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"A Course for the Intermediate Grades in the Understanding  
and Personal Relevance of the Traditional Jewish Prayers  
in the Reform Liturgy."

written by Milton Irving Schlager  
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A COURSE FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES IN THE  
UNDERSTANDING AND PERSONAL RELEVANCE  
OF THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH PRAYERS  
IN THE REFORM LITURGY

by

MILTON IRVING SCHLAGER

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Master of Hebrew Letters Degree  
and Ordination

Hebrew Union College-  
Jewish Institute of Religion  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
February, 1954

Referee:  
Professor Sylvan Schwartzman

## THESIS DIGEST

The title of this thesis is "Toward a Course of Study for the Intermediate Grades in the Understanding and Personal Relevance of the Traditional Jewish Prayers in the Reform Liturgy". It is divided into two sections: Section A, containing 26 pages; and Section B, containing 125 pages. The thesis also has a list of the sources of the stories, footnotes, and a selected bibliography.

Section A, shows the results of a survey to ascertain the status of instruction in liturgy in Jewish religious schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which have at least two hundred members; and information regarding Reform children's comprehension of the traditional prayers in the Union Prayer Book and the reactions and attitudes toward it. For the purpose of fulfilling these objectives two questionnaires were sent out. The first questionnaire was sent out to the directors of one hundred and forty-one schools. Eighty-four replies were received representing an enrollment of more than eighty-five hundred students. Following this, a second questionnaire was sent out to the children of the intermediate grades, and five hundred questionnaires were filled out and returned.

The findings show that forty percent of the schools offered no courses in liturgy. Less than one third used textbooks other than the Union Prayer Book. In general, very little time was devoted to the teaching of liturgy. The major texts used were: "Our Prayer Book", by Soloff; and "In the House of

the Lord", by Freehof.

The questionnaire of the students of the intermediate grades indicated in general a good understanding of the prayers and a growing awareness of the liturgy. However, there was little association of the students between the prayers and their personal wants.

Section B, consists of a textbook designed to meet the need of relating the prayers to the student himself and also increase his comprehension of the liturgy. It is based on an emotional approach for students of the sixth grade. It tries to explain the prayers by means of an appropriate story commentary. It is hoped by such an approach to overcome in part some of the problems facing the intermediate grades in the teaching of liturgy.



to  
my Wife  
and  
Parents

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the many rabbis, teachers, and students of the Reform religious schools who so helpfully gave of their time in furnishing data for the present study, the author expresses appreciation.

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The author also acknowledges his indebtedness to his typist, Mrs. Janice Shulman, for her fine cooperation and careful work in the typing of the thesis.

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Section A

A SURVEY OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEEDS  
IN LITURGY COURSES

## INTRODUCTION

### THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This thesis, "Toward a Course of Study for the Intermediate Grades in the Understanding and Personal Relevance of the Traditional Jewish Prayers in the Reform Liturgy" is a study of the current situation and needs in the area of Reform Jewish Liturgy in the religious school, and provides a basis for a textbook aimed at fulfilling those needs in part.

The Reform movement has made great strides in the enrichment and beautification of the traditional Jewish service of worship. All sorts of innovations have been employed to enhance the service. Although we have some indications of response of adult Jews towards Jewish prayer, very little is known about children's comprehension of the Jewish liturgy and their personal attitudes toward it. While everyone accepts the importance of worship and prayer for youngsters, and the need for its early development, relatively little has been attempted in this area, beyond the conducting of religious school services. A few textbooks have been written for the purpose of explaining the Reform Jewish prayers, but they are primarily for the upper grades and adults. What of the younger pupils? Here obviously the need for a textbook, geared towards arousing their interest, and suited in vocabulary and conceptual grasp, is indicated.

This thesis, therefore, attempts to meet two needs:

(1) to ascertain the facts concerning Reform children's comprehension of the traditional liturgy in the Union Prayer Book and their feelings toward it; and (2) to create the basis for a text that will satisfy their needs in this area.

#### GENERAL SURVEY

Based on these objectives, this thesis is divided into two main sections: Section A, containing 26 pages; and Section B, containing 125 pages. The thesis also contains a list of the sources of the stories, footnotes, and a selected bibliography.

Section A, presents the results of a survey taken of the status of instruction in liturgy at present provided by Jewish religious schools affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations which have at least two hundred members.

A questionnaire and a follow-up letter were sent to all those congregations, requesting information regarding their liturgy courses in the intermediate grades. One hundred and forty-one questionnaires were sent out, and eighty-four replies were received representing an enrollment of more than eighty-five hundred students. Following this, a second questionnaire was sent out to test the attitudes and reactions of the children in the intermediate grades toward prayer as found in the Union Prayer Book. Seven religious schools of different sizes in different parts of the country were selected for this sampling. Replies were received from more than five hundred questionnaires which were filled out and returned.

The approach and content of the textbook material in Section B, "Story Commentary on the Sabbath Morning Service" was prepared on the basis of the findings. Since the survey in part showed that where courses in liturgy are taught, the prayers are explained to youngsters by textbooks that use a rational approach directed almost exclusively to the intellect, it was recognized that such a method does not necessarily increase a favorable emotional response toward the prayers on the part of the students.

It appeared to the writer that what was needed here was an appeal directed to the heart as well as to the mind, and for an appreciation of the personal relevance of the prayers. Here the attempt is made to utilize short Jewish stories both as commentary and as an explanation of the main lesson offered by the prayer; and it is hoped that the prayers will take on new personal meaning and interest for the student.

Section B, begins with a general discussion of why people pray. Then it attempts to explain the Jewish concept of prayer, and what prayer should mean to the individual. Following a short introduction to the Siddur, the Synagogue, and the Sabbath, it offers an explanation of most of the traditional Sabbath prayers with each followed by an appropriate story out of Jewish source illustrating the central theme of the prayer.

#### THE PRELIMINARY SURVEY

The preliminary survey has been confined to Reform

children of the intermediate grades, that is, between the sixth and eighth grades of the religious school. This particular age-level was selected for two reasons: First of all, very few liturgy textbooks have been written for use in these grades; and secondly, this is the age at which pupils have already developed sufficient reading ability and conceptual comprehension to begin instruction in liturgy.

In this survey no exhaustive study has been attempted. It represents merely a preliminary and limited scale investigation. Hence while it is a useful sample of the picture that exists in some Reform schools, generalizations should not be made to consider this a completely accurate statistical survey of the movement as a whole.

To ascertain the facts regarding the teaching of liturgy in the Reform religious school and the comprehension of the prayerbooks by the pupils, direct inquiry was addressed to the individual congregational religious schools. The first step was to find out what was the scope of instruction offered in liturgy and a questionnaire was prepared by which the following information was solicited by means of a return postcard. Does the particular school offer any courses in liturgy? What textbooks are the classes using? Is liturgy taught together with the study of Hebrew? How much time of each week is devoted to liturgy? How many students are in the class?

The information was requested from over one hundred and forty member congregations of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with over two hundred members. (See Appendix A)



A follow-up letter was sent with the same questions to those congregations that did not respond. (See Appendix B).

#### FINDINGS OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY

A total of eighty-four congregations representing an enrollment of more than eighty-five hundred students responded.

The findings show that forty percent offered no courses in liturgy. Of those who offered a course in liturgy, more than a third taught it in conjunction with Hebrew. In those classes where liturgy was taught, less than one-third used textbooks other than the Union Prayer Book. The amount of time utilized in those classes with textbooks, including the Union Prayer Book, was as follows: On a weekly basis, seven schools taught liturgy for one hour per week; fourteen less than one hour; and only four for more than one hour.

These were the textbooks that were used in the courses, and the number of schools that employed them:

Braverman, Prayer Study	1
Cleveland, Prayer Study	1
Freehof, In the House of the Lord	6
Freehof, Little Sanctuary	2
Freehof, Learning of Prayer	1
Reichler, Prayer Study	2
Soloff, Our Prayer Book	8
Soloff, Jewish Life	2

A further questionnaire was devised in order to ascertain the understandings of children in relation to the prayers. The first explained the purpose of the questionnaire and

offered some sample answers for the clarification of the method the pupils were asked to follow. The remainder of the questionnaire contained four appropriate prayer selections from the Union Prayer Book which was used as a basis for testing pupil comprehension, attitudes of prayerfulness, and personal reactions toward traditional Jewish prayers. This questionnaire was sent out together with a letter of instruction to the teacher. (See Appendix C and D). For those religious schools who were late in responding, a follow-up was also sent out. (See Appendix E).

A total of 507 questionnaires were received from the following four schools:

- 1) The religious school of Congregation Emanu El, Houston, Texas;
- 2) The religious school of Congregation Emanu El, San Francisco, California;
- 3) The religious school of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio;
- 4) The religious school of Temple Emanuel, Worcester, Massachusetts.

A detailed tabulation of the questionnaires appears on page ix. However the general findings reveal, first, that the general comprehension of prayers among the students in the intermediate grades was quite high, ranging between 80% and 88%. In general, there was an increase in comprehension with the advance of grade level. Thus, whereas the sixth grade showed about 75%, the eighth grade had a percentage of about 92% in their understanding of the prayers. Secondly, well over ninety percent of all students indicated a wholesome

attitude toward the prayers in that the scale describing the pupil's "feelings of prayerfulness" were checked mostly between "moderate" and "a great deal". Thirdly, the section of the questionnaire which dealt with relating the prayers to the students themselves produced a comparatively low score. An average of only 18% was recorded.

Other interesting findings were revealed. In no area of the test, for instance, was there any significant difference between classes using textbooks and those not having textbooks, nor between schools that taught liturgy courses and those not having them. The "Sh'ma" received the highest feelings of prayerfulness. Very often God was thought of in terms of an ordinary human being. The concept of the Jewish Law was a narrow one; it was usually limited to the Ten Commandments.

On the basis of this information certain conclusions can be reached. For one thing it appears that comprehension in prayer depends largely on one major factor - the personal maturation of the individual student. Furthermore, there is considerable need in our program of religious education to relate the prayers of the prayer book to the students themselves. Apparently, our conventional approach today has not succeeded, and a special technique should be developed to accomplish this purpose. In part, it is hoped that here as in the sixth grade level, the use of the Jewish story commentary will be helpful. Hence, the study of prayer on an intellectual basis should be reserved for the latter years of the curriculum. It would seem that an emotional approach, that is, one poetic

then prosaic in its form and style would be necessary to heighten the personal reaction of the younger students toward the prayers. Hence the Jewish story commentary is suggested as providing an effective means for a greater emotional appeal.

For the rest of the curriculum in prayer study, it would appear that on the elementary level, from the third grade through the fifth grade, constant repetition of the prayers and familiarization with them is desirable since they tend to increase the feelings of prayerfulness. On the upper grade level a rational understanding of the prayers is indicated. The intermediate grades should be concerned with arousing emotional attachments to the prayers and relating them to the needs of the pupils of this age range.

The Ecco Jewish textbook was designed to meet some of the requirements for the intermediate grades. The Sabbath Morning Service was selected since it is probably the most familiar and most complete of regular worship services. Only the traditional prayers were taken from the Union Prayer Book. A brief explanation is given to explain the essence of the prayer, and an appropriate story is then offered to re-emphasize the point. The stories were taken from the vast sources of Jewish literature.

CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	Taught Together with Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Interim Grades
Temple Emanu-El Birmingham, Ala.	-	x	4-8	21	U.P.B.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	39
Temple Beth-Or Montgomery, Ala.	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
Temple Beth Israel Phoenix, Arizona	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
Temple Emanu-El Tucson, Arizona	-	x	5-10	-	S 2 F. S.	-	52
Temple B'nai Israel Little Rock, Arkansas	x	-	8-10	-	-	1 hour	58
Emanuel Temple Center Beverly Hills, Calif.	-	-	-	-	-	-	200
Temple Israel Hollywood, Calif.	-	x	7-11	175	U.P.B. S.	1 hour	225
Temple Israel Long Beach, Calif.	x	-	8	14	-	1 hour	46
Wilshire Boulevard Temple Los Angeles, Calif.	x	-	8	108	F. U.P.B.	1 hour	304
Univ. Synagog of Westwood Los Angeles, Calif.	-	-	9	-	-	-	90
Temple Sinai Oakland, Calif.	-	-	-	-	-	-	95
Temple Beth Shalom Santa Monica, Calif.	x	-	7	10	S. (By teacher)	-	45
Temple Emanu-El San Francisco, Calif.	x	-	10	-	-	-	180
Temple Ahavath Chesed Jacksonville, Fla.	-	x	-	-	U.P.B.	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	56
Temple Israel Miami, Fla.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hebrew Benevolent Cong. Atlanta, Ga.	x	-	9	28	F.	-	-

CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	Taught Together with Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Interm. Grades
Temple Sholom Chicago, Ill.	-	x	5-8	300	B. U.P.B.	40 minutes	240
Temple Beth Israel Chicago, Ill.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Emanuel Chicago, Ill.	-	-	-	-	-	-	70
N. Shore Cong. Israel Glencoe, Ill.	-	-	-	-	-	-	320
Ind. Hebrew Congregation Indianapolis, Ind.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Achduth Veshalom Ft. Wayne, Ind.	-	x	8	5	U.P.B.	-	50
Temple Beth El South Bend, Ind.	x	-	8	12	-	1 hour	90
Temple Emmanuel Davenport, Iowa	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
Temple Adath Israel Louisville, Ky.	x	-	7-9	50	-	-	-
Temple Ge'uluth Chessodim Alexandria, La.	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Temple Sinai New Orleans, La.	-	-	-	-	-	-	60
Temple B'nai Zion Shreveport, La.	x	-	6-8	25	-	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	25
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Baltimore, Md.	-	x	5-9	-	S.	45 Minutes	120
Temple Emanuel Worcester, Mass.	-	x	6	68	S.	2 hours	189
Temple Israel Detroit, Mich.	-	x	9	-	-	-	250
Temple B'nai Juhudah Kansas City, Mo.	-	x	8	36	F.	2 hours	100

CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	Taught Together with Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Interm. Grades
Temple Israel St. Louis, Mo.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Hebrew Temple St. Louis, Mo.	-	-	9	-	-	-	300
Temple Mt. Zion St. Paul, Minn.	x	-	7	19	U.P.B.	45 min.	190
Temple Israel Minneapolis, Minn.	-	x	6-7	75	S. 2	-	105
Temple Israel Omaha, Neb.	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Beth Israel Atlantic City, N.Y.	-	x	9	-	U.P.B.	1 hour	90
Temple Sharey Tefilo East Orange, N.J.	-	x	7-9	97	S.	2 hours	355
Temple B'nai Jeshurun Newark, N.J.	-	x	7	83	-	1 hour	220
Temple Beth Emeth Albany, N.Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-	129
Union Temple Brooklyn, N.Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-	182
Temple Ahavath Sholom of Flatbush, Brooklyn, N.Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Beth El Great Neck, L.I.	-	-	-	-	-	-	330
Flushing Free Synagogue Flushing, L.I.	-	-	-	-	-	-	110
Temple Israel Lawrence, L.I.	-	x	8	67	U.P.B.	45 min.	267
Temple Isaish New Gardens, L.I.	x	x	7	30	-	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour	75
Central Syn. of Nassau City Rockville Centre, L.I.	-	x	6-8	206	R.	45 min.	206



CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	Taught Together With Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Interm. Grades
Free Synagogue of Westchester Mt. Vernon, N.Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-	140
Temple Israel New Rochelle, N.Y.	-	x	6-7	110	C.	40 min.	200
Temple Rodeph Sholom New York City	-	x	6-8	200	R. U.P.B.	30 min.	30
Habonim New York City	x	-	9	-	-	-	75
Central Synagogue New York City	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tremont, Temple New York City	-	-	10	-	-	-	115
Temple B'rith Kodesh Rochester, N.Y.	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Jewish Community Center White Plains, N.Y.	-	x	-	-	S.	-	300
Temple Emanuel Yonkers, N.Y.	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
Suburban Temple Cleveland, Ohio	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
Temple Emanu-El Cleveland, Ohio	-	x	-	-	U.P.B.	- min.	100
The Temple Cleveland, Ohio	-	x	8-9	183	U.P.B.	45 min.	245
Temple Israel Columbus, Ohio	-	-	-	-	-	-	83
Temple Israel Dayton, Ohio	-	-	9	-	-	-	70
Temple Rodef Sholem Youngstown, Ohio	-	x	-	-	-	-	90



CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	Taught Together with Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Intern. Grades
Temple B'nai Israel Oklahoma City, Okla.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Israel Tulsa, Oklahoma	x	-	9	-	F. 2	-	30
Temple Beth Israel Portland, Oregon	x	-	8	21	F.	2 hours	70
Temple Sinai Pittsburgh, Pa.	x	-	9	-	-	-	120
Rodef Shalom Temple Pittsburgh, Pa.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rodef Shalom Temple Philadelphia, Pa.	x	-	8	58	-	-	161
Keneseth Israel Philadelphia, Pa.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vine St. Temple Nashville, Tenn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	58
Temple Israel Memphis, Tenn.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Emanu-El Dallas, Texas	-	x	8	-	F.	1 hour	150
Temple Emanu-El Houston, Texas	-	-	-	-	-	-	150
Temple Beth El Ft. Worth, Texas	-	-	-	-	-	-	34
Temple B'nai Israel Galveston, Texas	-	-	9	-	-	-	-
Temple Beth Israel Houston, Texas	-	x	6	33	-	20 min.	95
Temple Beth El San Antonio, Texas	-	x	7-9	41	S. 2 F. 2	-	68

CONGREGATION	Non-Hebrew Formal Liturgy Course	taught Together with Hebrew	Grades Offered	Number of Students	*Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Number of Students in Interm. Grades
Temple Ohel Shalom Norfolk, Va.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temple Beth Ahabath Richmond, Va.	-	x	8-9	24	Relig. 3	-	36
Temple de Hirsch Seattle, Wash.	x	-	11	-	-	-	164
Temple Emanu-El B'nai Jeshurun Milwaukee, Wisc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	186
Washington Hebrew Cong. Wash., D.C.	-	-	-	-	-	-	197
Holy Blossom Temple Toronto, Canada	-	-	-	-	-	-	180

\*TEXTBOOK KEY

- B. Braverman, Prayer Study
- C. Cleveland, Prayer Study
- F. Freehof, In The House of The Lord
- F.2 Freehof, Little Sanctuary
- F.3 Freehof, Meaning of Prayer
- R. Reichler, Prayer Study
- S. Soloff, Our Prayer Book
- S.2 Soloff, Jewish Life
- U.P.B. Union Prayer Book

COMPREHENSION CHART

TABLE II

CORRECT ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Temple and Location	Students	Textbook	Amount of Time per Week	Taught Together with Hebrew	I	II	III	IV
A. Texas	90	-	-	-	52	82	86	73
H. Ohio	144	x	45 min.	x	82	109	116	119
C. Calif.	137	-	-	-	63	117	111	102
D. Mass.	136	x	2 hours	x	87	107	118	117
TOTAL	507				284	415	431	411

FEELINGS OF WAYS OF PRAYERFULNESS  
(Total)

TABLE III

QUESTION	NONE	LITTLE	MODERATE	GREAT DEAL
I	25	55	242	185
II	23	45	137	302
III	57	80	181	189
IV	64	75	183	185

PERSONAL REACTIONS CHART TO PRAYER  
(Total)

TABLE IV

QUESTION	RIGHT	WRONG
I	72	435
II	124	383
III	84	423
IV	76	431

In scoring the answers, the following system was used as the basis of evaluation: A personal answer was considered incorrect if it simply repeated an answer already offered in section dealing with comprehension. If the answer was entirely omitted, or had no connection with the subject, or the student indicated he did not simply know the answer, it was counted as incorrect. On the other hand, an answer was considered correct if an illustration or a personal example were offered. Even if the question were answered in the broadest terms ("The words are like poetry to me") or with a negative expression ("I believe in praying to One God, not many") the answer was marked as correct.

Table V

FEELINGS OF PRAYERFULNESSTEMPLE A (90 Students)

Question	NONE	LITTLE	MODERATE	GREAT DEAL
I	4	6	41	39
II	3	6	15	66
III	4	11	32	43
IV	10	15	34	31

TEMPLE B (144 Students)

I	18	22	76	28
II	13	20	59	52
III	22	23	55	44
IV	28	19	64	33

TEMPLE C (137 Students)

I	3	16	58	60
II	5	16	33	82
III	18	25	45	48
IV	14	20	40	63

TEMPLE D (136 Students)

I	-	11	67	58
II	2	3	30	101
III	13	21	48	54
IV	12	21	45	58

PERSONAL REACTION CHART

TABLE VI

Answers Correct

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>TEMPLE A.</u>	<u>TEMPLE B.</u>	<u>TEMPLE C.</u>	<u>TEMPLE D.</u>
I	11	25	15	21
II	25	44	29	26
III	19	25	20	20
IV	19	17	19	19
Total Students	90	144	137	136

APPENDIX A

Dear Sir:

I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in connection with information about the teaching of prayer book liturgy in your religious school, especially as it pertains to the intermediate grades. This would be most helpful to me for the study I am making in my Rabbinical thesis at the College-Institute.

I shall be deeply grateful to you if you would kindly fill out the attached postcard and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

With sincere thanks, I remain,

Cordially yours,

Milton Schlager  
Senior Student HUC-JIR

1. In what grade(s) of your religious school do you offer a formal course in prayer book liturgy?
2. If you offer such a course in the intermediate grades (6 through 8) please give the following information:  
Grade(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Total No. of Students \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount of time weekly \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this being taught in connection with the study of Heb? (yes, no)  
Is a text book used by pupils? (yes, no)  
If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many pupils do you have in the intermediate grades (6 through 8) of your religious school?  
Comments: (problems, effectiveness, of liturgy instruction)  
\_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX B

Hebrew Union College  
Cincinnati 20, Ohio  
April 29, 1953

Dear Religious School Director,

A short while back a postcard questionnaire, similar to the one printed here, was sent to all congregations with two hundred members or more who are members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The findings will be used for my rabbinical thesis at the Hebrew Union College.

As yet I have received no response from your school. In order to complete this project, I would greatly appreciate it if you could return the information below to me.

My sincere thanks for your helpfulness.

Sincerely,

Milton Schlager

1. In what grade(s) of your religious school do you offer a formal course in prayer book liturgy? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. If you offer such a course in the intermediate grades (6 through 8) please give the following information:  
Grade(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Total No. of Students \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount of time weekly \_\_\_\_\_  
Is this being taught in connection with the study of Hebrew? (yes, no) \_\_\_\_\_  
Is a text book used by the pupils? (yes, no) \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. How many pupils do you have in the intermediate grades (6 through 8) of your religious school? \_\_\_\_\_
- Comments: (problems, effectiveness, of liturgy instruction) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

Dear Sir:

I wish to express my thanks for your kind response to the postal card questionnaire on Jewish prayer for children a short time ago. Your helpfulness is greatly appreciated.

May I request another favor of you? I am enclosing a student's questionnaire which can be filled out in only a few minutes. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain information for the writing of a textbook on Liturgy.

I would be most grateful if you would kindly have the instructors of the intermediate grades (6-8) give out the enclosed sheets to the class members and have them follow the instructions on the top of the sheet. I am enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope for your convenience in returning these student questionnaires.

Again, sincere thanks for your helpfulness.

Sincerely,

Milton Schlager

APPENDIX D

### QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is being given to religious school students in Reform congregations all over the country and the answers which you and others give will be helpful in the preparation of a textbook on Jewish prayers.

This is not a test and it will not count toward your religious school grade, nor do you have to sign your name, so you can say exactly what you want. Your aid will be greatly appreciated.

Before you fill out this questionnaire, please look over the example given below and make sure you understand what you are to do. Your teacher will be glad to explain anything that you are not sure of.

#### EXAMPLE

Here is a prayer which appears in your prayer book. Read this selection over carefully:

"WHO SHALL ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD AND WHO SHALL STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE? HE THAT HATH CLEAN HANDS, AND A PURE HEART..."

Now answer these questions:

I. Which of the following statements do you feel best expresses the meaning of the prayer? (Please check only one.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) If man is holy, he takes the place of God. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4) One who does good is acceptable to God. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) God is to be worshipped in the mountains.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 5) One must wash his hands before praying.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) God dwells on mountains.                   |  |

II. Do you feel that this idea you have checked is important to you personally? (YES). What main reason do you have for your answer?

(THE RELIGIOUS MAN CAN FEEL CLOSE TO GOD).

III. When this selection is recited in Temple, how much of an "inner feeling" of prayer do you get? (Please place a check-mark on the scale below at the point which gives the amount of "prayerfulness" you feel.)

/                      /                      /                      (X)                      /  
none                      a little                      a moderate amount                      a great deal

Now fill out the questionnaire. Take your time and answer all the questions. Remember, you are asked to give only your own opinions.

"MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE UNTO THEE, O LORD, MY ROCK AND MY REDEEMER."

I. Which of the following statements do you feel best expresses the meaning of the prayer? (Please check only one.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) God accepts all prayers.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 4) One hopes that prayers offered in the proper spirit are acceptable to God. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) God accepts only prayers which the individual and not the congregation recites. | <input type="checkbox"/> 5) God looks with favor on people who pray.                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) In praying, one may pray either aloud or quietly.                               |  |

II. Do you feel that this idea you have checked is important to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_. What main reason do you have for your answer? \_\_\_\_\_

III. When this selection is recited in Temple, how much of an "inner feeling" of prayer do you get? (Please place a check-mark on the scale below at the point which gives the amount of "prayerfulness" you feel.)

/                      /                      /                      /  
none                      a little                      a moderate amount                      a great deal

"HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE."

I. Which of the following statements do you feel best expresses the meaning of the prayer? (Please check only one).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) Israel is God's people. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4) The Lord is Israel's God.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) God hears our prayers.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 5) The correct name for God is "Lord". |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) There is only one God.  |   |

II. Do you feel that this idea you have checked is important to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_. What main reason do you have for your answer? \_\_\_\_\_

III. When this selection is recited in Temple, how much of an "inner feeling" of prayer do you get? (Please place a check-mark on the scale below at the point which gives the amount of "prayerfulness" you feel.)

/ / / /  
none a little a moderate amount a great deal

"WE BOW THE HEAD IN REVERENCE, AND WORSHIP THE KING OF KINGS, THE HOLY ONE, PRAISED BE HE."

I. Which of the following statements do you feel best expresses the meaning of the prayer? (Please check only one.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) God expects us to bow our heads when we pray to him.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> 4) Only by kneeling before God do we show how powerful He is. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) Just as earthly kings expect us to bow down before them, so does God.           | <input type="checkbox"/> 5) We recognize the greatness of God.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) God will answer our prayers only when we both bow our heads and bend our knees. |  |

II. Do you feel that this idea you have checked is important to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_. What main reason do you have for your answer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

III. When this selection is recited in Temple, how much of an "inner feeling" of prayer do you get? (Please place a check-mark on the scale below at the point which gives the amount of "prayerfulness" you feel.)

/ / / /  
none a little a moderate amount a great deal

"THE LAW OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, RESTORING THE SOUL..."

I. Which of the following statements do you feel best expresses the meaning of the prayer? (Please check only one.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1) There are no mistakes in the Bible.            | <input type="checkbox"/> 4) God is completely perfect.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2) God brings dead people to life.                | <input type="checkbox"/> 5) God's laws help people to lead better lives. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3) If we don't read the Bible, we lose our souls. |  |



II. Do you feel that this idea you have checked is important to you personally? \_\_\_\_\_. What main reason do you have for your answer? \_\_\_\_\_

III. When this selection is recited in Temple, how much of an "inner feeling" of prayer do you get? (Please place a check-mark on the scale below at the point which gives the amount of "prayerfulness" you feel.)

/                      /                      /                      /  
none                      a little                      a moderate amount                      a great deal

APPENDIX E

Dear Sir:

A short time ago, a student's questionnaire was sent to you. It can be filled out by your intermediate grades (6-8) in only a few minutes. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain information for the writing of a textbook on Liturgy.

Since time is growing short and I am very anxious to complete this limited study within the next few weeks, I would deeply appreciate your prompt cooperation in having the questionnaires completed and returned to me.

I shall be most grateful for your generous helpfulness. With warm personal thanks, I remain

Sincerely,

Milton Schlager

Section B

STORY COMMENTARY ON  
THE MORNING SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH

A Textbook for Liturgy in the  
Jewish Religious School

BLESSED ART THOU  
O LORD OUR GOD  
KING OF THE UNIVERSE  
WHO HAST KEPT US IN LIFE  
AND HAST PRESERVED US  
AND HAST ENABLED US TO REACH THIS SEASON

FROM THE PRAYER BOOK

## WHY PEOPLE PRAY

Have you ever thought why people pray? I am sure you could list a whole series of reasons. Many people pray because they feel it's a religious duty. They feel that since there is a God who gives them life and food, who brings the blessing of sun and rain, the least they can do is to thank Him who made all this possible. Because God plays fair with them, they ought to play fair with Him. Therefore, by praying, such people believe they give to God what belongs to God, because He gives to them what belongs to them.

Others turn to prayer for self-protection. They try to establish the right relationship with God, so that He may look down with favor upon their good deeds and look aside from their misdeeds. Such people attempt to soften and bribe God with gifts of many prayers and sacrifices of many benedictions to get their own way with God.

Still others pray for reasons of despair. They turn to God only in moments of stress and strain with the hope that God will not leave them. In days of prosperity and good health, they usually give little thought of prayer. But in times of trouble, when money fails and friends fail and doctors fail, they finally turn to prayer. As a last resort they hope prayer will save them. We have no doubt heard of how people learned to pray for the first time while they had to remain in foxholes.

By far, however, most people pray because they need and want things. The more they need, the more they pray; and so the less they need, the less they pray. To most people then, prayer is a kind of two-way telephone line reaching all the

way from man to God. When a man thinks he needs something, all he has to do is to make his telephone call to God and soon God sends back His decision. Such people hope to let God know what He does not seem to know, and expect He will do otherwise now that He has heard their request.<sup>1</sup>

These are only some of the reasons why people pray, there are many more. Now let us turn to the story of Honi the rain-maker and see why he prayed.

### HONI THE RAINMAKER

This is the story of Honi the rainmaker and why he prayed for rain!

It is told that Honi possessed the miraculous power to bring down rain while he stood in a circle he had made on the ground. From this spot he swore not to move until his prayer was answered. For the sake of showing his wonderful power of prayer to all his friends, he would frequently bring down rain by praying in the circle.

Once rain was badly needed, and a pair of Rabbis went to him in order to pray for the people. They found Honi at work in the fields and quickly told him the purpose of their coming.

After Honi learned that it was rain they wanted, he outlined a circle in the earth and began to pray to God for rain. A short time passed and light rain began to fall. Everyone seemed pleased with the light rain except Honi who felt that when he prayed for rain, he wanted a real rain. And so he continued to pray on for a bigger rain. He did not have to wait very long for it started to wind and storm. The rain

began coming down in a most violent fashion. Soon the earth changed to black mud, yet the rain would not stop. Even Honi could not stop it! In fact, his voice could no longer be heard over the roar and thunder of the rain. The rain poured on. The fields all became flooded, and Honi and his friends almost drowned, all because Honi wished to boast of his power of prayer and was not careful with his prayers.

The story of Honi should serve to teach us of the great power of prayer and that we should learn to use it wisely and carefully.



## JEWISH PRAYER

Until now we have seen that people in general pray for many different reasons. Some of these reasons are worthwhile and others are not. In this section, however, we would like to tell you why the Jewish person prays. We believe you may find the answer in this quaint tale about the saintly Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Spun around this little folk-tale is the Jewish concept of prayer with God.

On the Evening of Atonement, the holiest evening of the year, the legend goes, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov chanted "Kol Nidre" in the little synagogue of his town. The followers of the Rabbi listened to the simple tune, and the earnestness of the Rabbi moved them to deeper respect and reverence. He seemed to utter each word with exceeding difficulty, as though struggling to chant them. As he re-chanted the melody the third time, tears ran down his cheeks. The worshippers were indeed surprised; but their surprise grew to astonishment, when the Baal Shem suddenly sang the "Kol Nidre" a fourth time. This was difficult for them to understand, for this great prayer sung only in the Yom Kippur services is traditionally chanted but three times.

In the meantime, there had entered a villager and his little son who was a mute. A mute is a person who cannot speak. As the boy heard the sacred melody and beheld its impression on the people, he was moved by the spirit of prayer. But because he was mute, the words would not come to his lips, and the words in the prayerbook he could neither read nor understand.

The only way he could express his feelings was by blowing a wooden reed which he made for himself in the village. And as the worshippers stood in silent devotion, listening to the Rabbi's chant of "Kol Nidre", suddenly there shrilled across the lowly synagogue the whistling of a wooden reed!

The worshippers were thrown into excitement, and they wanted to throw out the lad who had dared to break the sanctity of the Holy Evening. But suddenly The Rael Shem Tov stopped his chant, and with joy upon his face he turned to the people and said:

"All this time I tried to have my prayers heard in the higher heavens. But our sins of the past year stood like an iron wall between God and Israel, and all my prayers failed to break through and ascend to the heavens on high. But when this mute village boy whistled upon his reed, the steel wall was suddenly torn asunder: and the holy melody of 'Kol Nidre' approached the throne of the Holy One, blessed be He. The desire to pray burned in his heart, and God desires the heart of man."

Such indeed, is the nature of Jewish prayer. It rises out of the heart and reaches into the heart to speak with God. It is that wonderful force that drives a deaf Beethoven to compose matchless symphonies, and a blind Milton to write immortal poetry, and a mute village boy to blow a beautiful prayer upon a wooden reed. This is why the Jew prays.

## WHAT PRAYER MEANS TO ME

Prayer can be old and traditional, or prayer can be new. It can be the original and heartfelt thought of any one of us. The story that is to follow will explain this idea.

It was just before the sounding of the ram's horn on New Year in the little synagogue of Rabbi Jacob. The people were filled with pious ecstasy. The Rabbi pronounced the benediction and raised the Shofar to his lips. But suddenly, he put it back on the pulpit. His followers were shocked and looked at one another in a strange way.

"Look, look how motionless the Rabbi stands," they whispered to each other. "Why does he not sound the Shofar? What is he waiting for? Woe, woe, who knows what he now beholds in the upper heavens on this day of Judgment?"

"They say," one follower murmured to another, "when our saintly Rabbi is about to sound the sacred notes of the Shofar, the evil spirits attempt to confuse and befuddle him. Who can tell what agonies of the soul he now endures? Look how tense he stands."

But soon and suddenly the sounds of the Shofar vibrated mightily through the lowly synagogue. And after the service, as the people pressed him for the meaning of the strange event, he turned to them and said:

"It was really nothing unnatural at all. As I recited the benediction over the Shofar, I saw in a vision that at the lower end of our synagogue stood a villager who had lived all

his life among peasants far away from a house of worship. As he saw how we prayed, he also wanted to pray with us. But he could not make out the words in the prayerbook. All he knew was but the alphabet, just the single letters. But the longing to pray grew more passionate, and he could not stand speechless any longer. And so, in a moment of awakening, he lifted his eyes and murmured in whispers: 'Master of the universe, Thou art the Maker of all beautiful prayers, and Thou the Source of all holy utterances of the heart. Behold, here is an A,B,C, and weave Thyself a prayer.' The Holy One on high, who hears every beat of the human heart, immediately sat down to weave himself a prayer out of the letters the simple Jew had spoken. Naturally I could not sound the Shofar until the Holy One, blessed be He, had made Himself a beautiful prayer..."

So have men and women done throughout the ages. Out of the alphabet of their life-experiences and the letters of their religious hopes, out of the A,B,C of their needs and ideals they strike off eternal prayers in which mankind hopes, dreams, and adores God of the universe.

Today, just as in the past, we need to speak with God in the ageless words - which there are no more purifying in all the world than those we are about to read of in our own Jewish prayer book.

## THE PRAYER BOOK

The Jews have always been known as "the people of the book". Among their many great books, the book of prayers stands out as a cherished companion in everyday life.

Long ago, people worshiped God through the sacrifice of animals, or even human beings. In the long history of religion, the Jews were the first to change from such worship to more civilized forms. For sacrifice we substituted prayers; for the burning of incense, we searched our hearts and thanked God for His wonders and His goodness.

At the beginning, prayer was private, unorganized. One prayed at any time, in any place, in any words. Eventually, prayer became public and organized. We prayed at definite times, in houses of worship, in definite words.

The Hebrew word "siddur" means order, arrangement. Our prayer book, the Siddur, is an orderly collection of prayers, arranged according to the ancient practices of our people. Some of it - for example, the "Shema" - was composed over two thousand years ago. Other parts were written just a few hundred years ago. Our modern Union Prayer Book included new readings and prayers also. Most of the Union Prayer Book is in Hebrew and English, but the "Kaddish" selection is in Aramaic, a language spoken during the days of the Second Temple in Babylonia. Different parts of the world have their different versions of the Siddur, but nearly all are based on the one compiled around 870 C.E. by Rabbi Amran, a great Babylonian scholar.

The Prayer Book has marched with the Jewish people through

twelve centuries of existence. It has been with us at births and at deaths, on Sabbaths and on workdays, in times of joy, and in times of sorrow. It has changed to meet the changing needs of the people. Its prayers are not only requests to God; they are prayers of thanks, the confession of sins, the reminder of great events in our history; the passages from the Bible, the Talmud, and other writings, and the great and original poetry of the Jewish people, the expression of its deepest feeling.

Maimonides, the sage of the Middle Ages said: "Come to your Prayer Book as if it held great treasure, and pray 'with deep feeling'."<sup>2</sup> But now let us allow the old Siddur to tell its own story.



## THE OLD SIDDUR

The little leather-bound Siddur was very, very old. Once the gold letters on its cover had gleamed brightly and not a single page had been missing. But that was one hundred and fifty years ago, when a young woman in a Jewish town in Russia had received it as a wedding gift.

But though old and worn, the Siddur remained proud. "Not only am I a Holy book," it would say to itself, "but I also have the history of five generations written on my pages. I can tell when members of the family were born, when they married, and on what day they died."

When the family emigrated to America the Siddur traveled with it. It had arrived fifty years ago, brought by a young woman when she came to live here with her husband. It was her most precious remembrance of her mother, and whenever she felt unhappy or distressed, she would turn to the Siddur and pour out her troubles to the little book.

Years passed. The woman's three sons grew to manhood. Then her husband died. The sons married and settled in far-away cities. The old woman was left alone with her Siddur in a little flat in the Jewish section of New York's lower East Side.

One day the lonesome old woman fell ill. Kind neighbors took care of her for a while. Then they decided that she needed better care than they could give her. They found a place far away from her old home. She never returned. The Siddur was left all alone in a corner of the room in a pile

of dusty papers.

One day the janitor came and removed all the old lady's possessions. He took the Siddur and all the other papers he could find and put them in a pile near the ash can outside the house.

Evening had settled slowly on the city. The old slums were steeped in fog. It had grown dark and a group of ragged boys gathered in the streets and began to light bonfires into which they threw old papers and empty cartons, which they had picked up in the alleys.

Right in front of the old Siddur's house they started their biggest fire. Sparks flew out into the night and the red tongues threw a bright light on the ancient gray buildings.

"More paper, fellows, more paper!" one of the boys shouted. A boy in a blue sweater walked over to the pile. His eyes fell on the Siddur and his voice rang with glee. "Hey, this one will rea-lly burn!"

"Dear God, have pity on me!" the Siddur bitterly pleaded with all its prayers. "Have I lived for one hundred and fifty years only to be burned like a paper scrap on the trash-heap?"

The moment had come. In a matter of seconds, the ancient book, which had brought light and hope to generations of Jews would flare up and crumble into a tiny heap of ashes. But another voice, that of a little Jewish boy who had seen its pages in the light of the flames was heard. "Hold on a minute! That's a holy prayer book. You're not allowed to burn a prayer book."

"I'm sorry, I didn't know," his friend said. "Here,



you can have it if you want."

The Jewish boy took the Siddur carefully, gently wiped it with his sleeve and carried it off to a tiny synagogue, where he put it into the bookcase among the other holy books.

"Whew!" the old Siddur panted heavily.

A time later, a sleek new automobile drew up before the curb and from it stepped a tall, handsome young man. He looked at the synagogue, his face lost in thought. He entered and spoke to an old man with a white beard who sat studying near the window.

"Pardon me for disturbing you", the young man said. "But I heard that an old lady named Rachel Rabinowitz died in this neighborhood."

"He's talking about my Rachel Rabinowitz. There is her name right on the first page," the Siddur whispered excitedly. "He must be looking for me!"

"I'm searching for an old family Siddur that she owned. My father used to say that our whole family history was written in that Siddur."

"Oh, if only I could shout, or call, or speak!" the little Siddur trembled in the bookcase.

"I'm afraid I can't help you," the old man was saying. "So many important books are thrown out and burned in this neighborhood."

The Siddur held its breath. The young man was turning to go. Suddenly the old man spoke again. "Jewish children sometimes rescue a holy book and bring it here. Look in the bookcase. Perhaps you may find it there."

The young man walked over to the bookcase. The Siddur could not stand the suspense any longer, and as the young man was examining the books, it shuddered with excitement, and fell to the floor.

The young man picked it up and casually leafed through its pages. Suddenly he stopped and called out: "I've found it!"

"Your grandmother was very fortunate," the old man sighed. "Not all people can find their grandchildren."

And the old Siddur began a new life. Among the fading names written on its yellowed pages is one new name.

"Today, in this month and year, a daughter has been born to me, and she has received the name of Rachel."

## THE SYNAGOGUE

After we think of Jewish prayer and the Siddur, we must consider the third part of the triangle - the Synagogue. The synagogue is equally important to us today. So let us learn something about the synagogue.

When the Jewish people were exiled from their own land after the destruction of the First Temple (586 B.C.E.) they no longer had the Temple at Jerusalem as the center for their religious observance. In Babylon, we find the synagogue becoming an institution. The word "synagogue" derives from a Greek word meaning "place of assembly". It was also a house of learning and a house of worship. It was within this institution that a new form of religious observance grew up - prayer.

From these beginnings, religious observances as we know them in Western civilization developed. The forms adopted by the Jewish people became the source from which other religions drew, until today there is not a place in the Western World where a house of worship cannot be found. There men gather together to pray to God.

The synagogue has often meant much more than this to its community. It has been the center of a man's life. Here prayers were said when he was born; here he studied as a child; here he was Bar Mitzvah or confirmed; here he prayed as a man; here he was married; here he celebrated the birth of his children; here he helped the needy; and here too, he remembered those who died. All this he did, not alone, but

with his family and friends in his community and in the synagogue.

A synagogue can be formed by any ten men. They can meet in any structure. As we know it today, it is often a large institution, composed of many hundreds of families who have elected a rabbi to serve as their spiritual leader. Whether it is large or small, in it there is an Ark containing the Torah, over which burns steadily the Eternal Light.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, we should remember that together with Jewish prayer and the Siddur, we must also include the synagogue. Have you ever heard of a weeping synagogue? Well, the story that is to follow tells us about an old weeping synagogue in Poland and why it started to weep.

#### THE WEEPING SYNAGOGUE

The synagogue was so old that not even the oldest Jew in town could remember when services had last been held there. It stood on the outskirts of a little village in Poland, nestling between giant pine trees with grass growing wild around it. The old stone steps leading into the synagogue were cracked, and sparrows had built their nests under the eaves of its crumbling roof.

In town it was known as the Weeping Synagogue, and stories were told that at midnight, when pious Jews rise from their beds to mourn the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, an eerie sound would be heard from within the deserted synagogue, the sound of unearthly weeping punctuated by the drip, drip, drip of water, as if the rotting roof

were raining tears onto the decaying floor.

The old men of the town have a story to tell of this deserted synagogue. Many years ago, they relate, a great and learned rabbi had lived there. He was very poor, and his home was a tiny house not far from the synagogue. But it was more than sufficient for his needs, for he spent all of his days and most of his nights in the synagogue, studying the Torah.

When the town was asleep, the rabbi would sit alone in the huge dark synagogue, with only a small candle to give him light. He would sit for hours bent over the big book in front of him, studying, searching, thinking.

Once, when it was past midnight, the rabbi, as usual, sat alone in the synagogue. Suddenly, he heard a voice from inside the Holy Ark: "Your piety has been noted in Heaven. As a reward you have been granted, in this special moment of grace, any wish you may make. Whatever it is, it shall be fulfilled. Hurry, for the time is short."

The rabbi thought, "What can I wish for? Riches? That leads to greed. Power? That brings cruelty. Honors? They may make me contemptuous of my fellow men. Wisdom? The Torah itself is the source of all wisdom and I study it day and night. No", he whispered to himself. "I have nothing to wish for."

At that moment, he heard a sobbing inside the Holy Ark and again the voice spoke:

"Oh, you unfortunate man. You did not think of the millions

of suffering people all over the world. You could have wished for peace, for an end to human suffering, for salvation for the entire world. But you thought only of yourself."

The next morning, when the synagogue was opened, the rabbi was found on the floor near the Holy Ark in a dead faint.

Quickly the people carried him to his little house. When he recovered he ordered that the oldest and most pious of the Jews in the town be called to his bedside. He told them what had happened in the night, and when he had ended his tale, he closed his eyes and died.

The following night, when the cantor was about to enter the synagogue, he heard a soft sobbing inside. From that day, every night past midnight the sobbing and the steady dripping of the water can be heard. It is the synagogue itself, weeping over the suffering the world might have been spared.



## THE SABBATH

Now we are ready to speak about some parts of the Sabbath service. We have selected the Sabbath service because it is typical and perhaps the most familiar service to us. However, before we touch upon the service, a word about the Sabbath. Knowledge about the Sabbath will offer us a better opportunity to appreciate the prayers recited on that holy day.

Each week of our lives, there comes a day of rest. For the Jews, Saturday; for the Gentile, Sunday; for the Mohammedan, Friday.

This day of rest, this Sabbath, is a unique Jewish contribution to the life of all peoples of the world. It began in the days of the Bible. The Ten Commandments tell us: "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." For on the seventh day of the Creation, God finished His work, and He rested. So man, too, rests from his labors on this seventh day. And because we once were slaves in Egypt, and were freed, we must have a rest-day for ourselves, and our servants, and the "stranger within our gates."

These two ideas have been an important part of Judaism from its very beginnings. Man was created in the image of God: the Sabbath is a reminder of the godlike and spiritual qualities of man. And the Sabbath is a symbol of freedom; just as the Jewish people were given a Sabbath from their slavery in Egypt, so must each of us have freedom from personal labor.

Sabbath observance has many forms and, within Judaism

itself, a large variety of customs. Deepest is the thought of the Sabbath as a source of rest and inspiration, a time for prayer and singing, a renewal for the coming week. In quiet study, in the gatherings of friends and families, the Sabbath finds expression today. So taken for granted is this custom among all the civilized world, in every religion, that we do not pause to think how strange, how hurried, how oppressive, our lives would be without our weekly Sabbath.<sup>4</sup> Now let us read a story about the Sabbath day.

#### REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

In a small village in Palestine there lived three friends, a Mohammedan, a Christian, and a Jew. The Mohammedan kept his Sabbath on Friday, the Christian on Sunday, and the Jew, of course, on Saturday.

On Friday the Jew and the Christian set out for their fields. When the Jew saw that the Arab's field was but half-ploughed, he said: "Today my friend can do no work. It is his Sabbath day. Tomorrow it may rain, and he may not have his field ploughed in time for the sowing. I shall plough his field a little, and thereby it may be that his work will be easier for him."

In the meantime, the Christian had said much the same thing to himself, so that, unaware of each other's presence, they ploughed the Arab's field, one from the east, the other from the west.

On the next day, when the Arab came and found his field all ploughed, he wondered, saying to himself, "Who could have



bloughed my field? It must be that God has sent His angels to help me".

Months passed by, and the time of reaping came. It was Sunday. The Jew and the Arab had gone to their fields, and the Christian remained at home to keep his Sabbath. When the Jew saw that his Christian friend's corn was full and ready to cut, he said: "Today my neighbor cannot cut his grain. Tomorrow a wind may come and scatter his seeds. I shall cut a little for him while I have the time."

Now, strange to say, while the Jew was thinking of his Christian friend's corn, the Arab had the same thought, so that, unseen by each other, they cut the Christian's grain, the Jew from the south, the Arab from the north.

The next day the Christian went to his field, and found the reaping done. He was surprised, and tried to explain it. "It must be that God has sent His good angels to cut my corn for me", he mused.

Reaping time passed and the season of threshing approached. It was Saturday. The Jew remembered his Sabbath day "to keep it holy." The Arab thought to himself: "Ah, the rain is coming, and it is the day of rest of our Jewish friend. Alas! The rain will wash his grain away". And going to his Christian neighbor, he said, "Come, neighbor, let us thresh the grain for our friend, the Jew".

To this the Christian gladly agreed, and after threshing the grain, they bound it up and covered it with straw to protect it from the rain.

When Sunday came, and the Jew set out for his field, he

found his grain not only well-threshed, but dry under the straw. Then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who dost send Thy angels to help those who remember Thy Sabbath day, 'to keep it holy'".

STORY COMMENTARY  
ON  
THE MORNING SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH \*

* Introductory prayers	pages 100-113
The Borchu	page 118
The Shema and Its Blessings	pages 118-124
The Amida	pages 124-126 138-140
Reading of the Scripture	pages 144-150
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\* All prayers are taken from the pages of the Newly Revised Edition of the Union Prayerbook, Volume I.

## MORNING SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel! Through Thy great mercy, O God, I come to Thy house and bow down in the fear of Thee. O Lord, I love the place of Thy house and the abode in which Thy glory dwelleth. And so I bow down, and adore Thee, O God, my Maker. May my prayer be offered in an acceptable time; mayest Thou, in the greatness of Thy mercy, answer me according to Thy faithfulness.

The Morning Service for the Sabbath starts on page 100. It begins with a selection by the choir, "How Goodly Are Thy Tents, O Jacob". This paragraph is made of verses taken from different parts of the Bible. We shall find many more prayers of this sort in our prayerbook. A long time ago the writers of the prayerbook gathered different verses from the Bible in order to form one prayer. The prayer above is an example of this sort of work. Verses have been taken from Numbers 24, Psalm 5, Psalm 26, Psalm 69 and Psalm 95.

In connection with the first verse, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel", the Bible tells us a strange tale. This verse was not spoken by a Jew. A certain non-Jewish prophet was invited by an enemy of the Jews to curse the Jews. But when this Prophet beheld the tents and homes of the ancient Israelites, arranged so harmoniously and peacefully, a picture of happiness and prosperity, he was swept away in admiration and blessed them

instead: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy dwellings, O Israel".

According to the Rabais, the "tents" are the "tents of Torah", and the "dwellings" are the Synagogues and Temples.

These Biblical verses have come to express the feelings of respect and joy of the Jew on entering the House of God.<sup>5</sup> In order to remember the lesson of this prayer, let us read the story of "The Two Brothers".

### THE TWO BROTHERS

Many, many years ago on a spot where the city of Jerusalem now stands, there lived two brothers. Both were farmers. One lived with his wife and children on one side of the hill, and the other was unmarried and lived in a little hut on the other side of the hill.

One year the brothers had a particularly good harvest. The married brother stood on his side of the hill looking at his tall sheaves and exclaimed: "How good God is! Why does he bless me with more than my brother? I have a wife and children, but my brother is alone. I am so much better off than he. I do not need all these crops. When my brother is asleep tonight, I shall carry some of my sheaves over the hill to his fields. Tomorrow when he awakens, he will never notice what I have done."

While the married brother stood thinking thus, the unmarried brother on the other side of the hill sat in meditation: "God be praised for His living kindness! But I wish He had done less for me and more for my brother, for my brother has

greater needs than I. I have as much fruit and grain as my brother although my brother must share his harvest with his wife and children. They will share mine, too. Tonight when they are all asleep, I shall place some of my sheaves on my brother's fields. Tomorrow he will never know that he has more or that I have less."

So both brothers waited happily and toward midnight, each went to his own fields, loaded his shoulders high with grain, and turned toward the top of his hill. It was exactly midnight when on the summit of the hill the brothers met. Realizing that each had thought only of the other, their hearts overflowed with joy and respect, and they warmly embraced one another with tears of happiness in their eyes.

On that spot where the brothers met with the feelings of kindness, respect and joy, the first Temple was built. Whenever we enter the Temple or Synagogue today and recite the prayer, "How goodly..." let us always remember the example of the two unselfish brothers, and be filled with feelings of kindness, respect and joy.

The soul which Thou, O God, hast given unto me came pure from Thee. Thou hast created it, Thou hast formed it, Thou hast breathed it into me; Thou hast preserved it in this body, and, at the appointed time, Thou wilt take it from this earth that it may enter upon life everlasting. While the breath of life is within me, I will worship Thee, sovereign of the world and Lord of all souls. Praised be Thou, O God, in whose hands are the souls of all the living and the spirits of all flesh.

Following the music by the choir which begins the service, there comes the above prayer. This prayer is quite old and quite famous. The main thought of the prayer is very important to us. Some people believe that human beings are born evil. This is what is generally referred to as the "original sin". The Jewish people, on the other hand, say that because man is created in the image of God, he was born good. He was born with a pure soul. "The soul which Thou, O God hast given unto me came pure from Thee," is the belief of the religious Jew. If the soul remains pure depends on the deeds and thoughts of the person. The person has the choice whether or not he wishes to keep his soul pure.<sup>6</sup>

The Rabbis have told us: "Just as God lives in the world and carries it, unseen yet seeing all, existing as the Only One, the Perfect, and the Pure, yet never to be reached or found out; so the soul penetrates and carries the body,



as the one pure and good being which sees and holds all things, while itself unseen and unreachd." The Beal Shem Tov taught that in the lowliest of men there dwells a soul, a sacred mystery, the garment of the Living God. Man is obliged to keep this garment spotless in order that he may return it whenever bidden, without blemish. Purity of heart, goodness of mind and love for all creatures preserve the soul from evil.<sup>7</sup>

The legend that follows, however, tells of a soul that did not remain pure as God intended it to be.

#### BODY AND SOUL

The Roman Emperor Antoninus once said to Rabbi Judah the Prince, "On the great Day of Judgment, soul and body will each plead their excuse for sin committed. The body will say to the Heavenly Judge, 'It is the soul, and not I, that has sinned. Without it I am as lifeless as a stone.' On the other hand, the soul will say, 'How can you say that I was the cause of the sin? It is the body that has dragged me down.'"

"Let me tell you a story," answered Rabbi Judah the Prince. "A king once had a beautiful garden stocked with the choicest fruits. He set two men to keep guard over it - a blind man and a lame man. 'I see some fine fruit over there', said the lame man one day. 'Come up on my shoulder,' said the blind man, 'I will carry you to the spot, and we shall both enjoy the fruit.' The owner, missing the fruit, called both men before him for punishment. 'How could I have been the thief,'



remarked the lame man, 'seeing that I cannot walk?' 'Could I have stolen the fruit?' said the blind man, 'I am unable to see anything.' What did the king do? He placed the lame man on the shoulders of the blind man and sentenced them both as one."

In the same way will the Divine Judge of the Universe give out judgment to the body and soul jointly.

Lord of all worlds, not in reliance upon our own merit do we lay our supplications before Thee, but trusting in Thine infinite mercy alone. For what are we, what is our life, what our goodness, what our power? What can we say in Thy presence? Are not all the mighty men as naught before Thee and those of great renown as though they had never been; the wisest as if without knowledge, and men of understanding as if without discernment? Many of our works are vain, and our days pass away like a shadow. Our life would be altogether vanity, were it not for the soul which, fashioned in Thine own image, gives us assurance of our higher destiny and imparts to our fleeting days an abiding value.

Help us, O God to banish from our hearts all vain-glory, pride of worldly possessions, and self-sufficient leaning upon our own reason. Fill us with the spirit of meekness and the grace of modesty that we may grow in wisdom and in reverence. May we never forget that all we have and prize is but lent to us, a trust for we must render account to Thee. O heavenly Father, put into our hearts the love and awe of Thee, that we may consecrate our lives to Thy service and glorify Thy name in the eyes of all men.

This prayer is even older than the one before. It is also connected in thought to the preceding prayer. The first part

of the prayer tells us to be modest. We may have a pure soul given to us by God, but as we have already explained, this does not make us automatically good people. This means we should not boast of or rely solely on this gift from God because many times we often spoil our God-given qualities. Therefore, this prayer begins by saying: "Lord of all worlds, not in reliance upon our own merit do we lay our supplications before Thee, but trusting in Thine infinite mercy alone." As a result therefore, we ask God to help us keep ourselves good, clean and noble. At the same time we are reminded that we have no time to waste on being boastful, proud, or self-centered, especially when we realize that we are not going to live forever, for all we have is but lent to us for a short time. "May we never forget that all we have and prize is but lent to us, a trust for which we must render account to Thee." So let us learn to appreciate and be grateful for the important things in life: health, beauty, education, loving parents and friends.<sup>8</sup> The story that is to follow tries in a most beautiful fashion to emphasize this very idea.

#### THE JEWELS

Rebbi Meir stayed during the whole of the Sabbath-day in the School instructing the people. During his absence from the house his two sons died, both of them of great beauty and great learning. His wife carried them to bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies.

In the evening Rabbi Meir came home. "Where are my sons?" he asked. "I looked and looked around the school, and

I did not see them there." She gave him a wine cup. He praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank the wine, and again asked: "Where are my sons?" "They are not very far off", she said, and placed food before him that he might eat.

When he had said grace after the meal, she spoke to him in the following manner: "My dear husband, I would like to ask you but one question." "Ask it then," he replied. "A few days ago a person entrusted some jewels into my hands, and now he demands them of me; should I give them back again?" "This is a question that my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask! Would you for one moment hesitate to return to someone what is his own?" "No," she replied; "but yet I thought it best not to return them without speaking to you first."

She then led him to the bed, and took the white covering from the dead bodies. "Ah, my sons! My sons!" loudly cried the father. "My sons! The light of my eyes!" The mother turned and wept bitterly. After /<sup>a</sup> while she took her husband by the hand, and said, "Did you not teach me that we must not be hesitant to return that which was entrusted to our keeping? See - the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to lead us in Thy ways, that Thy name may be honored and Israel be blessed by our actions. May we walk according to the precepts of Thy law, and, remaining firm in our devotion to Thee, may we never fall into temptation or shame. May our better nature always prompt us to discharge our duties faithfully and to do good with a willing heart. Gird us with strength to govern our inclinations in accordance with Thy will. Grant, O Father, that by our conduct we may win favor in Thine eyes and in the eyes of our fellowmen.

This closing part of the introductory prayers comes from an old prayer in the Talmud. It asks God's help to use our better nature for the fine and noble things in life. We pray that this may be the will of God.<sup>9</sup> The story that we are about to read shows how the good and kind person often does not realize that his actions are bound up with the will of God.

#### THE JUDGMENT OF THE WIND

During the days of King Solomon a very poor widow named Shunamith lived in a hut in a small fishing village on the shores of the Mediterranean. Here she dwelt and earned a poor living by doing odd jobs.

One winter when the winds were especially harsh and money was scarce, the poor widow soon found herself without

work or food. She knew not to whom she could turn for help. She thought of going to the fishermen, but realized that they too, were in great want because of the stormy season.

Not far from the village, a very rich man lived in plenty. One morning Shunamith decided to go to the rich man and ask for help. When she approached the house, she found him standing in the doorway. He asked her who she was and what she wanted. Shunamith replied that she was from the village, and that for many days she had not tasted food. She asked him for something to eat. The rich man pointed to his large fields and said, "Look, Shunamith, at my servants who are unloading my caravans. I have just returned from Jerusalem and have seen King Solomon in his beautiful palace. Solomon was sitting upon a throne of gold and was surrounded with many beautiful things. One of his sayings which impressed me most was: 'He who hates gifts shall live.' Therefore, I will give you nothing. However, you may take what little flour you can find that has sifted out of my flour sacks."

The women gathered up what little flour dust she could find and returned to her home. With this flour she was able to make three small cakes. She said "grace" and was about to eat them when suddenly the door of the hut opened and a very poor man came inside. He begged for food, saying he had not eaten in many days. Shunamith gave the man one of the cakes. He blessed her and left. Again she said "grace" and was about to eat when again the door was opened and another poor man asked for something to eat. The widow could not



refuse. After the man had left she picked up the third cake when suddenly a great wind swept through the hut and carried her last cake out to sea. Even though the woman was in despair she did not feel sorry that she had given the first two cakes away; but she could not understand why her last cake had been taken from her. "The wind had no reason for taking my cake," she said. "I will go before Solomon and he will pass judgment on the wind."

She arrived in Jerusalem, went before the king, and told him what had happened. "Now," she said, "you must judge the wind." "Very well," said the king, "but I see you are tired. First you must rest and refresh yourself."

While she was resting, three men came before the king and in their hands were large sacks, and this was what they told the king: "We are Ishmaelite merchants, who have just landed our cargo. While we were at sea a great storm arose and the sailors lost control of the ship. Suddenly after a large wave broke over the ship, we found that it had caused a leak. We called to our gods and to the gods of other nations but they did not hear. Then we called to the God of Israel and made a vow: 'If you deliver us, O God of Israel, all the gold and silver that is in these sacks will be yours.' At that very moment a great wind passed over the ship and blew something into the hole. Immediately the water stopped flowing into the ship. We arrived safely and have come to make good our vow. Where is your God that we may reward him?"

They were very much astonished when Solomon told them that

his God was invisible; they asked the king what they should do with the reward they had vowed to give to the God of Israel. Solomon asked them what it was that had stopped up the hole in the ship. They replied that it was a small cake. And one of them produced the cake and handed it to Solomon. Solomon then called to Shunamith and asked her if the cake belonged to her. "Yes," she cried. Whereupon the king handed down this judgment: "The three sacks of silver and gold shall be given to this woman."

The merchants gladly followed Solomon's advice. Whereupon Solomon turned to Shunamith and said: "Take the silver and the gold! They are yours. God has given you this in payment for your cake, and know that everything good is done according to the will of God."



Early will I seek Thee,  
God, my refuge strong:  
Late prepared to meet Thee  
With my evening song.

Though unto Thy greatness  
I with trembling soar, -  
Yet my inmost thinking  
Lies Thine eyes before.

What this frail heart dreameth  
And my tongue's poor speech,  
Can they even distant  
To Thy greatness reach?

Being great in mercy,  
Thou wilt not despise  
Praises which till death's hour  
From my soul shall rise.

This is a translation of a Hebrew poem written by the great master of poetry, Solomon Ibn Gabirol. The first letter in each Hebrew stanza spells out the name of the author, Solomon. In this short poem the author answers the following question: If God is supposed to know our thoughts even before we utter them, why pray to God? The answer is that we do not pray to God to inform Him, but rather that God in His love and mercy for His children desires to hear their

voices like any father listening to his children.

This beautiful poem was inserted for the purpose of setting the proper feeling and attitude toward prayer. Now let us examine the feelings of three Rabbis toward prayer.<sup>10</sup>

#### THE FEELINGS OF THREE RABBIS TOWARD PRAYER

The first Rabbi taught: "It is not proper to start prayer with a feeling of sadness, nor with an attitude of laziness, nor in a spirit of laughter, nor in a manner of low talk or joking. The best attitude to have for one who is about to pray is only in a mood of joy caused through the performance of a good deed.

The second Rabbi spoke and asked the first Rabbi: "Why however do you pray so fast?"

The first Rabbi replied: "The reason is simple. I love the words of the prayers; therefore I try to swallow them quickly."

"But," continued the second Rabbi. "I too, enjoy the prayers, and yet I say the words slowly."

"Your words," exclaimed the first Rabbi, "are like flaming fire, so you must give them a chance to cool,"

The third Rabbi taught that when we pray we should always have the Lord in our thoughts. However, he was asked: "Can we think of the Lord when we are engaged in buying and selling?"

"Surely we can," answered the third Rabbi. "If we are able to think of business when we are praying, we should be able to think of praying when we are doing business."

Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, for  
 praise befitteth the upright.  
 The Lord loveth righteousness and justice,  
 the earth is full of His kindness.  
 The counsel of the Lord standeth forever  
 And His purposes through all generations.  
 He fashioneth the hearts of men  
 He considereth all their deeds.  
 A king is not saved by the multitude of his  
 hosts  
 Nor is a mighty man delivered by mere  
 strength.  
 Our soul waiteth for the Lord,  
 He is our help and our shield.  
 The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants,  
 None that take refuge in Him shall be  
 forsaken.

This prayer is based on Psalm 33. It has for its main  
 idea the thought that the righteous people have faith that  
 God will deliver them from their troubles because He is a  
 righteous God. He will never forsake those who believe in  
 Him and live by His word.<sup>11</sup> Commenting on the words, "ye  
 righteous," Rabbi Jeremish said, "It does not say, Rejoice  
 in the Lord, ye Priests, ye Levites, ye Israelites; but it  
 says, 'Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous' - whether Jew or  
 non-Jew, priest or layman."<sup>12</sup>

Another Rabbi added: "The prayer of the righteous is

comparable to a pitchfork; as the pitchfork changes the position of the wheat so does the prayer of the righteous change the disposition of God from anger to mercy."<sup>13</sup>

The Rabbis commenting on the verse: "The Lord loveth righteousness....," came to this conclusion: "Usually a man does not care for the qualities which he himself possesses, but the Lord, though Himself righteous, loves righteousness. The last word is in the plural. It shows different types of righteousness. One man's righteousness is perfect; another's is less perfect, yet the Lord loves every kind. The perfect is like the heavens, the imperfect like the earth; yet it was God's will to create them both. He expects that even the imperfect to try and improve and so better his ways."<sup>14</sup>

#### THE SHEEP AND THE RIGHTEOUS MAN

When Rabbi Joseph was a young man, a friend borrowed five dollars from the chest established for the repairing of damaged synagogue books. He did so in order to donate a gift to a poor man who was collecting funds for the marriage dowries of dowerless brides. This became known to the trustees of the synagogue and they summoned the borrower to a hearing. The one who borrowed the money asked that Rabbi Joseph serve as his counsel.

Rabbi Joseph began his defense by narrating the following well-known fable: "There was once an epidemic among the animals of the forest. The lion, the tiger, the wolf and the fox held a consultation, and the fox said he believed that the epidemic among the animals was due to a great sin

committed by some resident of the forest. He advised that all the animals gather together and confess their sins. The beasts of prey first confessed, and their excuses were accepted. Finally, a sheep timidly approached and confessed that she had eaten a little hay from her owner's mattress.

"'Aha,' roared the lion, 'you are the great sinner. You have taken advantage of your master's confidence.' And the poor sheep was condemned to death."

Rabbi Joseph then turned to the judges and said: "You, Judge Leo, have been guilty of this and this; and you, Judge Bear, have done so and so; you, Judge Wolf, have acted wrongly in this and this instance; yet you dare sit in judgment against a kind and righteous man because he has borrowed money for a highly worthy cause."

Everyone present felt ashamed and left without even pronouncing judgment against the righteous man.

This story is only an example of how the righteous man is usually delivered from his troubles when he is truly righteous.

Every living soul shall praise Thee; the spirit of all flesh shall glorify Thy name. Thou art God from everlasting to everlasting and besides Thee there is no redeemer nor savior. Thou art the first and the last, the Lord of all generations. Thou rulest the world in kindness and all Thy creatures in mercy. Thou art our guardian who sleepest not and slumberest not. To Thee alone we give thanks. Yet though our lips overflow with song, and our tongues with joyous praise, we should still be unable to thank Thee even for a thousandth part of the bounties which Thou hast bestowed upon our fathers and upon us. Thou hast been our protector and our savior in every trial and peril. Thy mercy has watched over us, and Thy loving kindness has never failed us.

This is part of an ancient and beautiful prayer of adoration and praise of God. It tells us that there is no limit to the praise that we ought to render God who has never failed us. Notice the rich poetical imagery. While the first half of this prayer may date back to Temple times, the second half was well known to Talmudical teachers.<sup>15</sup> The Midrash expresses the same idea in this thought: "Everything that breathes shall praise the Lord;" this also means: for every breath a man breathes, it is his duty to praise his Maker. The story we are about to read is a Hassidic tale which tries to resolve a contradiction in this prayer.



A certain Hassidic Rabbi once said: "We read in the Sabbath prayers: 'Yet though our lips overflow with song, and our tongues with joyous praise, we should still be unable to thank Thee even for a thousandth part of the bounties which Thou hast bestowed upon our fathers and upon us.'

"There seems to be a contradiction in this statement. But it may be made clear by the following parable: A king informed one of his generals that he wished to lunch at the latter's home. The general showed the confusion he felt, inasmuch as he did not know the proper dishes for the royal food. The king noted this and added: 'My cooks will prepare the food, in order to save you the trouble.'

"Likewise the Lord desires our praise, and we tremble at the thought that our lips are ignorant of the proper words, and that we lack the proper spirit. But then we remind ourselves that our lips and mouth have been formed by the Lord, and we feel that He will accept our words through His vessels which He created."

It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High: to declare Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness in the night seasons, with an instrument of ten strings and with the psaltery; with a solemn sound upon the harp. For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy works; I will exult in the works of Thy hands. How great are Thy works; O Lord! Thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever. But Thou, O Lord, art exalted for evermore. For, lo, Thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, Thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. The righteous shall blossom like the palmtree, and grow like the cedars in Lebanon. Rooted in the house of the Lord, they shall flower in the courts of our God. They shall be fruitful in old age, flourishing and verdant; to declare that the Lord is upright, my Rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness.

The above prayer is taken from Psalm 92. According to Jewish tradition, this Psalm was composed by Adam on the first Sabbath of creation. In the times of the Temple it



was chanted by the Levites each Sabbath. It is a song of thanksgiving to God. It shows God's love in caring for the world, the marvelous works of His hands.<sup>16</sup> These two ideas of thankfulness to God and God's love in caring for the world is retold in the story of "Abraham and the Old Man".

#### ABRAHAM AND THE OLD MAN

When Abraham left the house of his father Terah, he settled in the beautiful valley not far from the city of Hebron in the land of Canaan. It was a lovely spot of rich meadows, green fields and lush orchids. Abraham and his household, his sheep and his camels, had found a peaceful haven in which to set up their tents.

The largest and the most richly decorated tent was placed at the crossing of two roads, one going from the hills to the sea and the other from the sea to the desert.

A small palm grove surrounded this tent and sheltered it in its shade. Not far away, a fresh water spring bubbled forth its waters. The tent itself had four entrances, open on all four sides, so that no matter from which direction a traveler would come he would be faced with an open and hospitable door, a table set with the finest foods and a soft bed covered with the skins of young goats.

And when a tired wayfarer, having satisfied his hunger and quenched his thirst, would offer his thanks to his host, Abraham would reply, "Do not thank me, O man of the road! All that you have received is the gift of Him Who has created the world. Give your thanks unto Him."

Then the traveler together with Abraham would thank the Creator for the food, the drink and the rest which he had enjoyed.

One day, Abraham emerged from his tent and saw a tired old man sitting upon his bundle. With great kindness, Abraham invited the old man into his tent. But the traveler refused. Only after much urging did he finally enter Abraham's home to partake of his hospitality.

After the traveler had eaten and rested, Abraham asked him to give thanks to the Creator of the world. But the traveler replied, "I give thanks only to my own god, and he is in my own house."

Abraham was angered by this reply. He scolded the old man roundly and ordered him to leave his tent.

That evening, as Abraham was walking through his fields, he heard a voice calling to him, "Abraham, Abraham!"

"I am here, my Lord," Abraham replied. "Abraham", said the Heavenly Voice, "for more than eighty years, the Creator of the world has clothed and fed that ancient traveler whom you ordered out of your tent today. For eighty years He has not lost patience with him. But you were unable to tolerate him for one hour. Go, bring him back to your home. Give him food. Prepare a bed for him, for he is very tired."

And Abraham went out to seek the ancient traveler, and found him lying on a stone. He brought him back, gave him a bed, and for the rest of the night stood guard over him, so that his sleep would not be disturbed.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He  
 leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth  
 my soul; He guideth me in straight paths for His  
 name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley  
 of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for  
 Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they  
 comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in  
 the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed  
 my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely  
 goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of  
 my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
 forever.

This prayer also comes from the collection of Psalms.  
 It is a translation of Psalm 23, one of the most beautiful  
 and popular of the Psalms. It speaks of faith in God, the  
 protector, and the safety one can find in His tent.<sup>17</sup>  
 Because this Psalm expresses such great faith in God as the  
 protector, it is usually recited in times of great stress and  
 trouble.

Now let us turn to our story and see an example of a  
 person who showed great faith in God, almost at the cost of  
 his life. Because he feared God alone, he had no fear of  
 evil!

#### THE LOST BRACELET

On his trip to Rome, a famous and very learned Rabbi  
 chanced to find a golden bracelet belonging to the Queen of

Rome. In the meantime a decree had gone about the kingdom which announced: "Whoever returns the bracelet within thirty days shall receive a grand reward, but if it is found upon him after the thirty days, his head will be cut off."

The Rabbi learned of the decree. He realized the consequences involved. Nevertheless, he would not return the bracelet until after the thirty days had passed.

When the Rabbi finally returned the bracelet to the Queen, she asked him, "Did you not hear the proclamation: 'Whoever returns the bracelet within thirty days shall receive a grand reward, but if it is found upon him after thirty days, his head will be cut off.'"

The Rabbi answered that he was aware of the proclamation and knew of its consequences.

Then the Queen said: "Then why did you not return the bracelet within the thirty days?"

"In order," he replied, "that you should not say that I returned the bracelet because I feared you, for I returned it only because I feared the One true God of Israel. And he has commanded us to return all lost articles to their rightful owners."

When the Queen heard this, she knew she was speaking to a man who showed great faith in his God and she cried out in admiration: "Blessed be the God of the Jews."

Sweet hymns and songs will I recite  
 To sing of Thee, by day and night.  
 Of Thee, who are my soul's delight.

How doth my soul within me yearn  
 Beneath Thy shadow to return,  
 Thy secret mysteries to learn.

And e'en while yet Thy glory fires  
 My words, and hymns of praise inspires,  
 Thy love it is my heart desires.

My meditation day and night,  
 May it be pleasant in Thy sight,  
 For Thou art all my soul's delight.

The author of this hymn of glory is unknown but we think the poem was written in the thirteenth century. Alice Lucas wrote the above translation which is only a part of the original poem. The thought is simple and beautiful; the writer hopes to learn of God and to be close to Him, for God is the very delight of his soul. And so the poet strives with all his soul to reach God. From the story of the "Three Gifts" we shall notice also that at the throne of the Almighty it is not the souls of the noble born that are preferred but rather the souls of the upward striving.

### THREE GIFTS

Ages ago, somewhere on this earth, a Jew died. Is there anything unusual about a Jew dying? Surely, nobody can live

forever! When the Jew passed away, his soul winged its way to the heavenly seat of Judgment.

On its arrival, it found the scales prepared, on which the court was to weigh all the earthly deeds, the good and the bad.

"Why does it take so long?" asked the head of the court. The attendant stammered:

"Even! The pointed has come to a stop in the exact center!" The good deeds and the evil balanced each other exactly.

"In the very center?" the court asked again. The attendant took another look and replied:

"Absolutely balanced!"

The supreme court deliberated a while and finally arrived at the following conclusion:

"Since the sins do not outweigh the good deeds, the soul does not belong in hell. On the other hand, since the good deeds do not weigh more than the vices, the doors of paradise cannot be opened for the soul. Hence the soul must remain homeless. It must fly about between heaven and earth until God remembers it, pities it, and bestows His grace upon it."

The court attendant pitied the poor soul and gave it the following advice:

"Fly down, dear soul, and flutter about the living world and observe how it carries on, what it does, and if you see anything of extraordinary goodness and beauty, catch it and fly up with it. Bring it as a gift for the saints of paradise.



Only the saints of paradise can plead for a poor wondering soul, and saints like gifts, nice gifts. Such is the habits of saints nowadays. And after you have brought three gifts, be assured the gates of paradise will be opened for you. The gifts will be effective. At the throne of the Almighty it is not the souls of the nobly born that are preferred but rather the souls of the upward striving."

With these words the attendant of the heavenly court mercifully sent the soul forth from heaven.

The soul searched year after year, but alas, in most cases the soul retreated, shocked at what he saw. The exiled soul brooded: "The world is so poor; human beings have such mediocre gray souls; their deeds are so petty; how can one expect anything extraordinary from them? I am doomed to wander, an eternal exile!"

In the midst of its brooding, a red flame caught its eye, a red flame in the middle of a dark overcast night.

The soul looked about - the flame was shooting up from a high window.

Robbers had broken into a rich man's house, robbers with masks on their faces. One held a burning torch in his hand as a light. Another stood with a glistening knife directed against the victim's breast and repeated over and over again: "A single move, Jew, and you're finished! The point of the knife will come out of your back." The others were opening chests and drawers and removing the contents.

The Jew stood with the knife pointed at his breast and watched the scene calmly. Not an eyelash moved over his clear

eyes, not a hair of his long white beard stirred. He seemed wholly unconcerned, as if thinking, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken, blessed be the name of the Lord." His pale lips murmured: "You're not born with it, and you can't take it with you to the grave."

He looked on calmly, as the last drawers of the last chest were opened and bags were removed, filled with gold and silver, with jewels and all sorts of treasures. He looked on and was silent.

Suddenly, however, as the robbers reached the last hiding place and pulled out a little bag, the last and most secret bag, he forgot himself. He was seized with trembling, his eyes glared, he raised his right hand to stop them, he wanted to cry out: "Don't touch!"

But, instead of a cry, a red ray of steaming blood spurted forth. The knife had done its job. His heart's blood bespattered the bag. As he fell, the robbers tore open the bag quickly, expecting the best and most valuable loot.

They were, however, bitterly disappointed. In vain had they shed blood. The bag contained neither silver nor gold nor jewelry nor anything of practical value in this world. It had only a bit of earth from the land of Israel, earth which the Jew had preserved for his grave. This was the treasure which the rich men had wanted to save from the hands and the eyes of strangers and which was bespattered with his blood.

The soul catches a bloody speck of this Palestinian earth and brings it to the window at heaven's gate.



"Remember, two more gifts!" said the angel, as he closed heaven's window leaving the soul outside.

"God will help!" thought the hopeful soul, as it flew down again in a more cheerful mood.

This cheerfulness faded, however, as years and years went by and the soul saw nothing of extraordinary beauty. Sad thoughts again came to the soul.

Suddenly, the soul was roused from its brooding by the noise of trumpets and drums.

Looking down, it saw on one side a Jewish girl who stood fettered. Near her, ten attendants held in check a wild horse. The presiding officer arose, and, turning towards the audience, read from a paper the sentence pronounced upon the Jewish girl:

"This Jewess, offspring of Jewish parents, committed a great sin, a monstrous sin, which even all-merciful God could not forgive. She stole out of the ghetto on our recent holy day and walked through our pure streets. She desecrated with her shameless eyes our sacred processions, our holy images, which we carried about the streets to the accompaniment of psalms and the beating of drums. This, therefore, is the sentence pronounced by us upon the devil in the shape of this lovely and beautiful girl:

"She is to be tied by her hair, by her lovely, devilish hair, to the tail of this wild horse. Let the horse gallop and drag her like a corpse over the streets which her feet stepped on in defiance of our holy laws. May her blood besprinkle our stones and wash off the impurity which her feet have brought to them!"

A wild shout of joy went up from all the throats round about the market-square. When the hysteria of wild shouts was over, the doomed girl was asked whether she had any last wish before her death.

"Yes," she replied. "I would like a few pins!"

"She must be out of her mind with terror!" muttered the magistrates.

"No!" she answered calmly and coldly, "this is my last wish and my only desire."

"Granted! And now, tie her!" commanded the presiding officer.

All were ready to watch the wild horse dash out, all faces glowed, all eyes blazed. In the excitement, nobody noticed that the doomed girl bent down quietly, pinned the edge of her dress to her feet, and stuck the pins deep, deep into her flesh, so that her body could not be uncovered when the horse dragged her through the streets.

This action was noticed only by the poor wandering soul.

"Let go!" commanded the presiding officer, and the horse darted forward.

The wandering soul drew a blood-stained pin from the leg of the dying girl and flew to heaven.

"Just one more gift!" the angel at heaven's gate comforted the soul.

The soul flew down again. It needed but one gift.

Again seasons and years passed by and the soul sank into melancholy. It imagined that the world was becoming still

smaller, with pettier people and pettier deeds.

Then the soul came upon a strange scene; two long rows of soldiers, with ships in their hands, were lined up with a narrow passage in between. Someone was to be driven through the two lines.

Who?

A mere Jew of ordinary appearance, with a tattered shirt on his emaciated body and a skullcap on his half-shaven head.

Why this punishment? Who knows? It might have been for theft of robbery or cruelty or perhaps even some trumped-up charge. It was, after all, before our age of progress.

The soldiers smiled and thought to themselves: why did they line up so many of us? Why, he wouldn't last half way.

He was shoved over and pushed into the passage between the lines. He started to walk. He went erect. He neither stumbled nor fell. He received lashes and he endured.

Fierce anger gripped the soldiers. He was still walking, still on his feet!

The whips whistled through the air like demons. They wound about his body like snakes. The blood of the emaciated body spurted unceasingly.

He was half way through, when a soldier struck too high and off came the skullcap from the head of the victim. After a few paces, the doomed Jew noticed this. He stopped short, he hesitated, he reflected a moment, he made up his mind, and turned around: he would not go with head uncovered. He retraced his steps to the spot where the cap had fallen. He bent down and picked it up. Then he continued on calmly, red

and bloodstained but with the Jewish cap on his head. He walked erect until he collapsed.

And as he fell, the soul flew over and caught the cap, which had caused the Jew so many extra lashes, and rushed with it up to heaven's gate.

The third gift was also accepted.

The saints interceded in behalf of the poor soul and the gates of paradise were opened for it after these three gifts.

The heavenly voice said:

"Really beautiful gifts, gifts of extraordinary loveliness. They are of no practical use or material value, but their beauty is indeed rare."

Thou, O Lord, art one, and Thy name is one.  
 May Thy truth unite all mankind into one holy  
 bond of brotherhood and may our love for one  
 another be our crown of glory and armor of strength.  
 Bless us, O God, on this Sabbath, and grant that  
 it be unto us a day of rest and sanctification.  
 May it strengthen us in all noble purposes and  
 holy resolves; may it encourage us to seek truth  
 from Thy fountain of truth, and inspire us to  
 become holy as Thou art holy. To Thee and Thy  
 service we would consecrate this day, which in  
 Thy love Thou hast sanctified for us. Amen.

There is a wonderful thought to be found in this  
 particular prayer: The unity of God is reflected in the  
 unity of all mankind, and the glory of God is reflected in  
 man's goodness to man.<sup>18</sup>

The story about Israel Salanter is another one of the  
 many tales which cluster around this saintly person. He was  
 a leader of a school of ethical living, his own life was  
 filled with proof of his devotion to the ideal of man's good-  
 ness to man.

#### ABOUT RABBI ISRAEL SALANTER

Rabbi Israel Salanter, the great and learned Rabbi,  
 was a righteous and pious man. One day, even though there  
 was a full pail of water in the house, he used very little of  
 it to wash his hands. His pupils were quite astonished that

their revered Rabbi did not perform properly the commandment to wash thoroughly before eating.

Hesitantly they turned to him and said: "Please forgive us for asking you this. But we cannot understand why you used so little water to wash your hands."

Whereupon Rabbi Israel replied: "I saw that the maid-servant delivers this water to the house from a far-off well. She, poor creature, bends low under the load when she carries the yoke on her shoulders. I do not think it right to perform a mitzvah at the expense of someone else's shoulders!"

In Kovno, where Rabbi Israel Salanter lived for a time, there was a home for beggars and those who could not afford a night's lodging.

The Home was broken-down and neglected. The inmates lived in dirt and disorder. The trustees hid their eyes from the terrible conditions at the Home. They made no plans to repair it or clean it, or improve it in any way.

Rabbi Israel Salanter learned of this situation...

He went to the Home one evening, and slept there all night on the bare floor, together with the other inmates. When morning came, people saw the famous Rabbi leaving the home.

The shocking news spread through town. That very day the trustees began to repair the Home and make it livable. Otherwise, how could they face the Rabbi...



I rejoiced when they said unto me: Let us go unto the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem; Jerusalem, that was builded as a city that is compact together; whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, as a testimony unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there were set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may they prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes. I will now say: Peace be within thee. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.

Here is another Psalm; it is Psalm 122. One interpretation makes this Psalm a pilgrim's happy meditation after he had returned home from his visit to Jerusalem. According to others it describes the pilgrim's sensations while he is standing within the Temple area. The latter view seems the more probable.<sup>19</sup>

Long after the Temple was destroyed the Rabbis could still see it stand in their minds. Let us read of some of the sensations the Rabbis experienced as they saw the Temple mirrored in their imaginations.

#### THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Among the great achievements of Solomon, first place

must be assigned to the superb Temple built by him. He was long in doubt as to where he was to build it. A heavenly voice directed him to go to Mount Zion at night to a field owned by two brothers. And as we have already learned from the story of the two unselfish brothers, God decided to build the Temple on that field.

Every detail of the equipment and ornamentation of the Temple testifies to Solomon's rare wisdom. Next to the required furniture, he planted golden trees which bore fruit all the time the building stood. When the enemy entered the Temple, the fruit dropped from the trees. Solomon was very careful in the work of erecting the Temple. It took him over seven years. Solomon first built God's Temple, then he constructed his own palace. In this respect he was superior to his father David, who first built a house for himself, and then gave thought to a house for God to dwell in. Indeed, it was Solomon's meritorious work in connection with the Temple that saved him from being reckoned by the sages as one of the impious kings.

According to the measure of the zeal shown by Solomon were the help and favor shown him by God. During the seven years it took to build the Temple, not a single workman died who was employed about it, not even did a single one fall sick. And as the workmen were sound and robust from the first to last, so the perfection of their tools remained unimpaired until the building stood complete. Thus the work suffered no sort of interruption.



Some of the Rabbis believed that none of the tools used in building the Temple were made of iron or any other type of metal used in waging war. God's house of peace could not be constructed by any materials which cause violence in the world.

The joy of the people over the completion of the sanctuary was so great that they held the consecration ceremonies on the Day of Atonement.

In the execution of the Temple work, a wish cherished by David was fulfilled. He was against having the gold which he had taken as booty from the heathen places of worship during his campaigns used for the sanctuary at Jerusalem, because he feared that the heathen would boast, at the destruction of the Temple, that their gods were courageous, and were taking revenge by wrecking the house of the Israelitish God. Fortunately Solomon was so rich that there was no need to resort to the gold inherited from his father, and so David's wish was fulfilled.

Praised be He who by His creative word  
called the universe into being. Praised be He  
who sustains it by His might. Praised be He who  
orders it in His wisdom and establishes the world  
in righteousness.

Praised be Thou, O God, for Thy manifold  
mercies unto us, for our heritage of faith, for  
visions of truth and of duty and for the courage  
to remain true to our higher nature amid trials  
and temptation. Thy servants in all generations  
have found joy in worshipping Thee with pure  
hearts. With psalms and songs they glorified  
Thy name. We too would adore Thee with prayers  
of thanksgiving and with deeds of lovingkindness.

Here is another example of a prayer of adoration of  
God, the Creator of the world. We show this sentiment best  
by sincere prayer and deeds of lovingkindness. The first is  
directed to God, the second to man. In the famous short story  
that is to follow, we meet a Rabbi who lives by both of these  
ideas and is not only a man of God, but a man among men in  
his relationships to other human beings.

#### IF NOT HIGHER

During the Ten Days of Repentance the Rebbe of Nemirov  
used to disappear suddenly - as if he had melted into thin  
air. He was not to be found anywhere, either in the synagogue  
or in the House of study, or even in his home.

When asked where the Rebbe had gone, the people of

Nemirov would answer, "Where should he be, with the Solemn Days so near, if not in heaven." So thought the people.

A skeptic from the neighboring community, however, decided to convince the people of Nemirov of the error of their ways and to discover where the Rebbe really would go during the Ten Days of Repentance.

So just before the Solemn Days, the skeptic stole into the Rebbe's room and hid in the Rebbe's closet. He intended to remain there until he could find out where the Rebbe disappeared. When the skeptic found himself alone with the Rebbe, terror took hold of him: and all night long he stood awake, trembling, in order to watch where the Rebbe would go.

At last, next morning, the Rebbe got up and dressed; but instead of his regular garb, he put on the clothes of the peasant. Dangling out of his pocket, strange to relate, was a thick rope - a peasant's rope. The skeptic became more confused and bewildered.

The mystery grew even more puzzling as the Rebbe, on his way out of the house, picked up a hatchet. The frightened skeptic did not know what to think now, but still he remained determined to follow the Rebbe, come what may! The skeptic could hear the sound of his own heart-beats in rhythm with the heavy foot falls of the Rebbe. Together they soon left the town far behind.

The Rebbe walked directly toward the forest, cut down a tree, chopped it up into small logs, tied it in a bundle on his shoulder, and returned back to town with the skeptic

following behind like his shadow.

In one of the back streets, the Rebbe stopped beside a tumble-down little house of a poor widow.

"I have wood to sell," said the Rebbe disguised as a peasant, "very cheap, for next to nothing."

The skeptic looked through a broken window into a dingy room with old, shabby furniture. In the bed was a sick woman huddled up in rags, who said bitterly:

"Wood to sell - and where am I, a poor widow, to find money to buy it?"

"I will give you six groschen worth on credit."

"But how will I ever be able to repay you?" groaned the poor woman.

"Foolish creature!" the Rebbe scolded her. "See here, you are a poor, sick Jewess, and I am willing to trust you with the little bundle of wood I believe in time you will be able to repay me. And you, woman, who have such a great and mighty God, why do you not trust Him! Not even the amount of a miserable six groschen for a bundle of wood!"

"And who is to light the stove?" groans the widow.

"I shall also light the stove for you," replied the Rebbe.

Later when anyone told how the Rebbe used to fly up to heaven before the Holy Days, the skeptic, instead of laughing as if in doubt, would quietly add:

"If not higher."

Happy are they who dwell in Thy house, they  
are continually praising Thee.

Happy are they who thus know Him: happy  
is the people whose God is the Lord.

I will extol Thee, my God, O King, and I will  
bless Thy name forever and ever.

Every day, I will bless Thee and I will  
praise Thy name forever and ever.

Great is the Lord and highly to be praised: and  
His greatness is beyond finding out.

One generation shall praise Thy works to another,  
and shall declare Thy mighty acts.

I will speak of the splendor of Thy majesty  
and of Thy wonderful works.

And men shall tell of Thy mighty acts, and I  
will tell of Thy greatness.

They shall herald Thy great goodness, and shall  
sing of Thy righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,  
show to anger and of great mercy.

The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies  
are over His works.

Thy kingdom is a kingdom for all ages, and  
Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

The Lord upholdeth those who fall, and raiseth  
up those who are bowed down.

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou

givest them their food in due season.

Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest the  
desire of every living being.

The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and  
gracious in all His works.

The Lord is near unto all who call upon Him,  
to all who call upon Him in truth.

My mouth shall utter the praise of the Lord;  
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.

Again we find another of the numerous Psalms used in  
the Jewish book of prayer. This selection is Psalm 145. It  
glorifies the greatness and majesty of God. From the beginning  
of the Psalm we might receive the impression that God is  
distant and far from our reach, but toward the end of the  
-salm we read: "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and  
gracious in all His works. The Lord is near unto all who  
call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." 20.

The chief character in the legend of "The Treasure"  
learned the truth of these words. He discovered that God  
is near and that God is gracious.

#### THE TREASURE

To sleep in summer time, in a room four yards square,  
together with a wife and eight children, is anything but a  
pleasure, even on a Friday night. Shmerel the woodcutter rises  
from his bed, though only half the night has passed, to  
escape his miserable dwelling. He steps into the street for



a breath of fresh air. Outside all is quiet, all the shutters are closed, and over the sleeping town is a distant, serene, and starry sky. He feels as if he were all alone with God, and he says, looking up at the sky, "Now, Lord of the Universe, now is the time to hear me and to bless me with a treasure out of Thy treasure-house!"

As he says this, he sees something like a little flame coming along out of the town, and he knows, That is it! He is about to pursue it, when he remembers it is the Sabbath day, and one must not run on the Sabbath. So he goes after it walking. And as he walks slowly along, the little flame begins to move slowly, too, so that the distance between them does not increase, though it does not shorten, either. He walks on. Now and then an inward voice calls to him: "Shmerel, don't be a fool! Take off the dressing-gown. Give a jump and throw it over the flame!" But he knows it is the Evil Inclination. He takes therefore, still smaller steps, and rejoices to see that, as soon as he takes these smaller steps, the little flame moves more slowly, too.

Thus he follows the flame, and follows it, till he gradually finds himself outside the town. The road twists and turns across fields and meadows, and the distance between him and the flame grows no longer, no shorter.

Meanwhile, the thought revolves in his mind: Were he indeed to become possessed of the treasure, he need no longer be a woodcutter now, in his later years; he has no longer the strength for the work he had once. He would order his



wife a new dress, and buy her a few strings of pearls. The children would be sent to better schools.

"It would be a meritorious act to pounce upon the treasure!"

The Evil Inclination again, he thinks. If this were only a weekday, he would not have any problem. But this day was the day of the Holy Sabbath, and one cannot act in such a fashion on the Holy Sabbath.

He sighs and walks on and on, now and then glancing up into the sky: "Lord of the Universe, of whom are you making trial? Of Shmerel the Woodcutter? If you do mean to give me the treasure, give it to me!"

He thinks on, and says, speaking into the air: "It is not God-sent! God does not make sport of us - it is the work of a demon."

Feeling already a little angry with the thing, he turns and hurries toward his home, thinking: "I won't say a word about it to anybody; first, they won't believe me, and if they do, they'll laugh at me. The Creator knows how it was, and that is enough for me."

No, he won't breathe a word. He won't ever remind the Almighty of it. If he really has been good, the Almighty will remember without being told.

And suddenly he is conscious of a strange, inward calm, and there is a delicious sensation in his limbs. Money is, after all, not everything, riches may even lead a man from the right way, and he feels inclined to thank God for not having brought him into temptation by granting his wish.

Finally he reaches his house. The door he sees, is open. Apparently he forgot to shut it. And, lo and behold! the flame goes in, the flame goes in at his own house door! He follows, and sees it disappear beneath the bed. All are asleep. He goes softly up to the bed, stoops down, and sees the flame spinning round underneath it, like a top, always in the same place. He takes his dressing gown, and throws it down under the bed, and covers up the flame. No one hears him, and now a golden morning beam steals in through a crack in the shutter.

He sits down on the bed, and makes a vow not to say a word to anyone till the Sabbath is over - not even half a word, lest it cause desecration of the Sabbath. If news of the treasure ever leaked out of his home, people in the streets would talk about his treasure, about his luck, and people would not say their prayers, or say grace as they should. As a result he would have led his household and half the town into sin. No, not a whisper! And he stretches himself out on the bed, and pretends to be asleep.

And this was his reward: When, after concluding the Sabbath, he stooped down and lifted up the dressing-gown under the bed, there lay a sack with millions of gold coins in it - an almost endless number.

He became one of the richest men in the place, and lived happily all the years of his life.

Only, his wife was continually bringing up against him: "Lord of the World, how could a man have such a heart of stone, as to sit a whole summer day and not say a word, not a word,

not to his own wife, not one single word! And there was I" (she remembers) "crying over my prayer as I said God of Abraham - and crying so - for there wasn't a penny left in the house."

Then he consoles her, and says with a smile:

"Who knows? Perhaps it was all thanks to your 'God of Abraham' that it went off so well."

Praise ye the Lord to whom all praise is due.

Praised be the Lord to whom all praise is due  
forever and ever.

This section is usually referred to as the call to prayer. The call to prayer means more than just to come to prayer, it means to prepare oneself for prayer. Prepare your heart, and make your mind ready to approach God properly. Try not to appear before God in anger or in bitterness or with complaint. Think of all the blessings and good things you have. And when we think how really fortunate we are, we come before God with feelings of thanksgiving and words of grateful praise.<sup>21</sup> The poor Jew in the story that follows finds this a lesson to always remember.

#### IT COULD ALWAYS BE WORSE

The poor Jew had come to the end of his rope. So he went to his rabbi for advice.

"Holy Rabbi!" he cried. "Things are in a bad way with me, and are getting worse all the time! We are poor, so poor, that my wife, my six children, my in-laws and I have to live in a one-room hut. We get in each other's way all the time. Our nerves are wearing out, and because we have plenty of troubles, we quarrel. Believe me - my home is a hell and I'd sooner die than continue living this way!"

The rabbi pondered the matter gravely. "My son," he said, "promise to do as I tell you and your condition will improve."

"I promise, Rabbi," answered the troubled man. "I'll do anything you say."

"Tell me - what animals do you own?"

"I have a cow, a goat and some chickens."

"Very well! Go home now and take all these animals into your house to live with you."

The poor man was dumbfounded, but since he had promised the rabbi, he went home and brought all the animals into his house.

The following day the poor man returned to the rabbi and cried, "Rabbi, what misfortune have you brought upon me! I did as you told me and brought the animals into the house. And now what have I got? Things are worse than ever! My life is a perfect hell - the house is turned into a barn! Save me, Rabbi - help me!"

"My son," replied the rabbi serenely, "go home and take the chickens out of your house. God will help you!"

So the poor man went home and took the chickens out of his house. But it was not long before he again came running to the rabbi.

"Holy Rabbi!" he wailed. "Help me, save me! The goat is smashing everything in the house - she's turning my life in to a nightmare."

"Go home," said the rabbi gently, "and take the goat out of the house. God will help you!"

The poor man returned to his home and removed the goat. But it wasn't long before he again came running to the rabbi,

lamenting loudly, "What a misfortune you've brought upon my head, Rabbi! The cow has turned my house into a stable! How can you expect a human being to live side by side with an animal?"

"You're right - a hundred times right!" agreed the rabbi. "Go straight home and take the cow out of your house!"

And the poor unfortunate man hastened home and took the cow out of his house.

Not a day had passed before he came running again to the rabbi. "Rabbi!" cried the poor man, his face beaming, "You've made life sweet again for me. With all the animals out, the house is so quiet, so roomy, and so clean! What a pleasure it is to feel thankful and grateful for what one has - praised be God."

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the world, who in Thy mercy makest light to shine over the earth and all its inhabitants, and renewest daily the work of creation. How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The heavens declare Thy glory. The earth reveals Thy creative power. Thou formest light and darkness, ordainest good out of evil, bringest harmony into nature and peace to heart of man.

In this part of our service which follows the section dealing with the call to prayer and praise, we have a description of what God is like, in order that we may well realize to whom we pray. The idea expressed in this paragraph is the same with which the Bible itself begins. Thus our thought in the above prayer, as in the Bible, is of God the Creator of the world. Nothing can touch our hearts more deeply than the realization of how wonderful and how mysterious the world is. It makes a great difference in our life when we think of God as the Living Creator of all the world. And according to our abilities, we too, must walk in God's ways and work and create with Him. We too, therefore, must build and not destroy.<sup>22.</sup>

Of all the wonders of nature, some would say that the most marvelous of all is the orderly motion of the stars and planets. The story that follows is simply a legend which attempts to explain how the moon became smaller and less brighter than the sun. The legend points out also that God



is the Creator and the Master of all nature.

#### WHY THE MOON IS PALE

In the very first day that ever was, God made the sun, the moon, the heavens, and the earth. And the moon was just as bright as the sun, only the sun's light was warm and golden, while the moon's light was cool and silvery. In the daytime the whole world blossomed and ripened in the heat, while in the night the forests and rivers shone and glimmered in radiant silver light, as bright as day.

The sun was a jolly, happy fellow; he enjoyed shining and making things grow, and listening to the songs of the birds when they woke in the morning; and his big, golden face smiled all day long. But the beautiful moon was a jealous creature; she did not like the sun with his heat and glow, and did not want him to shine with as much light as herself. She wanted everyone to say, "Oh, yes, the sun is handsome enough, but the moon is much brighter and much more lovely!"

So she planned and planned how to persuade God to give some of the sun's glory to her. And at last, an idea came to her. While the sun was away shining, she went to the throne of the Angel of the Lord, and spoke:

"Oh Lord of the Universe! How great, how wonderful, how beautiful are the works which Thou has made! Thou hast made two worlds, this world and the world to come, one greater and one lesser. Thou hast made the heavens and the earth, and the heavens are greater than the earth. Thou hast made

fire and water, and water is greater than fire, for it puts fire out. Now Thou hast created the sun and the moon: surely it is right that one of these two should be greater!"

"But," replied the Angel, "which one of these two wouldst thou have me make great? Would it be fair to the sun if I made him less great than thou?"

But the moon persisted and said:

"Oh Lord, I am sure the sun would not mind: he is very good-natured. And besides, his light is not so beautiful as mine."

But even while she spoke, the moon felt that her face and form were gradually losing more and more of their light. Dimmer and dimmer she became, till her light was sixty times less than before and her size decreased likewise. Then she knew that God was angry with her for her jealousy. From that time and on, she lifted her face and shone with a pale, sad light.

For many years she was sad and full of gloom, but when the tribe of man increased upon the earth, she saw that the paleness of her light brought rest and peace to those who labored, and that many people loved her light better than that of the sun. So she grew cheerful and sweet, and shone tenderly and peacefully. And with the stars she walks through the sky all night, and brings pleasant dreams to those who have done their work well.

Great has been Thy love for us and Thy compassion boundless. Our fathers put their trust in Thee and Thou didst teach them the law of life. Be gracious also unto us that we may understand and fulfil the teachings of Thy word. Enlighten our eyes in Thy law that we may cling unto Thy commandments. Unite our hearts to love and revere Thee. We trust in Thee and rejoice in Thy saving power, for from Thee cometh our help. Thou hast called us and drawn us high unto Thee to serve Thee in faithfulness. Joyfully do we lift up our voices and proclaim Thy unity. Praised be Thou. O God, who in Thy love hast called Thy people Israel to serve Thee.

God not only gives the sunlight, earth, and plants, but is also the Giver of understanding and knowledge. God is not only the Creator, but also the great Teacher, giving us wise rules by which to live. This is the main thought expressed in the above paragraph of prayer. As a result, when we use our minds we are using one of God's greatest gifts to man. And so as God is the Teacher we worship Him through prayer and learning.<sup>23</sup> The lesson from our story shows us that learning for the Jews has no boundaries: it was for the rich and poor, high or low, and even for the ugly as well as the handsome scholar.

#### THE UGLY SCHOLAR

The Emperor's daughter once said to Rabbi Joshua ben

Hananiah, who was very ugly: "How is it that your God saw fit to put such glorious wisdom and learning in so hideous a vessel!"

He replied: "Why does thy father keep wine in an earthen pitcher?"

"How else should we keep it?" she asked.

"People of your rank," said the Rabbi, "should keep their wine in vessels of gold or silver."

Thereupon the Empress persuaded her father to transfer the wine from earthen to gold and silver vessels. The wine, however, turned sour. The Emperor summoned the Rabbi and inquired why he had given such poor advice.

Rabbi Joshue answered: "I did so to show to your daughter that wisdom and learning like wine is best kept in a plain vessel."

"But," the girl objected, "are there not handsome scholars as well?"

"Yes," answered the Rabbi, "but they might have been greater scholars had they been ugly."

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

Praised be His name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever.

The most famous sentence in our prayerbook is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One." This verse comes from the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4) and is recited many times throughout the prayers. It is usually the first prayer we learn and the last we say before we die. It is also considered to be one of the most important thoughts in all our worship. It simply means that we Jews believe in One God, not many. We worship nothing that man has created because God is our highest ideal and Him alone do we worship.

After the Rabbi recites this famous sentence, the congregation responds with the sentence, "Praised be His name whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever." Although this sentence is not found in the Bible, it was recited in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. Today, too, we still continue to make this same ancient response in our synagogues.<sup>21.</sup>

Yet the doubt usually arises, how can we know for certain that an invisible God of the Jews actually exists. From our story, perhaps we can find one approach to the answer.

#### IN DESPAIR

Not far from the city of Prague is the royal city of Babenz with its beautiful gardens and a well-kept national park. During state holidays, band concerts were held there

and the people from the countryside for miles around could come to enjoy the festivities. On one particular afternoon there were no concerts and no crowd; the park was deserted. Deserted, except for a tall, handsome young man who seemed to be taking a stroll in the park. His walk was slow, and one could readily notice that he was sad, and that his face showed lines of care. He turned suddenly with a weary gesture and sat down on one of the stone benches. "Woe is me," he said aloud in his grief. "All hope is gone. My lot is indeed miserable." He covered his face with his hands and wept.

Perhaps that is why he did not notice the old man who approached. The youth continued to wail aloud: "Of what use is life to me without home? Where can I find a refuge? Can I return to my people, Israel, and become one of them? That is hardly possible. As a mere child I was estranged from them, and I know nothing about their life or their law. Or can I go to the Christians? No, that I cannot; in their eyes I am a Jew, and they will despise me as they have always done. Why was I ever born? It is better to be dead than to be without kin or people. There is naught left but to send a bullet into my heart and end my misery." As he finished speaking, he drew from his pocket a small pistol. He aimed it, saying, "In a minute I shall be at peace."

Before the last word had been uttered, a strong arm hit his own, and the pistol fell to the ground. The youth raised his eyes, and beheld a respectable looking old man with a beaming face and piercing, black eyes. The youth called out



in anger: "My dear sir, who gave you the right to do this?" The other answered: "I thought your aim was a little bad and that you ought to take a lesson or two in target practice before you commit suicide. But, my dear fellow, you seem to be in trouble. Let me help you. God has been good to me and I have plenty." "I, too, have plenty," the other retorted in heat. "Then tell me your trouble. Hide nothing from me, as it seems that God has sent me at the opportune moment." "God?" asked the young man, "Is there really a God?"

The old man said: "It is warm here. Let us go over to that other bench in the shade." When they were there, the old man continued: "Tell me, young man, what would happen if the sun got a hundred times hotter? Would not all life be burned to a cinder?" "The sun cannot do that," said the youth.... "And who will prevent it?".... "Nature has set a limit for the sun which it cannot leave".... "Nature?" asked the old man. "Is there really a thing like Nature?" The youth answered: "Well, all the natural laws of heaven and earth are called Nature.".... "Then why aren't all these laws called God instead?" The youth could not answer immediately, but soon said: "Perhaps you are right, but why cannot I also know about God, as well as I know about myself, or that you are standing there, or that my lot is indeed miserable?" The old man said: "Do you walk through this beautiful park often?" The youth nodded. "You see this beautiful lawn. It is soft and smooth and green. I know a blind man, with whom I used to come to this park, and I have pointed out this very same lawn and said it was soft and smooth and green. This man,



blind from birth, laughed: "Yes, it is soft and smooth, but it is not green. There is no such thing as green or blue, or color and light and darkness. Everything is darkness."

"Or, I know a man who has been deaf from birth and we often come into the park when the band is playing. I stop and listen. My friend is puzzled: he sees a host of people watching a group of men with shiny instruments. I communicate to him about the beauty of the music. He scoffs and says there are no such things as music, sound, or noise. Those are all figments of our imagination, says he. Thus each of my friends cannot appreciate a type of beauty because he lacks the perceptive sense that will enable him to know about it. One is deaf and the other is blind. Just so, my dear young man, many of us are lacking in a perceptive sense, a sixth sense, when we do not know God the same way we know that the grass before us is green and that my voice has sound. If all men were to have that sixth sense to know God with a certainty as did the prophets, then there would be no doubt and despair in the world. Until we develop that sixth sense, we must hope and trust."

The young man forgot the foolish intention with which he had entered the park. He returned with the old man to the Jewish community, and despite his former fears, was taken back into the Jewish fold. So well did he find his place there that he followed the Torah diligently and studied the life of his people. He became one of the greatest Rabbis of Bohemia.

Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt speak of them when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates: That ye may remember and do all My commandments and be holy unto your God.

This paragraph also is taken from the same place in the Bible as the Sh'ma (Deuteronomy 6:5). It continues to add another important idea which is basic to Jewish thinking. This particular paragraph tells us how we should feel towards God. "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul..." This love of God is probably the noblest emotion which we can ever expect to have for Him. To love God means to respect His mighty acts, to joyfully obey His laws, and appreciate His goodness towards us. Thus, true love for God is the highest expression of our faith.<sup>25</sup>

"The death of Rabbi Akiba" shows how one individual carried out this commandment to its fullest.

#### THE DEATH OF RABBI AKIBA

Once the Romans issued a decree that the Jews should no longer occupy themselves in the study of Torah. Nevertheless,

Pappus ben Judah found Rabbi Akiba expounding the Torah to great multitudes. Pappus said: "Akiba, are you not at all afraid of the Roman government?"

Rabbi Akiba answered: "Are you, Pappus, of whom people say that he is a wise man? In reality you are a fool! Let me tell you a parable: A fox once walked along the bank of a river, and he looked into the water and saw fishes in flight. The fox said to the fishes: 'What are you running away from?' The fishes replied: 'We are running away from the nets that have been placed to trap us.' The fox said: 'Why then stay in the water and be afraid of the nets? Come upon dry land, and there we shall live in happiness and in peace, the same as our forefathers did.' Thereupon the fishes said to the fox: 'Are you the one that is supposed to be the wisest of all animals? In reality you are nothing but a fool! If we are afraid in the water, the element in which we live, then we surely will have cause to fear on dry land, where we cannot live at all.' The same is true of us. If we are afraid when we study the Torah, which is our life, how much more cause shall we have to fear the enemy when we cease to study the Torah!"

A few days after this incident, Rabbi Akiba was seized by the Roman and put in prison. Pappus ben Judah was likewise put in prison, in the same cell with Rabbi Akiba. The latter asked the former: "Pappus, who brought you here?"

"Happy is your lot, Rabbi Akiba," replied Pappus, "that you were imprisoned because you studied the Torah. Woe to Pappus, that he was caught and imprisoned for absurdities and

vanities."

Just as Rabbi Akiba was about to be taken out for execution, the emperor was informed that the king of Arabia had invaded Roman territory. Hadrian hurried away with his army to check the advance of the Arabian king, and he ordered the execution of Rabbi Akiba to be postponed until after his return from the expedition.

Upon his returning from the war, Hadrian ordered that Rabbi Akiba be executed. The executioners flayed the great Rabbi with iron combs, and while they did so the martyr kept on reciting the verse: "The Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are justice: a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He."

When they had finished flaying the martyr, it was time to recite the Sh'ma; and the disciples said in tears to their great teacher: "Are you bent on reciting the Sh'ma even now?"

"All my life I was praying for an opportunity to fulfill the words: 'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul...' Now that opportunity has come to be able to give up my very soul and life for the sake of God," said the martyr. "Now that it has come, shall I not fulfill it cheerfully?"

The martyr thereupon recited the Sh'ma: "Shema Yisroel, Adonai Elohenu, Adonai Echad." (Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.) He prolonged the last word Echad until his soul ascended to heaven. Thereupon a heavenly voice was heard saying: "Happy art thou, Akiba, that thy soul departed while thou wert reciting the word Echad."

True and enduring is Thy word which Thou hast spoken through Thy prophets.

Thou art the living God, Thy words bring life and light to the soul.

Thou art the strength of our life, the rock of our salvation: Thy kingdom and Thy truth abide forever.

Thou hast been the help of our fathers in time of trouble and art our refuge in all generations.

Thou art the first and the last, and besides Thee there is no redeemer nor helper.

As Thou hast saved Israel from Egyptian bondage so mayest Thou send Thy help to all who are oppressed.

May Thy law rule in the hearts of all Thy children, and Thy truth unite them in bonds of fellowship.

May the righteous of all nations rejoice in Thy grace and triumph by Thy power.

O God, who art our refuge and our hope, we glorify Thy name now as did our fathers in ancient days:

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, awe-inspiring, working wonders?

The above blessing, "True and enduring," begins after the Sh'ma. It deals with the redemption from Egypt as evidence and promise of God's saving of Israel from persecution. God always fulfills his promises' because he is a God of truth.<sup>26</sup> That is what we mean when we say: "Thy kingdom and Thy truth abide forever." And just as God is true, we, His people, must also follow the true course in life.

The six blind boys in the story that follows represent those people, however, who allow themselves to be blinded to the truth. So let us now turn to our story and see what follows when people become blinded to the truth.

### THE SIX BLIND BOYS

In a little village in a beautiful country beyond the mountains of Africa there lived a man who had six blind sons. They were born blind, and had never seen the light. The man was very sad, and so you can imagine his joy when his wife gave birth to a seventh son who could see. Of course he loved the blind boys as well, but he took the greatest care of his youngest son. He was afraid lest he, too, might lose his sight. This little boy grew up happily, and used to tell his older brothers of the beauties of the sky and of the earth. He would tell them of the cows and sheep in the fields; of the flowers; of refreshing running streams set in delightful valleys. And the brothers hated him because they could not see these things.

"You are imagining them," they shouted at him. "You are telling lies. The world is dark. We know, because we are six and every one of us can see nothing."

But the little boy knew that he was telling the truth, for he could see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the earth.

Well, one day, there came to that country a wanderer and his fame reached the village. The father said, "I will go and see this man. Perhaps he can cure my children



of their blindness." So he went, leaving his youngest son with the six others for the first time in their lives. Their mother had in the meantime died, and there was no one else with them in the house.

Now, when they knew that they were alone with their youngest brother, they thought of a wicked plan to take away his eyes. They seized him and felt all over his body until they reached his face.

"Don't, don't," cried the boy. "Don't take away the light of my eyes, for the things I tell you are true."

The brothers paid no attention. Cruelly, unmercifully, they went on with their wicked deed, and the little boy, too, was made blind. When the father came home and saw what had happened, he wept, because now none of his children could see.

"It doesn't matter," said the youngest son, "I haven't forgotten what the world looks like. I still have the light in my heart."

A few days later the wonder-worker came to the house, and was able to cure all the boys of their blindness. When they saw the world, and realized that their youngest brother had been telling the truth, the other six were very sorry for what they had done, and showed him kindness for the rest of their lives.



A new song the redeemed sing unto Thy name.

They proclaimed Thy sovereignty and said:

The Lord shall reign forever and ever.

O Rock of Israel, redeem those who are oppressed  
and deliver those who are persecuted. Praised be Thou,  
our Redeemer, the Holy One in Israel.

This section is actually the text for the closing part of the blessing, "True and enduring." The main idea is as follows: God is the great redeemer of all the oppressed peoples in the world.<sup>27</sup> If they deserve it, he helps them often and when they least expect it. Let us read now the tale called, "The help of God," where we see how God sometimes helps some deserving individuals in a most unusual fashion.

#### THE HELP OF GOD

There once was a very poor man whose name was Ephraim. He made a living by selling old clothes, but most of the clothes he received were in such poor condition that he could not get much money for them. Matters became very bad for him and his wife, and as a last resort, he sent to the Prince of the province for help. The Prince was a kind man, and he told Ephraim that he would give him all of his old clothes to sell. This pleased Ephraim very much, because he knew that people would buy the old clothes of the Prince. This helped him a great deal. Now he was able to buy fish, wine, and candles for the Sabbath.

But his good fortune did not last very long. Christoff,

one of the servants of the Prince, began to tell his master lies about Ephraim. The Prince believed these lies. One day when Ephraim told his wife what had happened, they both cried over their misfortune, for their source of income had been cut off. That night while they were sitting in their room, someone flung open the window and threw an ape into the room. This was the mischief of Christoff. He didn't like Ephraim, and thought that if a dead animal were found in his house, it would get him into trouble.

When Ephraim saw the dead ape, he was horror-stricken. He couldn't move from his chair. He had to get rid of the animal some way. His wife suggested that they burn the body and thus destroy the evidence. This pleased Ephraim. He edged up to the body, and as he lifted it, several pieces of gold fell from the dead ape's mouth! Imagine their surprise! Thinking that perhaps there was more money in the body of the ape, they took a knife and cut into the ape's stomach; there they found over a hundred gold coins! They washed the coins and stored them in a sock, and the ape's body they put into the stove to burn. Now at last, they were really rich. Ephraim bought his wife a new tablecloth and new wine-glasses for each. He bought a new suit for himself and a silk dress for his wife.

In the meantime, the Prince experienced a change of heart, and decided to go to the home of Ephraim to beg for his forgiveness. When the Prince saw how they were living, he questioned Ephraim about the source of his wealth. The Prince couldn't imagine who would do such a thing. One of the Prince's servants

suggested that this might have been the work of Christoff, because Christoff was supposed to have buried an ape which had died in the palace, and it was no secret that Christoff disliked Ephraim.

"Yes, but how account for the gold in the ape's stomach?" questioned the Prince. The servant thought that it might have happened in this way: The ape had been the pet of the palace, and it had been permitted to roam wherever it pleased. One day it might have been with the Treasurer while he was counting the money, and might have begun to imitate the actions of the Treasurer who was accustomed to bite each coin to determine whether it was real or counterfeit. No doubt the ape put the coins in his mouth, too - imitating the Treasurer, but instead of putting them back, swallowed them. The Prince was pleased with this explanation, because it accounted for a shortage he had noticed in the treasury.

When Ephraim heard to whom the money really belonged, he immediately offered to give it back to the Prince. The Prince refused, saying that it was through the help of God that the gold had come to Ephraim when he was in great need of it. So Ephraim kept the gold and won back the friendship of the Prince.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, great, mighty, and exalted. Thou bestowest lovingkindness upon all Thy children. Thou rememberest the devotion of the fathers. In Thy love Thou bringest redemption to their descendants for the sake of Thy name. Thou art our King and Helper, our Savior and Protector. Praised be Thou, O Lord, Shield of Abraham.

Eternal is Thy power, O Lord, Thou art mighty to save. In lovingkindness Thou sustainest the living: in the multitude of Thy mercies Thou reservest all. Thou upholdest the falling and healest the sick: freest the captives and keepest faith with Thy children in death as in life. Who is like unto Thee, Almighty God, Author of life and death, source of salvation? Praised be Thou, O Lord, who hast implanted within us eternal life.

These are the first two blessings in the traditional prayer known as the T'filo. T'filo in Hebrew means "prayer" and in the prayerbook it consists of seven blessings on the Sabbath. The above introductory blessings are two blessings of praise to the God of our Fathers. In so doing we try to show that we believe in the same God as did our Fathers of old. So now when we come before Him for help, we think first of His help in ages past. We think of what He meant to our Fathers. We know from the great stories of ancient times how He protected our fathers in every time of trouble, how He gave them hope in times of despair and courage in days of weakness. Just

as our Fathers received help from Him, we, too, turn in confidence to ask for his help.<sup>28</sup>

The Jews take great pride in our heritage and in our ancestors. The story we are about to read tells us that pride in ancestry does not mean special privilege, but rather extra responsibility.

#### TO FIT THE CRIME

Two thieves were caught stealing. When they were brought to trial the judge cross-examined each individually.

"My name is Moshe," the first one said, "and I come from Warsaw."

Upon hearing this, several bystanders in the courtroom called out, "We know him very well. He has served many prison sentences. His father and his entire family are thieves."

"My father was a prominent rabbi and my grandfather was a great scholar," the other culprit declared. "As a matter of fact, my whole family is made up of rabbis and sages."

After the judge had listened to both men he passed a verdict whereby the one whose family consisted of thieves was to receive a small penalty, but the other was to be severely penalized.

"Where is justice?" the rabbi's son cried out. "I, who have such a fine heritage, receive harsher punishment than my partner in crime who is known to come from a family of rascals."

"My decision should not amaze you," the judge replied. "He who was born and raised among thieves should not be blamed so much for his wrongdoing, since he had no one to teach him

honesty. But you are a thief in spite of the fact that you were reared in a very good environment, and therefore, you deserve a greater punishment."

We sanctify Thy name on earth, as the heavens declare Thy glory; and in the words of the prophet we say:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.

God our Strength, God our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth.

Praised be the glory of God in all the world.

Our God is one: He is our Father, He is our King, He is our Helper and in His mercy He will answer our prayers in the sight of all the living.

The Lord will reign forever, thy God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Hallelulah.

From generation to generation we declare Thy greatness and throughout all ages proclaim Thy holiness: Thy praise shall never cease from our lips. Praised be Thou, O Lord, the God of holiness.

This paragraph (the K'dusho - which means "holiness" in Hebrew) sings of God's holiness and is based on prayer spoken thousands of years ago by the prophet Isaiah. It should make us think that we have a Holy God, and then we feel that certain desires that we may have begun to have are not really noble as we first imagined. Although we can never hope to attain the perfect holiness of God; nevertheless, we must do our best to strive towards it. That is what the Bible means when it says (Leviticus 19:2): "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." "Holy" means perfect, pure, righteous without evil,



merciful and just, the noblest qualities which we humans can think of.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps we can approach a little of the meaning of "holiness" by the example of Simeon ben Shetah, the hero of the following story.

#### THE PRECIOUS STONE

In those days, there lived in Jerusalem a great rabbi named Simon ben Shetah. He was a very learned and pious man. Day and night he was occupied with the study of the Torah, and students flocked to him from all over the land. This sage refused to accept fees from his pupils, and supported himself and his family by making ink out of gallnuts. Every day this great rabbi would go to the forest to pick gallnuts, out of which he would make ink to sell to the people of his town.

Walking on foot to and from the forest takes too much time," thought Simeon ben Shetah. "Because of this, I am unable to devote the whole of my time to study." He decided finally to sell everything he had in the house. With the money he realized from the sale he purchased an ass from an Arab in the market place.

Simeon's disciples were very happy at the sight of the ass, and they said to one another: "Now our great teacher will no longer have to carry the gallnuts on his back all the way from the forests." They went out to examine the ass, and to their great amazement and delight they discovered a precious stone hanging from the neck of the animal.

"Oh, master!" they all shouted out as one upon entering the house, "May the name of our Lord be blessed forever and

ever, for you shall no longer know of poverty and want."

"Ohv, what has happened?" asked the astonished rabbi.

"It was the will of our good Lord that you become rich," answered the disciples. "Behold, here is a precious stone which we discovered hanging from the neck of the ass you have bought."

"God forbid that I derive any profit from this stone," said the teacher, taking the gem into his hand. "For I have bought an ass from the Arab, and not a precious stone. I must go and find out the whereabouts of the Arab and return this stone to him."

Rabbi Simeon at once went back to the marketplace, found the Arab from whom he had bought the ass, and said to him: "Here, my good man, it is a precious stone which I found hanging from the neck of your ass: it does not belong to me: it is yours."

The Arab looked in great bewilderment first at the stone and then at the rabbi, and exclaimed: "Praised be the God of Simeon ben Shetah. He has made holy the name of his God."

Our God and God of our fathers, grant that our worship on this Sabbath be acceptable to Thee. May we, sanctified through Thy commandments, become sharers in the blessings of Thy word. Teach us to be satisfied with the gifts of Thy goodness and gratefully to rejoice in all Thy mercies. Purify our hearts that we may serve Thee in truth. O help us to reserve the Sabbath as Israel's heritage from generation to generation, that it may ever bring rest and joy, peace and comfort to the dwellings of our brethren, and through it Thy name be hallowed in all the earth. Praised be Thou, O Lord, who sanctifiest the Sabbath.

In this part of the service, we do not ask for ordinary things but for a few simple, noble things to make us better persons. May we, sanctified through Thy commandments, become sharers in the blessings of Thy word."

"Teach us to be satisfied with gifts of Thy goodness."

"Purify our hearts that we may serve Thee in truth." And we conclude by thanking God for having given us the Sabbath.<sup>30</sup>

In our story section, the author attempts to imagine how the first Sabbath came into being.

#### THE ANGEL OF REST

The earth was made. Like a dark strange ball, it floated slowly on its way, between masses of sky and cloud. Gentle winds blew around its green valleys, and fierce icy gales tossed among the snow crags of the colder regions. Through the hot, tropic lands, heavy winds hung warm upon the damp

purple trees.

Animals roved through the wild land, birds darted through the air, fish swam in the sea. And man had come and was tilling the earth. Man was fixing the soil, scattering the seeds of corn, watching and tending the growth of the little green stems. When the sun rose in the morning, its bright red face glowed upon the frosty dew and the bent backs of men already at their labor: in the heavy, blooming heat of noon, the sweat ran down the foreheads of the men, as they still labored: and at night, when the heat grew less and the kind night breeze to spread, all blue and soft, over the fields, over the laborers straightened their backs, raised their heads, and went, stumbling with tiredness, to their rest.

And so it went on, day after day, day after day, and there was no rest.

The Angel of Peace and Rest looked down from heaven, and saw how mankind labored, and her heart was touched.

"I shall go down to them," she said. So she spread her great, gray wings and floated down to the earth.

Her feet touched the soil of a little, lonely pathway in a forest near a hut built of mud. At one side of the hut, a large fire was briskly burning, and a man half dressed in furs was leaning over it, watching it, and from time to time taking something out of the fire. He had a large pot into which he drained a thick, black, curdling liquid.

The Angel stood near, looking at him, then she said, "Shalom!"

"Shalom," replied the man, raising his eyes. They were

red with the weariness of looking into the bright fire.

"I am the Angel of Rest," said she. "I have come to bring you peace. Let me touch your eyes, and you will fall into delightful slumber. When you wake, you will be happy."

"And who will burn my charcoal in the meantime?" answered the man roughly. "Will you do it for me?"

"Cannot you leave the charcoal for a day?" asked the angel.

"Then how should I be able to earn money to feed my wife and child?" growled the charcoal-burner. "Go about your business, my fine angel. I have no time for you."

The Angel looked sadly at the man. Into her eyes came the first tear that she ever shed, for angels do not weep in heaven. And the tear fell from her eye and dropped into the folds of her dress, and turned into a star.

She went away from the charcoal-burner, and waving her gray wings, she rose high into the air, and floated along over hills, and valleys until she hovered over a great city. From the air she could see that the city was full of toiling people. Day after day went by, and still the people worked and toiled without rest.

Then the Angel bent her head, and wept, and another tear slipped down her cheek on to her gown, and it became a star.

Grieving, the angel sailed up and up and up, past the clouds, past the sky, until she came to heaven. And she would not join the bright angels but sat apart: and her head was bent, and her face was full of sorrow.

"Oh, Lord, almighty God, she said, "I have been down to earth. I have seen how menkind labors, and how animals labor,

and they have no time to rest."

"What dost thou desire?" said the voice of the Angel of the Lord.

"Grant, Oh Lord," said the Angel, "that I may bring them peace."

"Art thou not the Angel of Rest? Canst thou not go down to them and bring them rest?"

"They cannot accept me, for their labor is unending" replied the Angel.

"Then dost thou desire to dwell among them rather than the angels of heaven?"

"Oh, Lord, the angels of heaven are with Thee: they do not need me. But the toiling people of the earth, they need me."

Then the air began to grow very bright, and everywhere was with the blinding light of the glory of God.

"Thou shalt go down to mankind, one day in seven," said the voice of the Angel of God. "For one day in seven, mankind shall have rest, for the comfort of his body and of the peace of his soul. Thou shalt be called the Sabbath day, and My people shall bless thy name and long for thee, and shall greet thee with great rejoicing."

Full of joy, the happy Angel thanked the Lord, and sailed down to earth, to bring the first Sabbath. And over all the world, people laid down their tools, and ceased their labors, and rested. And their hearts were filled with prayer and gratitude to God. In the fields, the animals lay down and slumbered: in the homes, the women lighted candles and prepared fine food, while the men prayed, and the children smiled.

And the Angel spread peace and rest over the earth,  
all that night and all the next day, and the people blessed  
the Sabbath day, and kept it holy.



Look with favor, O Lord, upon us, and may our service be acceptable unto Thee. Praised be Thou, O God, whom alone we serve in reverence.

The above paragraph is the hope that God has accepted our prayers. We hope, too, that all that we asked for was worthy of being presented before God. In different words, it is our hope that all we uttered was said with the greatest reverence and care. The incident with Rabbi Jacobs is an example of another form of religious reverence.

#### RABBI JACOBS

Rabbi Jacobs of New York lived in a house adjoining his synagogue. As he was walking along the street one morning, he was startled by the clanging of the fire-wagons, and soon saw a large crowd rapidly gathering in front of his house. Sure enough, it was the temple that was wrapped in flames. The rabbi quickly pushed his way through the onlookers, and started to run toward the doors of the burning building.

"You are mad," shouted a fireman who had rushed up from behind and seized the rabbi by the arm. "What are you going to do in there? Let your money burn. If you enter that building, you will never come out alive."

"It is not money, but the holy Ark of God that I must rescue. The Lord will lead me through the flames as safely as he did Daniel," replied the rabbi, speaking quickly but devoutly.

Impressed by the religious reverence of the worthy man,

the fireman loosened his hold, and Rabbi Jacobs dashed through the doors to save what to him was the most precious possession in all the world. The crowd waited with breathless expectancy. In a few minutes, the rabbi reappeared, his clothes ablaze, but born aloft in his arms was the Torah, rescued from the Ark.

We gratefully acknowledge, O Lord our God, that Thou art our Creator and Preserver, the Rock of our life and the Shield of our help. We render thanks unto Thee for our lives which are in Thy hand, for our souls which are ever in Thy keeping, for Thy wondrous providence and for Thy continuous goodness, which Thou bestowest upon us day by day. Truly, Thy mercies never fail and Thy lovingkindness never ceases. Therefore do we forever put our trust in Thee.

This paragraph is simply a prayer of thanks and appreciation to God, the Creator of all. The story we are about to read tries to point out that it was God who created the world and therefore it has plan and purpose although we cannot always realize it.<sup>11</sup>

#### DAVID, THE WASP, AND THE SPIDER

Once David was sitting in his garden and he saw a wasp eating a spider. He said: "O Lord, why hast thou created these creatures of no purpose? The wasp consumes honey all day and nothing good comes of it. The spider weaves silky webs, but they cannot be used for garments." He heard the voice of God in his ears: "David, do you despise the work of my hands? There will come a day when a great salvation shall be wrought through these: then shalt thou know that I have created nothing without purpose."

Before many days had passed, Saul was seeking David's life and David was forced to flee. He hid in a cave in the wilderness. God appointed a spider which wove a web over the

mouth of the cave, thus sealing it. Saul and his men passed by. One said: "Let us search this cave. Perhaps David is hiding in it." The second answered: "Behold the spider web, completely covering the mouth of the cave. Had anyone passed through, he should have broken the web; therefore, the cave cannot be occupied." So the men passed on without entering the cave. David lay in hiding near the mouth of the cave and heard the words of the men. When his pursuers were gone, he came out of the cave and saw how the web had saved him, and said: "Blessed be thy Creator, and blessed art thou, also, O spider, the work of his hands."

Saul continued to pursue David. David heard that Saul was pursuing him in the wilderness, and he learned where Saul was wont to encamp at nightfall. So David proceeded to the camp alone. There in the moonlight lay Saul surrounded by a circle of mighty men. One could not approach the king without stepping over the men, and thus awakening them. That is, no ordinary man could, but David was a mere slip of a lad. And Abner, the general of the army, had his knees raised so that his legs stood as portals of a great doorway, giving David ample room to crawl through. Saul had, on one side of his head a spear stuck in the ground and on the other, a flask of water. David took both of these and began to crawl back beneath Abner's great legs. Just then Abner, in his sleep, lowered his knees flush with the youth, David, and his legs were so heavy that David thought he would soon be crushed to death. He called out unto God for help. A weevil came and stung Abner's leg. He raised

his knees again, and David passed beneath them in safety.

Then David realized that none of God's creatures are created without purpose; even the spider and the wasp are a part of God's great plan.

Grant us peace, Thy most precious gift, O Thou eternal source of peace, and enable Israel to be its messenger unto the peoples of the earth. Bless our country that it may ever be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate in the council of nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship among all the inhabitants of our land. Plant virtue in every soul, and may the love of Thy name hallow every home and every heart. Praised be Thou, O Lord, Giver of peace.

This paragraph is one of the noblest prayers in the entire prayer book. It is an expression which is close to our heart. It is our hope that not only among nations but within our own nation peace may soon come: so that the different religions and races will learn to act as brothers and friends and thus live in contentment and friendship and joy.<sup>32</sup> This is the message of the paragraph, "Grant us peace." Our story speaks of the two great Biblical representatives of peace, Aaron and Joshua!

#### AARON AND JOSHUA THE PEACE MEN

The famous Rabbi Hillel would say: "Be one of the disciples of Aaron, a lover of peace, following after peace, loving mankind, and drawing them near to an appreciation of the Torah. When Aaron used to walk along the highway and meet a man of known wickedness, he would greet him cordially. On

the following day, if the man of wickedness wished to perform an evil deed, he thought to himself: "If I meet Aaron again and he greets me so cordially, how will I feel?"

Thus he would be led to abstain from sin.

When Aaron heard that two people had quarreled, he would go to one and say: "I have just come from a man whom you believe to be your enemy, and what have I seen? He beats at his heart and rends his garments and cries out: 'I have sinned against my neighbor. Woe is me! I am ashamed to look him in the face.'"

He would then do the same thing at the home of the other. Thus, when the two men met, they fell upon each other's neck and embraced each other.

Therefore, when Aaron died, the whole house of Israel went over him, women as well as men. When Moses died, however, only the men went. It was said: "So many married couples were reunited after domestic quarrels by Aaron that many thousands of families to whom a son was born after such a reconciliation named the child Aaron in his honor: and at his death, eighty thousand persons named Aaron walked in the funeral procession."

When Joshua was building an altar to God, the Jews came to him and asked, "Explain to us our Master Joshua, why God has forbidden the use of iron on stone from which an altar is constructed?"

Joshua explained, "When men sin against God and bring a sacrifice upon His altar and confess their sins, God forgives them and rewards them with long years of peace. This is because the altar is made only to lengthen the life of men and to



establish peace between man and God.

It is different with iron. From it, one fashions swords and spears and all manner of weapons employed to kill, to shorten life and to kindle hatred between man and man, between nation and nation. Therefore, God commanded that iron which shortens the life of man be not allowed to touch the stones of the altar which bring him peace and increase his years."

When the people heard Joshua's explanation, they were filled with delight and said, "If stones that see not, hear not and speak not are so highly prized by God because they make peace between Him and the sons of man, how much more prized must man be when he makes peace between one individual and another, between husband and wife, between nation and nation!"

O God, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. Be my support when grief silences my voice, and my comfort when woe bends my spirit. Implant humility in my soul, and strengthen my heart with perfect faith in Thee. Help me to be strong in temptation and trial and to be patient and forgiving when others wrong me. Guide me by the light of Thy counsel, that I may ever find strength in Thee, my Rock and my Redeemer.  
Amen.

The beginning of the above prayer is based on a private saying of R. Elazar, the son of Rabbin, a famous rabbi of the fourth century. It is a prayer of humility and asks for God's help especially in the time of great distress and grief.<sup>23</sup> Our story that follows makes an attempt to illustrate how the ancient rabbis tried to console their teacher in just such a moment of grief. Pay special attention to the answer of Rabbi Eliezer!

#### CONSOLATION IN GRIEF

When the son of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai died, the students came to console the father.

First came Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanos. Wishing to distract the sad father, he asked, "Would you like to listen to my talk, Rabbi?"

"Speak!" Rabbi Yohanan agreed.

So Rabbi Eliezer began: "Adam had a son and he died. Nonetheless, Adam allowed himself to be comforted. We understand this from the fact that Adam and Eve reconciled themselves to their loss and fulfilled their assigned tasks on earth. So

you, too, Rabbi Yohanan, find comfort in your great grief."

"Not enough that I have my own sorrows," cried Rabbi Yohanan reproachfully, "must you remind me also of the sorrows of Adam?"

Rabbi Joshua then entered and said, "Will you allow me, Rabbi, to speak?"

Rabbi Joshua began: "Job had sons and daughters, but they all died in one day. Nevertheless, he found comfort. How do we know that? From the fact that he said: 'God gave and God took, blessed be the name of the Lord!' You, too, should therefore find comfort."

"Not enough that I have my own grief, must you remind me of Job's grief?" Rabbi Yohanan cried angrily..

Rabbi Yose then entered.

"Permit me to say words of comfort to you," he asked.

"Speak," said Rabbi Yohanan.

Rabbi Yose began: "Aaron had two grown sons and both died on the same day. Nonetheless, Aaron allowed himself to be comforted. How do we know that? It is written in the Torah: 'Aaron was silent.' When a man who mourns falls silent, it means that he has ceased to feel grieved and is consoled. And so, Rabbi, I say: you too, must accept comfort in your bereavement."

"Not enough that I have my own sorrows," cried Rabbi Yohanan angrily, "must you remind me of the sorrows of Aaron?"

"Will you permit me, Rabbi, to speak on this subject?"

Rabbi Simeon asked.

"Sneak," said Rabbi Yohanan.

Rabbi Simeon began: "King David had a son and he died. Nonetheless, he permitted himself to be comforted. And how do we know that? It is written in the Scripture that he comforted himself and his wife. Like David, you, too, must find comfort."

"Not enough that I have my own grief, must you remind me of David's?" cried Rabbi Yohanan.

The last to go in to him was Rabbi Eleazar ben Arak.

"Will you allow me, Rabbi, to say words of comfort to you?" he asked.

"Sneak," said Rabbi Yohanan.

Rabbi Eleazar began: "Let me tell you a fitting parable. A King had given one of his servants a valuable object to hold for him. Each day this man would weep: 'Woe is me! When will the King come and take back his possession so that I won't be burdened with such a great responsibility?' The same holds true of you, Rabbi. You had a son who was accomplished and a fine scholar. He left the world unstained, pure from sin. Therefore, you must find comfort in the thought that you have returned unstained, the possession entrusted to your care by the King of Kings."

"You have comforted me, Eleazar, my son!" cried Yohanan.

And he arose and put his grief aside.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

The main thought behind this brief paragraph is the idea of sincerity. The person who has offered his prayers concludes with the hope that he has been sincere enough so that God might accept his prayers.<sup>34</sup> Just as in the story that follows, the rich man tested the motives of the laborer to see if he was sincere or not, perhaps God in His own way does the same thing when a man prays!

#### MAN IN NEED

There was a rich man whose charity consisted in buying up instruments and tools to loan to needy laborers. One morning a poor carpenter came to borrow an awl.

"Go up to the attic," the wealthy man suggested, "and you will find it there."

The carpenter did as he was told, but soon was back empty-handed. "I've looked all over," he said, "but I could not find it."

"Perhaps it is in the cellar," was the reply.

The man was back shortly. "I've searched in every corner, but did not see it."

"Then try the stable," the other said. "It may be in the wood pile."

The carpenter ran from place to place, but to no avail. The tool could not be found. When he was exhausted with fatigue, the rich man said, "Here, my friend, the awl was on

the table all the time."

The poor man gaped with surprise. "If the awl was on the table all the time, why did you tire me out needlessly?"

"It affords me pleasure to loan my tools to men who are in need of them," the wealthy man explained. "There are, however, some who do not need the implement, but will merely take it for the sake of borrowing something, without a definite motive. I tested you to see whether you really needed the awl, and since that was quite evident, I gave it to you."

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. Behold, a good doctrine has been given unto you: forsake it not.

It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it, and its supporters are happy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.

After the Scriptures are read, the Torah is returned to the ark while prayers and additional songs are sung by the choir. The paragraph above is a sort of summary of all those words. It simply states that the Torah (God's laws) is a very dear possession of the Jews. Knowledge and practice of the Torah can help people to lead better and happier lives. "It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it, and its supporters are happy." This wonderful attitude of the Jews towards their Torah is again retold in the three selections that we are about to read.

#### OF TORAH

Once a man came to Shammai and said: "I will accept Judaism if you will teach me the Torah while I stand on one leg."

Shammai ordered him to depart.

Then the man went to Hillel. And he became a Jew. For Hillel accepted his challenge, and spoke thus to him: "Do not do unto others what you would not have done unto yourself. This



is the Torah: the rest is commentary."

Torah is compared to water.

It cleanses man from what is bad in life.

Torah is compared to wine.

Time cannot render it useless: yes: time increases its power.

Torah is compared to honey.

It is sweet, but man free from bitterness of hatred.

Torah is compared to oil.

It mixes not with other elements but preserves its own distinctiveness.

Torah is compared to a wall.

It protects its adherents from violence of the wicked.

Torah is compared to manna.

It proclaims the equality of rich and poor before God.

Above all, Torah is compared to a crown.

It sets man above all God's creatures.

The rabbis tell a story of a beautiful maiden who once married a handsome young man. Not long after the wedding, the bride-groom was called away from home on what he said would be only a short trip.

Days passed, but he did not return: he did not write. The days became weeks, the weeks became months, the months years, and still no word came from the missing man. Through it all the bride remained hopeful. At first, people began to whisper, and then to speak openly. Finally, they grew bold

enough to taunt the good woman herself. "He loved thee not," they declared. "He has deceived thee and has now deserted thee, simple child. Turn from him and marry another man."

"O, no," replied the trusting wife, "my faith in him never wavers. During his absence, I read every day some of the love letters he wrote me before marriage - letters in which he promised that he would care for me as long as I was true to him - and I know he is one whom I can trust."

At last, the husband returned. He had been captured by wicked men and held a prisoner these many years. Now then was the wife, although now an old woman, that she had remained true; and rich was the reward of her faithfulness.

The husband, the rabbis declare, symbolizes God: the wife, Israel: the love letters, the Torah. Even though God may sometimes appear to have hidden Himself from Israel, and the nations taunt her and bid her turn from the Lord to some other god, she always renews her faith by reading of God's love in the Bible - a book written especially for her.

Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. He is our God; there is none else.

We bow the head in reverence, and worship the King of kings, the Holy One, praised be He.

May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshiped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come when all men shall invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye, when all who dwell on earth shall know that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine image, recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be forever united before Thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Lord will reign forever and ever.

On that day the Lord shall be One and His name shall be One.

This selection tells us in the beautiful language of prayer that God is the Father of us all, and we are His children, and so we pray for the day when all mankind will recognize that there is only one God, and that His children should act

towards one another as brothers.<sup>35</sup> Our story tells us these same truths.

#### WHY ONLY ONE ADAM?

Why did God create only one Adam and not many at a time? He did this to demonstrate that one man in himself is an entire universe. Also he wishes to teach mankind that he who kills one human being is as guilty as if he had destroyed the entire world. Similarly, he who saves the life of one single human being is as worthy as if he had saved all of humanity.

God created only one man so that people should not try to feel superior to one another and boast of their lineage in this wise: "I am descended from a more distinguished Adam than you."

He also did this so that the heathen should not be able to say that, since many men had been created at the same time, it was conclusive proof that there was more than one God.

Lastly, He did this in order to establish His own power and glory. When a maker of coins does his work he uses only one mold and all the coins emerge alike. But the King of Kings, blessed be His name, has created all mankind in the mold of Adam, and even so, no man is identical to another. For this reason, each person must respect himself and say with dignity:

"God created the world on my account. Therefore let me not lose eternal life because of some vain passion!"

Extolled and hallowed be the name of God throughout the world which He has created according to His Will. And may he speedily establish His kingdom of righteousness on earth. Amen.

Praised be His glorious name unto all eternity.

Praised and glorified be the name of the Holy One, though He be above all the praises which we can utter. Our guide is He in life and our redeemer through all eternity.

Our help cometh from Him, the creator of heaven and earth.

The departed whom we now remember have entered into the peace of life eternal. They still live on earth in the acts of goodness they performed and in the hearts of those who cherish their memory. May the beauty of their life abide among us as a loving benediction.

May the Father of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort all the bereaved among us.

Every Jewish service ends with a prayer in honor and memory of the departed. This prayer is called the "Kaddish." This prayer was not originally written in Hebrew but in Aramaic, a language as close to Hebrew as Italian is to Latin. The word "Kaddish" means "holy." When we say it, we do not cry for those who have died, but we give thanks to God that they had once lived among us. We do not complain at what we lost but are grateful for what we once possessed. For all this we recite this prayer of praise to God. And although we do not always understand His

says, we nevertheless accept his decision.<sup>36</sup> The spirit of the Kaddish is expressed in the story that follows.

#### THE STORY OF MAN

The Creator descended. All the Angels, the Princes of the elements, beheld and contemplated his work.

He called to the dust. And dust gathered itself from all the quarters of their terrestrial globe. And the Angel of the earth said, "This frame will be a mortal creature, wheresoever it dwells upon earth: for it is dust and must return unto dust."

He called to the heavenly cloud: and it moistened the dust. The clay began to heave and shape itself into vessels and compartments. And the Angel of the waters exclaimed, "Thou wilt require nourishment, thou curious constructed creature! Hunger and thirst will become inseparable from thy being." Immediately the veins and cells began to be formed: the manifold outward limbs assumed their shape, and the Angel of the living said, "Thou wilt be subject to many desires, beautiful and scientific creation! Love of thy species will attract and impel thee!"

The Creator approached with his daughters, Wisdom and Love, Kindness and Immortality to visit man. Man stood erect. Delighted, he looked around. "Behold!" said the voice of the Most High. "All the growth of the meadows and trees, all the animals that dwell upon earth, I have given to thee. Thy Fatherland, the earth, is thine, and thou shalt rule it: but thou thyself art kind: thy breath is My gift, and when thy time cometh, I summon it unto Myself!"

Wisdom and Love, the offsprings of God, stayed with the new lord of the earth. They instructed him and taught all sorts of things in nature. They conversed with him as loving companions, and their light was with innocent man.

Man lives his allotted time on earth, happy if wisdom and love do their best to cheer him with their influence. But when his allotted time expires, his body returns to mix with the elements whence it was taken: but the spirit returns again to God, by whose paternal embrace it was breathed into him.



Let us praise God with this symbol of joy, and thank Him for the blessings of the past week, for life, health, and strength, for home, love, and friendship, for the discipline of our trials and temptations, for the happiness that has come to us out of our labors. Thou hast ennobled us, O God, by the blessings of work, and in love and kindness Thou has sanctified us by the blessings of rest through the commandment: Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath hallowed unto the Lord, Thy God.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine.

This selection is called the Kiddush. It is primarily a wine ceremony recited on Friday night. It is a wine ceremony ushering in the Sabbath.<sup>37</sup> ("Kiddush" is the Hebrew word for "Holiness" and is a wine ceremony. It should not be confused with the Aramaic term "Kaddish", a prayer recited in memory of the dead, which also is related to the idea of "holy".)

Our story is a fanciful legend which attempts to connect the very first wine ceremony with the ancient figure of Noah.

#### NOAH AND THE SERPENT

When Noah left the Ark and began to plant a vineyard, the serpent came to him and asked: "What are you planting?"

"A vineyard," said Noah.

"And why do you want a vineyard?" asked the serpent.

"Because its fruit is sweet, and its juice gladdens the heart."

"If you want to be partners with me, I will help you in the planting," said the serpent to Noah.

"Good," said Noah.

So the serpent took a sheep and slaughtered it, and sprinkled some of the blood on the vine. Next he slaughtered a lion, and poured its blood on the vine; then he did the same with an ape, and finally with a pig.

When Noah asked him why he did this, he explained: "The reason is simple. When one drinks the first glass of wine, he is as quiet and peaceful as a sheep. After the second glass of wine, he becomes brave and daring as a lion. After the third glass he begins to prance about and make himself look as foolish as a monkey. Finally, after the fourth glass, he wallows in the mud like a pig."

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of all universe, who causest the earth to yield food for all.

This is a prayer of thanks that is recited before all meals. It is sometimes referred to in Hebrew as the "Motzi" ("who causest the earth to yield food for all.") "In The Inn" is a story about a young boy who never forgot the "Motzi."

#### IN THE INN

There once lived a very poor tailor and his wife, who had no children. They became advanced in years, but dreaded the thought of dying, because they had no son to say Kaddish after them.

Did I say no son? Well, they once did have a son, but this is what happened to him: The boy was eight years old. He was getting ready for school one day when army officials burst into the tailor's house and demanded that the child be handed over for army duty. The mother and father pleaded for the child's release because he was so young, but the officials insisted on taking the boy. They pushed the mother and father aside and snatched the child away.

That was ten years ago, and there was never a Friday night afterward that the tailor and his wife did not shed tears because their son was not there to say the "Motzi Lechem". One Friday afternoon there was a great commotion in the village square. The army was passing through on its way to a new location and the captain was trying to find lodging for his men. They even came to the hut of the poor tailor and told him he would have to house a man overnight. What could the tailor do? Hadn't they already taken his son away?

So he agreed to take a man.

A boy was brought to the tailor's house. He put his back in the corner and took a seat, awaiting the evening meal. It was on the Eve of the Sabbath, and the tailor had his one big meal of the week. He didn't want the boy to sit at the table with him and his wife because he was afraid that the boy would make fun of the candles and the Sabbath songs, so he took a plate of food over to the boy in the corner.

The boy had been silent all the while, but he had been looking hard and thinking fast. The clock on the wall looked familiar. When the tailor began his blessings, the strange words which came out of his mouth sounded somewhat familiar. Where had he seen that clock? Where had he heard that strange language? The boy did not know.

After the meal, the tailor began to question the boy about his father and mother, his age, his native city. But none of these did the boy recall. He did have a small parcel, however, which he remembered was given to him by his father. The boy brought it out, and lo and behold, in it was a huge Jewish star which the tailor had given his son when he was carried off to the army. This, then, was their own boy, Benjamin! The tailor and his wife were so happy they cried. In fact, they repeated the Sabbath Eve blessings so that their son could say the "Motzi lechem".

## STORY AND SOURCE

STORY	SOURCE
Honi The Rainmaker	Talmudic Anthology
The Mute Village Boy	Dialogue with God
God weaves Prayer	Dialogue with God
The Old Siddur	Dialogue with God
The weeping Synagogue	Dialogue with God
Remember The Sabbath Day	Dialogue with God
The Two Brothers	The Bar Mitzvah Treasury
Body and Soul	Book of Jewish Thoughts
The Jewels	Book of Jewish Thoughts
The Judgment of The Wind	Stories for Religious School (Vol.I)
The Feelings of Three	Hasidic Anthology, Ein Jacob
Rabbis Toward Prayer	
The Sheep and the Righteous Man	
Hasidic Tale	Hasidic Anthology
Abraham and the Old Man	World Over
Three Gifts	Bar Mitzvah Treasury
About Rabbi Israel Salanter	Bar Mitzvah Treasury
The Building of the Temple	Legends of the Jews
If Not Higher	Yiddish Tales
It Could Always Be Worse	Treasury of Jewish Folklore
Why the Moon Is Pale	Palace of the Eagles
The Ugly Scholar	Wisdom of Israel
In Despair	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)
The Death of Akiba	Book of Legends

# STORY AND SOURCE

STORY	SOURCE
The Six Blind Boys	Treasury of Jewish Folklore
The Help of God	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)
To Fit The Crime	Anthology of Jewish Humor and Maxims
The Precious Stone	Book of Legends
The Angel of Rest	Palace of the Eagles
Rabbi Jacobs	The Jewish Teacher
David, the Wasp and the Spider	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)
Aaron and Joshua, the Peacemakers	Talmudic Anthology, Treasury of Jewish Folklore
Consolation In Grief	Treasury of Jewish Folklore
Man In Need	Anthology of Jewish Humor and Maxims
On Torah	The Bar Mitzvah, Treasury of Jewish Folklore, Jewish Teacher
Why Only One Man	Treasury of Jewish Folklore
The Story of Man	Legends and Tales
Noah and the Serpent	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)
In the Inn	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)
Observing the Sabbath	Stories for Religious School (Vol. I)

# FOOTNOTES

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2. Eisenberg, Azriel (editor) The Bar Mitzvah Treasury, p. 302.  
See also, Idelsohn, Abraham. Jewish Liturgy.
3. Eisenberg, Azriel (editor) The Bar Mitzvah Treasury, p. 304.
4. Ibid.
5. Freehof, Solomon. In The House Of The Lord, pp. 100, 101.
6. Ibid. pp. 136, 137.
7. Newman, Louis. Hasidic Anthology, p. 450.
8. Freehof, Solomon. In The House of The Lord, p. 137.
9. Ibid. p. 138.
10. Ibid. pp. 273, 274.
11. Newman, Louis. Hasidic Anthology, p. 206.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Hertz, Joseph. Daily Prayer Book, pp. 416-421.
16. Cohen, A. The Psalms, p. 304.
17. Ibid.
18. Hertz, Joseph. Daily Prayer Book, p. 579.
19. Cohen, A. The Psalms, p. 122.
20. Ibid. p. 467.
21. Freehof, Solomon. In The House Of The Lord, pp. 53-54.
22. Ibid. pp. 57-58.
23. Ibid. pp. 59-60.
24. Ibid. pp. 60-63.
25. Ibid. pp. 63-64.



FOOTNOTES (continued)

26. Ibid. pp. 65-66.
27. Ibid. pp. 73-75.
28. Ibid. pp. 77-79.
29. Ibid. pp. 81-82.
30. Ibid. pp. 82-83.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid. pp. 85-86.
33. Hertz, J. Daily Prayer Book, p. 156.
34. Freehof, S. pp. 106 ff.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. p. 117.
37. Ibid. pp. 126-131.

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