now more than seven years old. _____. "A Solar Ner Tamid: The Ultimate Rededication." http://www.coeil.org/Hanukkah/documents/solarnertamid.php. February 12, 2008.

90 http://www.adatshalom.net/lech_lecha.html. February 25, 2008.

91 _____. "National Energy Policy: Resolution Adopted at the 111th Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis." March 2000. http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=energy&year=2000. February 12, 2008.

within the Conservative movement). The FJMC recently began a program to recommend installation of a solar *ner tamid* in every conservative synagogue.[92] This program provides step-by-step plans for investigating and implementing this project, as well as technical advice for those considering making the change.[93] Finally, national organizations such as Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) and the Religious Action Center (RAC) both offer information regarding how a congregation can introduce solar power for its *ner tamid.*[94]

Each of these innovations, the introduction of gas jets, electricity, and now solar technology exemplifies a willingness to adapt Jewish worship spaces to include modern technology. As further innovations develop, it will be interesting to see how widespread these may become in non-reform worship settings.

V. Focus on Screen/Projection Technology in Worship

a. Earliest Located Example: Hillel

In 1973, Alfred Jospe and Richard Levy edited a book entitled, Bridges to a Holy Time: New Worship for the Sabbath and Minor Festivals,[95] which explored multiple forms of then-new worship. Alfred Jospe introduced the book as follows:

> Numerous observers and students of the religious scene in America feel that a new religious intensity has begun to make itself felt among young people. It rejects the standard forms of worship and religious expression but seems to reflect a genuine religious quest and, in some instances, actually possesses all the elements of a religion which accompany the

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92 http://energy.fjmc.info/9n%20shomrei%20pamphlet.pdf. February 15, 2008.

93 http://energy.fjmc.info. February 15, 2008.

94 _____. "A Solar Ner Tamid: The Ultimate Temple Rededication." http://www.coejl.org/Hanukkah/documents/solarnertamid.php. February 12, 2008. See also: _____. "Sustaining the Light: A Social Justice Program Guide for Chanukah." Page 7. http://rac.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=1270&destination=ShowItem. February 15, 2008.

95 Jospe, Alfred, and Richard N. Levy. Bridges to a Holy Time: New Worship for the Sabbath and Minor Festivals. New York: KTAV, 1973. This book includes creative services and liturgy written by students or directors at Hillel Foundations which had previously not been available elsewhere.

> counter-culture that has developed among a substantial segment of the nation's youth.
>
> Several features characterize these new modes of worship and religious expression.
>
> 1) They differ radically from the traditional and conventional forms of worship. Some employ a multi-media approach; others experiment with jazz music and masses, calls to worship accompanied by twelve-string guitar, dances on the pulpit, seating in concentric circles on the floor, long periods of silent meditation, prayers taken from newspaper headlines or reflections on them, changing light effects. Nevertheless, some observers and many participants feel that the rejection of the conventional forms and symbols of religion does not imply a rejection of religious faith itself; it simply constitutes a search for new ways of expressing it more meaningfully. As one rabbi put it, "We need the expression of religious ideas through media which are familiar to our young people."[96]

Thus, by this time, experimentation had occurred with new music sounds, dance, and liturgy, as well as the introduction of technology in worship. From this, it appears Jospe believes that a new type of worship is springing forth from the youth – in order to meet the needs of the youth.

The brand-new multi-media experience referenced in Jospe's Introduction is introduced more fully in "Creativity: Pathway to Tradition," an article by Richard Levy which sets the tone of this ground-breaking book. Levy introduces the multi-media service he arranged while acting as a Rabbi at the University of California-Los Angeles' Hillel, stating:

> "A Visit to Sodom: A Torah Reading in Mixed Media." Arranged by Rabbi Richard N. Levy, this script is a utilization of the Sodom and Gomorra account in *Parasha [sic] Vayera* (Gen. 19) through a dramatic reading, recorded music, slides, and film. The service requires a reader and a cantor who will chant selected sections of the Torah portion either in Hebrew or in English, as the text indicates. Though there are no specific provisions for it in the script, dance may also be introduced into the

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[96] Jospe, Alfred, and Richard N. Levy. Bridges to a Holy Time: New Worship for the Sabbath and Minor Festivals. "Introduction: Tradition and Innovation in Worship," Alfred Jospe. New York: KTAV, 1973. 1.

> dramatization at several points. The intent of the text is to press middle-class Jews into confronting the eternal questions of those contemplating a society in chaos, "What can I do?"[97]

The purpose for creating this service appears to have been an attempt to tap into as many ways as possible to "move" the pray-er as possible, Accepting that not each worshipper is "reached" through recitation or listening to someone else read/recite, the use of technology allows a different way of hearing material that one may have heard many times. Thus, the use of "slides" as referenced within the service was likely rather mainstream for college students in their classes. Adapting their usage to a worship service would have likely made the worship experience more accessible.

b. Lack of Early Adoption of Technology by Synagogues

Other than occasional experimental use, synagogues have been slow to introduce the use of screen/projection technology into regular worship. What is the reason? Rabbi Peter Knobel, current President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis wrote:

> Has the new technology fundamentally changed the concept of a book and its role in worship? In churches across the country, hymnals are being replaced by television screens where the words are projected to the entire congregation and PowerPoint presentations accompany the minister's sermon.[98]

Rabbi Knobel seems to point out the bias against adopting worship techniques from our Christian brothers and sisters because they might not seem "authentically Jewish." By analogy, it is interesting to note that one of the initial objections to

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[97] Levy, Richard N. "Introduction: Tradition and Innovation in Worship: Creativity: Path to Tradition." Bridges to a Holy Time: New Worship for the Sabbath and Minor Festivals. Eds. Alfred Jospe and Richard N. Levy. New York: KTAV, 1973. 20-21.

[98] Knobel, Peter. "The Challenge of a Single Prayer Book." Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism. Ed. Dana Evan Kaplan. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 159.

introducing band-style "rock music" to Jewish worship is that it was seen as emulating Christian practices. However, ten years after the introduction of the "Friday Night Live" service at Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, these so-called "band services" have become the norm in North American reform congregations, although usually on a monthly basis. (Indeed, many conservative synagogues have also followed this trend, although to a much lesser degree than reform ... this is particularly interesting in that the pioneer, Sinai Temple, is a conservative congregation.)

Understanding the special relationship Jews have to the written word historically, particularly in light of holy books being burned and the too-often inability to pray as one wished using the accoutrements one wished, it is easy to understand that Jews may feel a different connection with a prayer book than Christians, especially when many Christian denominations do not have a fixed liturgy at all.

c. Case Study of the "Mega-Church" Phenomenon: Saddleback Church

Saddleback Church was founded by Pastor Rick Warren in 1980 as a "neighborhood church" in Orange County, California. The church's web-site states, "[e]xplosive growth over the years has brought change, and now Saddleback is a local community within itself." [99] More than 22,000 people attend Saddleback each week, with growth so strong that the church states it is "turning away hundreds of cars each week during our busiest services," resulting in the plan to build "regional churches" in ten locations by 2010 (the first two in Irvine and Corona will be opening this spring). [100]

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99 http://www.saddlebackfamily.com/regionals/index.html. February 3, 2008.

100 http://outreachmagazine.com/docs/top100_2007_largest.pdf. February 3, 2008. Saddleback is the fourth largest church in the United States according to Outreach Magazine, a magazine marketed towards Christian pastors. http://www.saddlebackfamily.com/regionals/index.html. February 3, 2008. The church uses an off-site parking lot on Sunday mornings at a location with a Starbucks, providing free coffee and doughnuts to all worshippers who park in the auxiliary lot and take the shuttle to the church property. http://www.saddlebackfamily.com/etv/default.asp?id=etv_qa. February 3, 2008.

Saddleback Church has completed four phases of its development and is now fundraising to meet its goals for its fifth phase. On 120 acres, the "campus" currently consists of a "Children's Building" and a "Nursery Building," three large permanent tents (with air conditioning/heat, theatre-style lighting, and video capabilities), a two-story classroom building, a building with a large meeting room and multiple smaller meeting rooms as well as a café, a stand-alone café, and the "Worship Center" which seats 3,800. [101] In addition to the Worship Center, there are seven additional "worship venues" found on campus, from the large permanent tent facilities to rooms in a classroom building. These eight venues together offer simultaneous worship services, focused on the different needs of self-selected smasll communities. [102]

Saddleback makes extensive use of technology in worship. The Worship Center has two large "Jumbotron" screens, one on each side of the main stage. These make the service easily viewable from any seat in the space, including the bleacher seats in the back of the large, gym-like room. [103] Below is a photo from the top of bleacher seats at the back of the Worship Center.

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[101] http://www.acousticdimensions.com/projects/worship/saddleback.htm. February 3, 2008.

[102] The worship options respond to congregants' needs. Currently, there is a Spanish service, a "gospel service," a "Guitar-driven, rock-style" service, an "islands-style" service, a singles service (meeting only Saturday night at 6:30 p.m.), a family service with kid-friendly activities, and a service with traditional hymns "all at a lower volume." https://www.saddlebackfamily.com/story/5700.html. February 3, 2008. In the past, there has been a "country" service featuring country music during worship and line dancing following services. In the past, there have been services at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, but this service has been discontinued. Additionally, there have previously been services marketed as "Passion" ("an intimate atmosphere for encountering God ... this service has an all-around younger feel") and "E-1: Basic" ("an introspective approach to praise and worship for young single adults"). http://media.50webs.com/saddleback-church-video-venue-photos-2.html. February 3, 2008.

[103] http://www.acousticdimensions.com/projects/worship/saddleback.htm#. February 3, 2008. This is the website of the company which provided audio and acoustic engineering for the Worship Center.

For those sitting in the floor level seats, there are also three smaller screens in the center just above the main stage, one facing the middle seats, and one facing each side, with all three screens placed on a downward angle to specifically meet the needs of those sitting at floor level who have to look up at an angle to see them. These smaller screens allow those sitting close to the stage to see the various screen shots from the multiple cameras.

During the service, three separate stationary cameras provide live-action shots – two on a small pedestal in the center of the floor at the back, plus one in the far-right hand corner in the rear, also on a small pedestal. (The pedestals are used to ensure that the cameras are over the worshiper's heads when people are standing during the service.) Additionally, a roving on-stage cameraman on also provides live shots used during the service. Saddleback's services are not shown on television; however, they are videotaped for the church's website, for public viewing both live and for later playback.

Because of its large population, Saddleback offers two main services on Saturday afternoon (4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.) and four services on Sundays (9:00 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 4:30 p.m., and 6:30 p.m.). During these times, there are also auxiliary

services going on at the same time focusing on special target audiences, allowing for different styles of worship.

Clearly, this magnitude of worship is not emulated anywhere in Jewish worship today, not even at the High Holy Days. However, elements of this style of worship can be analogized to Jewish worship: concurrent services running for different populations: children's and adult services, for example. Additionally, it is now generally accepted that "overflow seating" at the High Holy Days has often involved either piping in just the sound, or now both sound and video, into a second location. Finally, space planning needs at Saddleback are exactly the same as any Jewish worship space: line of sight issues, amplification issues, helping the community feel "connected" – these are just done on a much larger scale.

d. Case Studies Regarding the Introduction of Technology in Jewish Worship Spaces

i. Examples of Adapting Existing Space

1. Leo Baeck Temple[104]

Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, California, has been using screen/projection technology for the past two years. Interestingly, as the synagogue's social action committee has became more environmentally aware and active, one of the stated goals of introducing technology (throughout the synagogue, not just with respect to worship) has been to reduce paper waste. (In my discussions with him, Rabbi Chasen also indicated that another application of using the technology at Leo Baeck has been to

[104] I interviewed Rabbi Ken Chasen on two separate occasions regarding the use of projection technology in worship spaces. I also attended services twice to view the use of the technology at the synagogue. This section is based on both personal interviews and my experiences at the synagogue.

minimize handing out papers at staff meetings and board meetings in order to reduce paper waste as well – now, as much as possible gets projected directly onto the wall.)

Regarding its use for worship, the technology was initially introduced only during Leo Baeck's "PrOneg," an innovative *oneg Shabbat* which occurs before services start (instead of occurring after the service ends). The PrOneg takes place in the synagogue's social hall, which is separated from the sanctuary by a movable wall.

The purpose of the PrOneg is to allow worshippers to gather for a *nosh* and to chat, readying themselves for the beginning of the service. (By having the PrOneg and service early, congregants can come straight from work and then have dinner after the service without going home from work, eating quickly, and returning to the synagogue – with the Los Angeles traffic patterns, the synagogue felt this configuration better met its congregants' needs than their previous later worship time.)

During the PrOneg, the announcements for the next few weeks are projected on a large screen which hangs from the social hall's ceiling. The projector is a simple model which sits on a small table in the middle of the social hall, raised up to reach the screen. A computer sits next to it on the table. PowerPoint is used as the software for each week's presentations.

When it is time for the service to start, the clergy change PowerPoint files to move to a file containing the blessings. They ask all who are attending to come closer to the screen with their family members so they can participate in singing *Shalom Aleichem*, and then the blessing of the children, the words of which are both projected on the screen. Next, the blessings over the wine and bread are shown to enable congregational participation. Afterwards, the congregation moves as one large group

through the doors at the back of the social hall into the sanctuary for the *Shabbat* service.

In addition to the pre-service usage for announcements and blessings, the congregation sometimes uses the screen/projection technology in the Sanctuary as well. This has occurred when a guest speaker has shown slides during their talks (where the clergy's sermon would normally take place). Another usage by Leo Baeck's clergy has been during services when the Junior Choir sings. In this case, instead of the children holding song sheets to sing from, the Cantor has projected the words to the songs from table at the front of the *bimah* in the front of the Sanctuary onto a wall in the back of the Sanctuary.

There are several benefits to projecting the words onto the back wall. First, the children are looking upwards when they sing, so they generally sing louder. (This occurs naturally because it is easier to sing with one's chin up than down, as well as because the sound is directed outward rather than down.) Second, the children have an easier time seeing the person who is conducting them and sing better together/more in unison because it is easier for them to take direction. Third, because the children are looking outward towards the congregation, the congregation gets to see the children's faces instead of the tops of their heads. This allows for much more eye contact – which makes the children's parents very happy.

Regarding the challenges of integrating technology at the synagogue, Rabbi Chasen indicated that the current architecture of the building is challenging in that they must adapt their present space for its usage. He seemed to have little concern

regarding the aesthetics of needing a table for the necessary computer and projector. He was more impressed with its functionality.

Rabbi Chasen stated that both the other clergy at Leo Baeck Temple and the administrative staff were very open to the use of technology, even in worship. They have discussed the issue and believe the benefits outweigh any disadvantages. As such, as the synagogue embarks on a $25 million capital campaign to rebuild the sanctuary space, Rabbi Chasen is investigating the cost of including screen/projection technology not only in administrative space, but also in the main worship space. He stated that he is somewhat challenged by the preliminary sanctuary design at this time in that the space is designed in a somewhat oblong shape such that worshippers are facing each other, with lots of windows and light at the end of the sanctuary away from the doors. He is aware that it would difficult to install a drop-down screen in an aesthetic way in front of the planned windows. Furthermore, the new worship space is specifically being designed to take advantage of as much light as possible (Leo Baeck is located in a valley, very close to the bottom of a large hill). This provides an additional challenge with respect to natural light behind any drop-down screen that may be installed. (He will be investigating different types of shades for the windows to alleviate this problem.)

Regarding who is responsible for creating the items which are projected on the screen, Rabbi Chasen stated that both the clergy and staff are very well trained and enthusiastic about using the technology. The assistant rabbi and the cantor both are able to use the technology, with the office staff having primary responsibility for creating the announcements which are projected each week. Most importantly, however, Rabbi

Chasen stated that this could not be done without a staff with a good attitude toward learning how to use the technology and incorporate its use meaningfully into the congregation's daily life.

Regarding any "pushback" to the introduction of technology, Rabbi Chasen stated that its introduction came about during a time of intensive change in worship practices at the synagogue. Upon his arrival as the new rabbi (being only the third senior rabbi since the congregation's creation in 1947), Rabbi Chasen embarked on a plan to facilitate his transition into the role as spiritual leader as smoothly as possible. He scheduled multiple meetings with specially-selected congregants regarding possible changes in worship practices, which included leaving behind a synagogue-specific liturgy which had been used for many years. Through a careful planning and transition process and the creation of "buy-in" over the course of many conversations, change to the liturgy was introduced in a relatively quick time (i.e., less than one year after the new rabbi started, the worship model at the synagogue changed significantly, from a relatively "classical" approach to a more modern, mainstream reform approach). The introduction of technology was discussed very little in light of the much more drastic changes going on with respect to replacing a prayer book, along with changing the musical style and the whole tone of the service to a more participatory feel. It was merely a part of *all* of the changes that were happening at the same time.

The successful introduction of technology in worship spaces at Leo Baeck Temple is built on a very simple model. It is supplementary in nature, which allows the congregants to feel comfortable with the technology, i.e., they are not being asked to give anything up. Also, because of the congregation's interest in "greening" its

synagogue, the use of the technology has been marketed as a way to be more ecologically aware (through saving paper), which has probably contributed to its success.

2. Kehillat Israel[105]

Kehillat Israel, the largest Reconstructionist congregation in America, is located in Pacific Palisades, California. This congregation introduced screen/projection technology in its monthly youth service in January 2007. This monthly service runs parallel to the adult service and is called the "PaLS" service, short for "Pray, Learn, and Socialize." Each month, the PaLS *Shabbat* service night focuses on a different value/theme which is coordinated with the general service, such that both children and adults learn about the same idea during worship. Near the end of the general service, the children return to their parents for a blessing.

When asked what motivated the introduction of technology into worship, Jon Hanish, the Rabbinic Intern responsible for introducing it, stated that the service previously used photocopied prayer books that were flimsy and worn. Hanish and the other intern responsible for the service noticed that the kids would often not be on the correct page during the service and they did not want to be the "prayer book police." (Indeed, he stated that the children would sometimes not listen to the page numbers even when they were announced.) Consequently, he suggested projecting the liturgy onto the wall and doing away with the use of the prayer books altogether. He noted that the conservative rabbinic student who was also responsible for this service was initially against the idea of projecting the service.

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[105] I interviewed Jon Hanish multiple times between took place between December of 2007 and February 26, 2008. Furthermore, I attended services at Kehillat Israel to view the service described on two separate occasions. This section is based both on interviews and my experiences at the synagogue.

The initial service was prepared using the Hebrew word processing program Davka, with all screens in a single document, then the entire final service saved into PDF format. The computer file was structured such that one formatted page of liturgy would fill an entire screen. There were no graphics in the service and it was very simple to operate since someone (usually him) merely needed to hit the "page down" button as they moved through the service.

Regarding the physical set-up of the worship space, the main sanctuary held the general service, necessitating that the PaLS *Shabbat* service take place in the congregation's social hall, which is separate from the sanctuary. The computer is placed on a small table with the projector. There is no screen; the images are projected up high on a wall. The children sit on the floor or stand as necessitated by the particular prayer being recited.

Regarding reaction to the initial service, the conservative rabbinical student was pleased with its usage – both interns discovered that the children were more involved in the service than they had been when they were using prayer books and they no longer needed to be "the prayer book police." Jon opined that this change in behavior was due to the children being socialized as "visually focused," i.e, they are trained to look at television and computer screens and not books. Further, he stated that they realized "this is what they [the children] do because this is their generation and we need to program for them that way."

As the service has evolved, Hanish decided to include graphics and different colors within the projected liturgy to make it more interesting and attractive for the children. Additionally, the service has evolved to include slides that are more interactive

in nature, with teachings and questions interspersed with the liturgy. By making the service more interactive, the children are more engaged in the worship. For example, the theme for the month of January was *tzedek*. Because the service was projected rather than printed, he was able to include questions relating to the theme of righteousness throughout the liturgy, enabling him to have the worshippers share experiences in *chevrutah* merely by reading the question posed on the screen. Thus, the goal of making the service more interactive based on the theme has been easy to accomplish on the computer with a projected service since there are no handouts – one just adds in a page of text for a specific service and then deletes it when it is no longer needed. Projecting the service has also been helpful when teaching new songs to the children for holidays, i.e., a new page is added to the projected liturgy and then easily removed after the holiday passes.

Finally, Hanish mentioned that, in addition to being a particularly good approach to liturgy for children, he believed the idea of not wasting paper was a significant benefit to using the technology. Simply put, without being distracted, the kids can just sit down and pray.

ii. The "Mega-Church" Experience in a Jewish Context

1. Biennial Usage During Shabbat

Since 2001, the bi-annual national convention of the Union for Reform Judaism has included screen/projection technology during its Shabbat worship. Because over 4,000 individuals come together to pray at *Erev Shabbat* and *Shabbat Shacharit* services, services are held in large convention center halls. Because many of the

worshippers are far away, large drop-down screens are used to project the service leaders throughout the service, much as is done in the mega-churches.

One particular innovation, however, is unique to the Biennial Convention: *Torah*-cam. *Torah*-cam is a camera which allows a scroll to be shown on the screens as it is being read. Interestingly, though, one should note that the *Torah* actually read during the service is not the *Torah* being shown on-screen, i.e, a second *Torah* is used backstage for purposes of showing the text on screen. (This was discovered in 2001 when the *Torah*-reader on the *bimah* kept chanting while the person following along with a *yad* got lost in the *Torah* text.)

After three biennial experiences, a new technological application occurred at the latest Biennial convention in 2007: text was added to the screen shots so that people could read the words with melodies not found in the prayer books. (In previous years, there was no text found onscreen during the worship.) This sparked some discussion among attendees about looking for the "bouncing ball" of their youth.

2. Experimental *Ma'ariv* Service at the 2007 URJ Biennial

Rabbi Billy Dreskin of Woodlands Community Temple in Greenburgh, New York, was selected to lead an "experimental" *ma'ariv* service on the first planned day of the 2007 Union for Reform Judaism's Biennial convention based on prior screen/projected services he led at his own synagogue and at his regional biennial.[106]

By the time Rabbi Dreskin led the service at the Biennial, he had already worked out "some of the kinks." In his first service, Rabbi Dreskin used PowerPoint as the presentation software. However, PowerPoint has many problems with the difficulty of

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[106] I conducted an extensive interview of Rabbi Billy Dreskin during the 2007 Biennial Convention for the Union for Reform Judaism. This section is based on that interview.

importing Hebrew text. Consequently, Rabbi Dreskin was using church-oriented liturgical presentation software by the time he presented the service at the Biennial.

The service at the Biennial was projected onto two screens, one at each side of the front of the convention space. The projectors were on small tables on the floor, controlled by a single computer operated by Rabbi Dreskin's thirtee-year-old son, Aiden. The service leaders, including multiple musicians and a choir, were seated on a platform between the two large screens.

On the entry doors, signs were posted indicating that no prayer book was needed for the service, however, there was a box of prayer books guarded by an usher at each door. If someone insisted, they would be given a prayer book. The service itself was traditional in its liturgy. Each prayer was projected onto the screen, often with a video of nature in the background.

Over 800 people attended the service, a dramatic increase to the number of people who usually attend the afternoon service on the first day of the Biennial. Over 150 people attended a follow-up session two days later designed to discuss the service and ways to introduce technology into congregations.

One of the concerns Rabbi Dreskin discussed was making sure that the technology actually worked. He stated that it was important to have a "run-through" working with all of the individuals involved, since timing of changing the slides is important if no prayer book is used.

In post-service interviews of random attendees, the most often quoted challenge was problem that the congregants were sitting on a level floor, meaning that one's view of the screens could easily be blocked by someone sitting/standing in front of you.

Otherwise, the service was generally well accepted. (It is important to note that the people who attend the URJ Biennial are generally what one might consider "change-seekers." Additionally, big-screen usage had been introduced several years before, albeit with books at the URJ convention. Thus, the major innovation for this service was the lack of books.)

iii. Technology Available in a Newly-Constructed Facility: Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada

Congregation Ner Tamid opened its newly-constructed facility in February of 2007. Among the items in its design were: a "*Torah*-cam" in the ceiling centered above the *Torah*-reading table facing downward, two drop-down screens on each side of the Ark, two projectors in the ceiling, and each facing one of the drop-down screens. Two drop-down screens are also located in the Social Hall on the ceiling closest to the connecting Sanctuary, for use when the seating is expanded by putting away the movable wall separating the spaces.

Uses for the screens have included showing DVDs during life-cycle events and parties and to show video montages during special services such as before the service dedicating the sanctuary space. Occasionally, the screens are used during the opening of Religious School to project song lyrics. However, until the service I created, none of the technology present had been used to project liturgy during a worship service.

VI. Analysis of "Screen-Projected Service" I Wrote and Used at Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, Nevada

The purpose of this section is to reflect on the experience of writing and leading a screen/projected service after having completed significant research on this topic.[107]

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[107] A copy of the service is attached as "A" to this paper. The pre-service announcements that were shown are attached as "B."

This special service was conducted on Friday, January 18, 2008, at my student pulpit: Congregation Ner Tamid, 55 North Valle Verde Parkway, Henderson, Nevada. The service was held in the synagogue's main sanctuary in order to take advantage of the technology available in that worship space.

a. Goals for Creating This Type of Service

I had very specific goals when I approached the rabbi about creating a *siddur*-less service. First, I wanted the challenge of offering something "cutting edge" to the congregation in Las Vegas, i.e., something it would be unlikely they would see anywhere else in the valley. (In light of the size/resources available to the remaining synagogues in town, it is highly unlikely this type of worship would be pursued.) I wanted to "push the envelope" with respect to testing people's "comfort zones" and my ability to help them through their difficulties. Additionally, I wanted to challenge the rabbi's sense of "thinking outside the box" with respect to pushing his staff towards using the technology available in the building which had not yet been accessed, even after being in the facility almost one year.

Finally, the synagogue's president had given an instruction that paper usage was to be cut in order to save costs. I intended this service to meet that goal as well since the synagogue photocopied 300-400 sheets of paper for the weekly announcements and the *Mi Sheberach* list each week (both sheets were double-sided), resulting in most of them being thrown away. (See Appendix "A" for the slides containing the announcements that were shown. See Appendix "B" for the slides containing the complete liturgy of the service.)

b. Goals for Creating the Liturgy

This service was intentionally scheduled to occur on the Friday night of Martin Luther King, Jr., weekend for two very specific reasons. First, service attendance is usually significantly lower on holiday/long weekends, thus minimizing the risk in case the service was not well received. Second, the rabbi committed to giving a specially-advertised sermon about his father's relationship with Martin Luther King, Jr., thus creating "buy-in" on his part to ensure I received the necessary cooperation from other staff members to be able to carry out this specially-created service.

With respect to the goals of the liturgy itself, because the service would be presented in a different format than congregants were used to, I wanted to be sensitive to not changing the entire liturgy at the same time I changed its presentation. Therefore, my goal was to select the greater body of the liturgy from "Gates of Prayer" (the synagogue's usual prayer book) which matched the theme of the service – freedom from bondage. Additionally, my priorities with respect to providing transliterations are slightly different than the rest of the clergy at this synagogue, so creating this kind of service allowed me to have every word included and transliterated so we could test out my theory that this would increase congregational participation.

Regarding music for the service, I had some input into the musical selections, but not complete control. For example, the cantorial soloist was given the power to decide specific settings of prayers, so I needed to work with him to ensure that the pieces fit the emotional tone I was trying to set within the service. I was able to supplement the liturgy in several places with pieces of music appropriate to the theme. For example, for the *Mi Chamocha*, I added the African-American spiritual "Let My People Go," arranged

in a creative way: the English lyrics were interspersed with the chorus of *Mi Chamocha*. (The purpose of including this was to reinforce the connection in the liturgy of the Jews being freed from slavery to the emancipation of African-Americans in light of the holiday weekend.)

I was able to influence the music for this service in two additional ways. In discussing the rabbi's sermon with him, we were able to include in the projected service itself all of the words for the anthem following the rabbi's sermon about his father's involvement in the civil rights movement, "We Shall Overcome" – a stalwart from the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Normally, the cantorial soloist performs the anthem as a listening piece, which was contrary to one of the goals of this service, which was to be as participatory as possible. Since all of the words could be projected onto the screens, a liminal moment was created when everyone was asked to stand and lock arms while singing this song – they were able to do this without difficulty because there was no song sheet to hold.

Lastly, with respect to music, one of the goals of this service was to create the feeling of continuity throughout the service. In order to set the mood for the evening, I asked the accompanist to begin playing music fifteen minutes before the service started, at the same time the announcements would begin to be projected. When the clergy entered onto the *bimah*, the accompanist would continue to play, segueing from the announcements into the introduction/explanation of the service. By having her play underneath the service introduction, the tone could be set for the entire service. Furthermore, this would model a different way of doing responsive readings in English, which many think of as stopping the mood of a service since the music usually stops for

the reading. Having the music play underneath helps the congregation feel that the words of the English prayers are just as important as the Hebrew that might be sung to the music as well; in other words, it can help create a sense of sanctity in an otherwise dry liturgical piece.

My introduction was a very important piece regarding setting the tone of the service for the congregation. I was careful to begin by asking them to step "out of their comfort zone" and feel the freedom of not holding a prayer book throughout the entire service. I suggested that they could clap, snap, wave their hands in the air, or even hold the hand of their loved one if they are sitting next to them. I told them that the service would be just like any other service ... but different. They didn't need a book. They just needed an open mind. In order to create "buy-in," I told them that the experimental service was part of my "capstone project" on the introduction of technology in worship, necessary for my ordination, and hoped that they would open themselves up to join me in the experiment.

What did I not tell them? Until a few minutes before the service started, I was wavering regarding whether or not to tell the congregation in my introduction that the numbers in the bottom right-hand corner of each slide were page numbers that corresponded to "Gates of Prayer." In the end, I decided to not include this in my opening because I believed that telling them would be an invitation to pick up the books that were sitting in the seat-back pocket of the chair in front of them (unlike Rabbi Dreskin's service at the Biennial, my congregants had the books within arm's reach). I also did not tell them that there would be an opportunity for discussion after the service so I could hear their feedback.

c. Issues Surrounding Using the Technology

i. Software Issues

I experienced the expected difficulties with the introduction of Hebrew text into the PowerPoint software. Because PowerPoint is based on a Microsoft Word platform, it has the same problems with inserting Hebrew that Word does (it is incredibly difficult to type since the words have to be typed backwards, left to right, letter then vowel by letter then vowel, without a special Hebrew add-on). An additional difficulty is that Word does not allow direct importing of Hebrew from Davka Hebrew word-processing software. Only after MUCH difficulty (and many recommendations from others that I simply leave out the Hebrew altogether) was I was able to figure out a way to type the Hebrew into Davka and then import it without changing all of the Hebrew formatting.

Having the Hebrew was important for me for two reasons. First, Hebrew is in the prayer book and, to me, this was intended to be a prayer book replacement for purposes of this service. Therefore, everything that was in the prayer book should be up on the screen. Second, some people might argue that the difficulty in making the software work as they want is justification not to use the technology. Third, because I am a strident supporter of every word in the Hebrew being transliterated for those who cannot read Hebrew, I feel I must not be hypocritical and leave the Hebrew out. (Indeed, once someone learns to read Hebrew, it is often the transliteration that they have difficulty with, and these people should not be punished if I were to be too lazy to figure out the solution to the problem.) Lastly, even though the liturgy is projected via what some might consider an informal system, it is still Hebrew prayer. Therefore, the prayers should be included in the Hebrew.

ii. **Projector Issues**

The synagogue's cantorial soloist is charged with responsibility for all of the technology in the sanctuary space (and, more broadly, anything to do with sound amplification in the entire facility). Consequently, there was some need to coordinate this service with him in order to ensure a smooth service. This was done via a meeting with the rabbi and the soloist the Sunday morning before the Friday service. During this time, it was discovered that the synagogue needed to procure additional lengths of cabling to connect the computer screen to the projector, which had to be located more than twenty feet away from the center *bimah* table which held the computer.

The synagogue actually has two ceiling-mounted projectors that are permanently aimed at screens that drop down on the left and right sides of the Ark. These projectors were not available to me since it was believed that the synagogue was missing a piece of equipment to connect the computer to these ceiling projectors; in the past, these projectors had only been used to play DVDs. Because of this, the synagogue had purchased a small, portable projector for use with computers. This is the projector I used for the service.

iii. **Aesthetic Issues**

Because the computer was located on the center *bimah* table so I could lead the service while the projector was off to the edge of the *bimah*, a twenty-foot long connecting cord was strung between the two pieces of equipment. Because this cord needed to be taped down to the carpet to prevent anyone from tripping, this was not very attractive. There was a second cord coming out of the back of the computer into a floor outlet on the *bimah* which was, again, not very attractive. Finally, the electrical

cords from the projector looked unattractive because they also needed to be taped down. (Interestingly, the chief fundraiser for the building project happened to be at services that night. He remarked to the rabbi, "Why aren't you going through the system we paid so much for? None of this ugliness would be necessary if we used the equipment in the building rather than rigging it up this way." He clearly did not know that the soloist believed there was a needed piece of equipment in order to use the projectors in the ceiling.)

Another aesthetic issue to be dealt with concerned lighting. Both drop-down screens to either side of the Ark are located in front of a eight foot by twenty foot piece of art that hangs on the wall. Spot lighting was installed in order to highlight these two large pieces of art. This spot lighting shone right over the top of the screen, causing a glare. I spent a significant amount of time at what I considered to be the "technology rehearsal" during the day attempting to determine how to turn off this single spotlight. However, because the lighting system is choreographed for different uses (none of them being using the drop-down screens while retaining enough light in the room for it not to be considered dark), there was no way at the time to figure out how to turn off a single bulb. (I had even considered the creative solution of asking a maintenance man to simply get on an extension ladder and loosen the light bulb, but this was not possible in time before the service.)

A third aesthetic issue arose at the rehearsal: what kind of table to use for the projector. Several different types were tried, but all required a significant amount of books to prop up the projector to just the right height and angle. In the end, the cantorial soloist suggested an excellent solution: to place the projector on a music

stand. Because the stand was adjustable for both height and angle, it worked beautifully.

iv. **Changing Slides Between Prayers**

When creating the slides for the service, I created one file for the announcements before services and a second file for the service itself. This was necessitated by the announcements needing to be set to repeat automatically after a certain number of seconds (I selected six seconds between slides). Consequently, when the "setting the tone" music ended and I was preparing to introduce the service, I also needed to change files, closing the announcements and opening up the service file.

Rabbi Billy Dreskin uses his son, Aiden, to be the person sitting in the back of the room to press "next" to go from one slide to the next. Because I had no one to ask to perform this function for me, I both led the reading of the service and was responsible for the "electronic page turning," with only two times being slow to move the liturgy forward. Neither time was overly awkward, but the necessity to control the technology aspect of the service while leading the spiritual part was a challenge I believe should be handled wrangling a second body to "turn the pages." This would free up the service leader to focus more on creating a spiritual atmosphere.

d. Feedback from Staff

I did receive some initial "pushback" from staff during the planning process. I believe this occurred for two reasons: first, none of them had ever experienced a screen/projected service before, with one exception: the cantorial soloist had attended the Biennial *Ma'ariv* service which was the showcase introduction to the technology.[108]

[108] While I had used the projector for the first time during services about six weeks before the "capstone service" (for a special service focusing on Darfur education), no members of the staff, including

Second, like many people, the staff seems to be risk-aversive with respect to instituting change. There is no culture of "even a failure at something new is a good experience." Consequently, it is sometimes difficult to "step outside the box" with the limited authority of the position of "Rabbinic Intern."

Once the service had been complete, the feedback from the non-clergy staff who attended was very good. On a very practical level, the maintenance staff commented favorably that there was no paper to clean up in the sanctuary after services. The office staff appreciated that they did not have to make hundreds of copies they knew got thrown away every week.

With respect to their reaction to the service itself, the reaction was positive. Interestingly, no one from the staff provided negative feedback (which people usually feel comfortable to do), and several people said they enjoyed seeing "something different." All of them seemed favorably disposed to the technology available simply being used at all, except the rabbi, who stated that he was "unsure that using the technology added anything to the service."

e. Feedback from Congregants

At the end of the service, the congregation was invited to share feedback in the "Multi-Purpose Room" across from the social hall. More than 40 people crammed into the room to share their thoughts on the service (approximately 150 people attended the

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the rabbi, happened to be present. For this special Darfur education service, I used PowerPoint to create eight slides with pictures depicting the situation in Darfur. Each slide had a short explanatory piece to go along with the picture. These slides began playing 20 minutes before the service and continued being shown until the beginning of the Amidah, rotating every twenty-five seconds, playing over and over. The feedback I received from this "dipping my toe in the water" was very good, with people saying they thought it was very effective to have the pictures playing in the background as I interwove social justice-themed readings on the responsibility to act within the service.

service). All of the comments except one were expected as a result of the research I completed. The unexpected comment will be discussed last.

i. Expected Feedback from Congregants[109]

Even though I made announcements several weeks in advance that the service would be "experimental" and had placed an announcement in the congregational Bulletin, several people said they did not know there would be a special service on this particular night. I am unsure how I would, or even if I could, "correct" this in the future except to begin announcing the special service even earlier.

The issue with the spotlight above the drop-down screen was expected. Several congregants complained that the glare made it difficult for them to see the top part of the screen.

I expected to hear discomfort regarding what to do with one's hands during the service. The negative aspect of this comment was actually minimal, with several older people saying that they appreciated not having to hold the book during the entirety of services because it was heavy.

Several people said they had trouble reading the type on the screen. However, many more people responded by saying they had no trouble at all. Several people stated that they figured out that the numbers in the bottom right-hand corner represented the page numbers in "Gates of Prayer" so they just pulled out the prayer book and followed along that way when they had difficulty seeing the screen. (One woman said that this confirmed her need to see her eye doctor.) On a very practical

[109] The following comments are based on a group discussion (about forty people participated) which took place fifteen minutes after services ended. The conversation lasted approximately forty minutes.

note, one congregant noted that it is difficult to bow and read the screen during the *Aleinu*

A couple people stated that it was difficult to read the Hebrew print, while another person said the transliteration should be bigger. However, others said the print was nice and clear and it was not difficult to read.

One very negative comment came from an older congregant and his wife who recently donated 300 copies of *Mishkan T'fila* to the synagogue. He and his wife stated, "I feel like I was following the bouncing ball at a church ... and why did we donate all those prayer books if we aren't going to use them?"

In response, I explained in great detail that this was an experiment and that the congregation had no intention of going to a screen/projected service every week. This was intended to be an example of how the synagogue tries to stay on the "cutting edge" by introducing a variety of kinds of worship to its congregants. "The screen is not close to my heart." (The same announcement had been made in my introduction at the beginning of the service, leading me to believe that this was mostly situational in light of the recent large book donation.) Another congregant noted that Judaism does not connect well with the introduction of technology like the mega-churches.

Several congregants noted that they missed the feel of having the prayer book in front of them. They stated that holding the book allows them to follow along with the Hebrew with their finger and practice their Hebrew. However, another congregant said she was able to "mellow out" because she was not worried about staying on the right page. Others joined her in stating that they felt it was liberating not to hold onto the book.

One congregant noted, "if we are going to use technology, then we need to do it very well." He was concerned with the aesthetics, especially in light of the fixed technology in the synagogue not being used that night. Another congregant said it would be better if a third person controlled the computer to move the service pages forward. (I agree.)

One said the congregation was singing louder than normal because people were projecting up not down toward their books.

Several congregants noted that they liked the idea of changing and trying new things, to keep the service "refreshing." One added that he thought liked the service but thought it would have been better to have pictures related to the sermon showing behind the rabbi (i.e., pictures of the Rabbi's father instead of just pictures of Martin Luther King, since the sermon was entitled, "My Father, Martin Luther King, and Me").

There was uniform agreement regarding the use of the announcements via projection. Everyone agreed that the saving of paper was a primary concern. (One congregant noted that he liked the use of technology "because the synagogue saved money.") It was noted that, because everything is always in the Bulletin, people could look up anything they wanted to investigate further. However, the rabbi made certain to state that a limited number of printed copies of the announcements would be available after services in case there was someone who did not have internet access or they merely wanted a hard copy to take home.

Regarding ideas for improvement, one congregant suggested changing the colors of the slides for the announcements so that someone could differentiate between

announcements (he stated that they seemed to "blend together" since they were on the same color background).

Finally, one congregant asked about the possibility of broadcasting services. The rabbi explained that this is a goal that the congregation is pursuing.

ii. Unexpected Feedback from Congregants

Based on my previously completed research, the only comment I truly did not expect before leading the service at Congregation Ner Tamid was from a female congregant probably in her 50s. She stated that she loved the service because she wears reading glasses, which means she has to put them on to read from a prayer book and take them off to look at the prayer leader. Because she did not have to worry about taking her glasses on and off, she loved that the service was projected onto a screen – no more fumbling with her glasses.

f. Plan for using the technology at CNT in the future

The rabbi at the synagogue has great concerns over the manpower necessary to conduct a wholly screen/projected service again in the future. Consequently, it is unlikely that this will occur again until someone with a special interest in this type of service is again on staff to spearhead the project.

However, because the response was so great to the announcements being shown on screen, the rabbi has made a commitment to using the screen/projection technology to project the synagogue announcement's each week before the service begins. (Interestingly, two weeks after this service, when I was not present, the announcements were not projected ... because no one had been assigned the responsibility to follow through and make sure it occurred, i.e., no one was invested in

the process. I understand that this issue has been resolved and the announcements are being projected each week.)

VII. Conclusion

Understanding that change is natural in Judaism allows innovation in not only space design, but also the applications that take place within that space. It appears that the biggest challenge to implementing innovations like screen/projection technology in worship is not the cost of the technology (which was never discussed as a factor in any of the interviews I completed), but rather having the right people spearheading its introduction. Only people who are truly invested in making it a success for the right reason, and who are concerned enough to introduce it in a thoughtful way will be successful.

Additionally, one must consider *why* the technology should be introduced. In the case of using it with children, it is easy to see that they are growing up with the technology and are very comfortable with it. With respect to older congregants, some may balk at the idea of change regardless, but with careful planning, they can be helped to accept a new way of approaching prayer. At this time, because of the difficulty with "letting go of books," the best introduction of screen/projection technology to Jewish worship practice appears to be the use of it as supplementary, to enhance worship, so that no one feels their prayer books have been "taken away." In this way, we meet the needs of every generation.

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- Rabbi Billy Dreskin
- Jon Hanish
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