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The Founding and Early History of the Union Libérale Israélite

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of the requirements for Ordination

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DIGEST

In this thesis, the founding and early history of the Union Libérale Israélite is made up of five chapters. The preface reviews the previous scholarly examinations of the Union Libérale. Then, the first two address the developments in nineteenth-century France that eventually turned French Jewry away from its strict traditionalism. The final three chapters address the efforts undertaken specifically to create and maintain a distinctly liberal Jewish religious institution.

Chapter One discusses the background to Jewish religious reform in nineteenth-century France. This chapter develops the framework in which the atmosphere of French Jewish society changed. The various factors that serve as precedents to religious reform are shown to be the backdrop against which the Union Libérale eventually would emerge.

Chapter Two surveys the ideological background to the establishment of an independent liberal religious institution. Specifically, the work of Ernest Renan and James Darmesteter, and their influence on the founding of the Union Libérale, is examined.

Chapter Three addresses the founding of the Union Libérale Israélite. After reviewing the early struggle to gain Consistorial approval for the reform group's activities, this chapter discusses Rabbi Louis-Germain Lévy, the predominant figure during the Union's early history. The inauguration of the synagogue at the rue Copernic is then

examined, followed by an exploration of those issues that concerned the Union.

Chapter Four deals with the early history of the Union Libérale, considering its lay leadership, early liturgy, and the cultural activities it undertook during its first years of existence.

Chapter Five addresses the history of the Union from 1921 until 1933. Discussion of Le Rayon, the Union's periodical, is followed by an analysis of the youth program, which flourished during this second half of the Union's early history. Renewed liturgical productivity, represented by the creation of Rituel des Prières Journalières, is then introduced. The Union's first twenty-five years are considered in concluding the thesis. A complete bibliography of works consulted is found after the final chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people without whose support this project could never have been undertaken. It is to them that I dedicate this work.

My parents, Murray and Shirley Siroka, have shown me the way from the very beginning.

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The input of these few has been invaluable to me, but the work contained in this thesis is solely mine. Any oversights or mistakes are my responsibility alone.

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PREFACE

An independent liberal Jewish religious institution did not emerge in France for more than a century after legal emancipation had been granted. Several factors delayed such an appearance until 1907, when the Union Libérale Israélite was formally founded. These factors included the conservatism of French society and French Judaism; Jewish assimilation, which was chosen by nonorthodox elements within the community, rather than creating any modified or modernized manifestations of Judaism; and the lack of support for independent religious organization, due to the consistory system which structured French Jewry (and all French religion).[1]

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, both the growth of liberal schools of thought and practical actions taken by the Jewish leadership challenged this dearth of institutionalized progressivism within French Jewry. Following the lead of Ernest Renan, James Darmesteter, the French Jewish scholar, laid the foundation for liberal Judaism in France.[2] He believed that religion after his time would emerge from the fusion of prophetism with science. Darmesteter's "prophetism" was the ideological origin of the movement for an independent liberal Judaism in France. Additionally, the work of Louis-Germain Lévy, who would become

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[1]For discussion of these factors, see Chapter One.

[2]For discussion of the thought and impact of Renan and Darmesteter on the founding of the Union Libérale Israélite, see Chapter Two.

the first rabbi of the Union, was also influential in the development of a progressive stream of French Judaism.[3] In his book Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque, Lévy called for a synthesis of religion and reason, of tradition and modernity. Turning to the example of liberal Protestantism, he argued for a Judaism governed by an non-hierarchical system, and not subject to the constraints of the consistory. This Judaism would advance toward a better understanding of God, realized in concert with the discoveries of modern thought.

In terms of the practical, "reform" in French Judaism can be traced to Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn, who instituted measures to "slow the ongoing process of religious neglect."[4] He began a program of Saturday afternoon services, which focused on the sermon, and introduced a Sunday lecture series. These initial steps were minor and affected few (several of whom were actively involved in the founding of the Union), yet they served as precedents for subsequent changes, opposing the rigid organization of the consistory.

Another important event led to the founding of the Union. The official separation of church and state n France altered French religious life, and therefore French Jewry, irrevocably. For "in no country in Europe was the union of

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[3]See Chapter Three.

[4]Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity: a History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (New York, 1988), 221.

church and state closer than in France."[5] When the separation was finally achieved in 1905, efforts to establish an independent liberal congregation advanced among the small group of Parisians who had first gathered together a few years earlier with hopes of organizing a "Liberal Temple." The manifesto which this group had issued echoed the unfettered sentiments that took hold in French Jewry.[6]

By 1907, the Union Libérale petitioned the consistory several times for the use of a hall in which it might conduct liberal services. When the initial request was denied, the members of the Union claimed themselves a "cultural association", under which title they were recognized. The subsequent impotence of the consistory enabled the Union to act without further interference. Under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Lévy, the Union grew considerably during its first few years, and, after surmounting the prevalent conservatism of French society, took on practices similar to its Reform counterparts in England, Germany, and the United States.[7] Its membership, though remaining small, was comprised of those truly interested in a Judaism conversant with the world of reason. Without a large pool of like-minded

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[5]David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (Cincinnati, 1931), 425.

[6]For discussion of the initial efforts of the Union and its founding, see Chapter Three.

[7]For discussion of the early history of the Union, see Chapter Four.

Jews upon whom to draw, the Union would persist as a non-mainstream component of French Jewry. Yet, through its founding, the Union Libérale Israélite brought the struggle for modernization of Judaism to France, and created a liberal Judaism whose roots were distinctly French.

This study has aimed to research and analyze the issues that directly influenced the founding of the Union Libérale Israélite, and trace its history down to 1933. At that time, the publication of the first series of its magazine, Le Rayon, ceased. To understand the background to the Union's founding, it has been necessary to examine the nature of Jewish religious life in late nineteenth-century France, those factors that held back Jewish religious reform, and the precedents within French Judaism for such reform. These ideas are considered along with the thinking of those most influential on the Union's emergence. In exploring the early history of the Union, the principal areas of focus have been the major personalities involved, the objectives and goals of these founders, the issues they faced, and their achievements.

For this investigation, all of the relevant material available has been used. Unfortunately, there exists less primary source information than was expected. The Union Libérale itself, having no documents in its possession from its early history, did not prove helpful to this endeavor. The various archives of French Judaism are apparently bereft of materials concerning the Union. The Union, historically

self-aware even during its early period,[8] did produce a retrospective summary of its existence upon its fiftieth anniversary, yet this remains tainted by its biased view of the subject.[9]

The only previous scholarly surveys concerning the early history of the Union Libérale have been undertaken by David Philipson and Michael Meyer in their respective histories of the Reform movement, and by Jakob Petuchowski in his examination of Reform liturgy in Europe. Each, though important in providing material relevant to this study, has its drawbacks. In The Reform Movement in Judaism, Philipson is limited in his effectiveness because he is contemporary with the Union's early period. Therefore, he cannot possess the critical understanding made obtainable by the passage of time. Meyer, in Response to Modernity, does maintain the appropriate critical distance for a dispassionate appraisal of the Union's founding and early history. Yet, as the study of Reform in France was but part of a much broader work, his analysis could not be exhaustive. Additionally, certain sources that were found during the research for this project were unknown, or unavailable, to him. Prayerbook Reform in Europe contains an erudite and thorough discussion of the Union's early liturgy, yet Petuchowski was not able to set it correctly within the historical framework of the Union.

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[8]See Chapter Five.

[9]See Le Rayon, volume 37 (December 1957).

Again, he did not have access to sources that would have allowed him to determine the actual date of publication. Nor was this the scope of his work. The desire to go beyond the seminal work of Philipson, Meyer and Petuchowski has guided this project, in hopes of presenting a more complete and detailed history of early Liberal Judaism in France.

CHAPTER ONE
The Background to Jewish Religious Reform in Nineteenth-Century France

The nature of nineteenth-century French Judaism was defined by the mounting tensions between religious traditionalism and religious reform. Though this struggle is not viewed as being as advanced as it was in Germany at that time, religious reform in France did commence in the earlier decades of the century. Phyllis Albert Cohen rightly points out that religious reform began along many avenues in France. "...it would be a mistake to assume that nineteenth-century French Judaism did not reflect the concerns, theories, and activities of reformers of all shades of opinion."[1] She notes that the main difference between religious reform in France and those places where it took hold earlier is that the French reformers failed to institutionalize their efforts formally. In this light, Albert further argues that "reform" is not the best term to use when discussing such developments in France, for it has come to represent but one strain of non-traditional religious activity. Rather, she prefers "nonorthodox"; this term includes all attempts at religious reform within post-emancipation French Jewry.

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[1]Phyllis Cohen Albert, "Nonorthodox Attitudes in Nineteenth-Century French Judaism," in Frances Malino and Phyllis Cohen Albert, eds., Essays in Modern Jewish History, (Rutherford, NJ, 1982), 121.

Napoleon, the Assembly, and the Founding of the Consistory System

The era of Jewish emancipation in Europe was inaugurated by the 1781 publication of Christian Wilhelm Dohm's *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews). In several states, non-Jewish authorities hoped that granting equality to the Jews would lead to their "betterment"; specifically, it was hoped that if greater rights were given to the Jews, they would forsake their "vile"[2] ways and assimilate completely into the surrounding society. After emancipation was granted to French Jewry by the Revolution, French authorities hoped to accelerate assimilation by having Jews live in areas without previously established Jewish populations. Yet, the Jewish tendency was to remain in communities already inhabited by fellow Jews.[3]

However, during the early post-Revolution period, this new civil status was seen to have no influence leading toward the "betterment" of the Jews. Therefore, in 1806, Napoleon convened the Assembly of Notables to address the failures of emancipation. He projected two goals for the Assembly. First, the Assembly should work toward a resolution of the

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[2]Simon Schwarzfuchs, Napoleon, the Jews and the Sanhedrin (London, 1979), 49. Even as Napoleon was portraying himself as a friend to the Jews, his ultimate goal for them was assimilation; he referred to them as the "vilest of all nations."

[3]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 39.

incompatibility between Judaism and the individual's civic duties; second, the Jews were to clarify the attitude of Jewish law to living within a non-religious state.[4] Those averse to Jewish equality still blamed Jewish usury for the poverty of the French peasantry and criticized Judaism's particularist moral doctrine. Napoleon hoped to quiet these opponents of emancipation by having the Jews defend their position, and prove their loyalty to the state in their own words. To this end, the Jews were to "declare themselves no longer a nation within a nation, and that Jewish law would yield, without exception, to French law."[5]

What the Assembly did was to provide answers to the famous "twelve questions." These twelve questions, the answers to which aided in eliminating vestiges of Jewish communal political independence in France, were posed by Napoleon's representatives to the Assembly, and confronted specifics of Halakhah concerning intermarriage, loyalty to the state, and usury. The answers provided, though fulfilling the requirements initially set forth by Napoleon, were not enough to ensure satisfaction on the part of those who opposed equality for the Jews. In this way, the Assembly proved that conditions in France were ripening for a new conception of Judaism; this revived Judaism would be responsive to the

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[4]ibid., 44.

[5]Robert Chazan and Marc Lee Raphael, eds., Modern Jewish History: a Source Reader, (New York, 1969), 14.

exigencies of modernity.

To further organize French Jewry as part of a modern nation, Napoleon issued three decrees on March 17, 1808, the first two of which established the consistory system. The consistory was to "enforce decisions of the Assembly via education and surveillance."[6] Phyllis Cohen Albert writes that "the consistory was the single most important and comprehensive French Jewish institution of the last century; it was responsible for molding French Judaism throughout the nineteenth century, and, to a large extent, into the twentieth."[7]

The consistory system, a "quasi-governmental" body, was created to bridge the gap that Napoleon felt existed between religious and political law.[8] Whereas religious law is eternal and therefore immutable, Napoleon held that political law, when discussed in terms of Jewish autonomy, only applied to the Jews in ancient Israel, when they comprised an independent state. To bring together these two spheres, religious and political authority, the consistory was ascribed three function by law. The three functions were administration, regeneration, and police duties.

In administration, the consistory was to "maintain order

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[6]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 45.

[7]Phyllis Cohen Albert, The Modernization of French Jewry: Consistory and Community in the Nineteenth Century, (Hanover, NH, 1977), 45.

[8]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 43.

in the synagogues, supervise the administration of private synagogues, and receive and handle the tax money destined for religious expenses."[9] The function of regeneration was to "encourage Jews to exercise 'useful' professions."[10] However, regeneration entailed a broader scope of goals, for the French government hoped that the Jews would become not only useful professionals, but participating members of a modern society. The third function given to the consistory, the police role, was most important to Napoleon. "It was with the idea of ensuring proper control of the Jews that he had convened the Assembly of Notables."[11] Yet, these were not the only changes the Jewish community underwent on that March day in 1808.

Along with the decrees organizing the consistory system came a third, known as the "infamous decree."[12] It served to nullify all debts owed to Jews by soldiers, minors, and women. Further, the third decree cancelled all loans that carried an interest rate over ten percent. Finally, no new movement was to be allowed for Alsatian Jewry, nor were any new Jewish settlers to be admitted into Alsace.[13] This served to strip

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[9]Albert, The Modernization of French Jewry, 122.

[10]ibid., 124.

[11]ibid., 143.

[12]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 45.

[13]See also Albert, The Modernization of French Jewry, 18. Demographic study shows that in 1808, when the consistory system was founded, close to 80 percent of French Jewry was located in the

the Jews of France of the rights granted to them in 1791, and further forced them to prove their worthiness for citizenship. Worse yet, the conditions of the infamous decree were to be enforced over the following ten years, then to be reviewed for renewal. The "infamous" decree further impressed the Jews that religious reform and reorganization would be necessary to bring Judaism away from its second-class station.

The consistory system itself was made up of seven provincial offices and a Central Consistory in Paris. The seven provincial consistories were located in Paris, Strasbourg, Colmar, Metz, Nancy, Bordeaux, and Marseilles. The Central Consistory office in Paris also served as a mediator between the Jewish communities and the government.[14] Each provincial consistory board was made up of a rabbi and four laymen. The Central Consistory was initially comprised of the Chief Rabbi of France and seven laymen, one from each of the provincial departments.

Soon after its inception, the consistory system mainly dealt with synagogue affairs. Even the Alsatian complaints about Jewish usury eventually subsided, as did certain notions of exclusively Jewish professions, allowing Jews to venture into previously prohibited businesses. Yet the extent of Napoleon's original intentions for the consistory would never

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departments created in the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

[14]Simon Dubnov, History of the Jews, 5 (New York, 1973), 219. For a complete discussion of the structure of the consistory system, see Albert, The Modernization of French Jewry, chapter 5.

be gained, as France reinstituted the Monarchy under Louis XVIII in 1814. Initially, the Jewish position was no better at this time, for the new constitution issued by Louis on June 4, 1814 excluded acknowledgement of Jewish religious authority. It stated that "all citizens shall be free to profess their respective religions, and their cults shall enjoy the same protection; however, the Roman Catholic religion shall be the state religion, and only Roman Catholic priests and clergymen of other Christian denominations shall receive their salary from the royal treasury." The first part of this declaration was to elevate Roman Catholicism above rival Christian groups, while the second part was intended specifically to exclude French Jewry from official recognition.[15]

The Jewish Question and the July Revolution

The "Jewish Question", as the condition of the Jews became known, was addressed by Jewish and non-Jewish writers throughout the 1820's. In arguing their position vis-à-vis Jewish enfranchisement, some advanced Napoleon's idea that Jewish and civil law were not compatible. Agricole Moureau, for example, contended that Judaism and citizenship would remain incompatible because Jewish law was of divine origin, and recognized no "temporal obligations to the state."[16]

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[15]ibid., 211.

[16]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 46.

Therefore, Jews could not serve the state well because of various intervening prohibitions on their conduct.[17]

There were also those who worked toward the improvement of the situation of French Jewry, as they saw it could only improve France as well. Arthur Beugnot set forth the first systematic plan for Jewish regeneration.[18] In an 1824 essay, he proposed the organization of five committees to aid the process of regeneration. His plan involved aspects of life ranging from education to agriculture, and included consideration of religious reform. Beugnot continued by arguing that the Central Consistory should advise the Jews to abandon ancestral laws that no longer remained relevant, which would bring Judaism into a modern, enlightened context. He wrote that maintaining traditional points of view concerning such issues as kashrut and intermarriage only acted to impede the *fusion sociale des juifs*, the social integration of the Jews. This detailed essay was never published, but came to represent general French sentiment toward the Jews at the time.

This discussion about the Jewish Question arose repeatedly until the July revolution of 1830, after which the Jewish situation tended to improve. When the July Revolution began, the Jewish community could "already be regarded as an

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[17]The "prohibitions" that were used most often in this course of argument were those concerning Shabbat, intermarriage, and kashrut.

[18]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 52.

integrated part of state and society."[19] The progressive elements of French society believed that economic rehabilitation, rather than punishment, would foster improvement for the Jews. Among the Jews themselves there was a growing frustration with tradition. The ideological foundation for Jewish modernization, the Haskalah, was seeping into the French Jewish community. As opportunities, especially educational ones, opened up for the Jews of France, their intellectuals became "increasingly aware of the limitations posed by tradition"[20] for Jewish entry into modern society. The slogan of the July monarchy, "*enrichissez-vous!*", in a spiritual sense, became especially meaningful for the Jews who supported the cause of the new revolution.

After the revolution of July 1830, the issue of equal rights for Judaism, as a religion, again arose. On November 13, 1830, Merilhoux, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, argued for equal status for the Jewish religion. He announced the decision that "beginning on January 1, 1831, the clergy of the Jewish cult is to be granted a salary by the government."[21] This supplement to emancipation was followed by several positive strides for the Jewish community. Isaac

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[19]Jacob Katz, Out of the Ghetto: the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 1770-1870, (New York, 1973), 193.

[20]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 58.

[21]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 213-214.

Adolphe Crémieux, who became the leading Jewish political figure of his day, succeeded in abolishing the oath *more judaico* by 1846. Thus, French Jews were able to take positions within society alongside their non-Jewish comrades, without the legal inclusion of the embarrassing loyalty oath that had been reserved only for them.

Jewish leadership, especially within the consistory system, was transferred away from the religious officials. By 1844, secular members of the consistories took precedence over the rabbis. These lay leaders endorsed acculturation "without apology."[22] They saw no contradiction between full integration into French society and maintaining Judaism. This acculturation was most rapid in the larger urban areas, where an abundance of professional opportunities in a liberal environment proved available. Yet, just as the leaders had believed, the acculturation of French Jews did not lead immediately to assimilation.

French Supporters of Reform

The new generation of emancipated Jews was optimistic about their role in French society. They saw the era of post-Revolution France as a time of transformation. Even in the earlier years of the nineteenth century, there were those sympathetic to religious reform as the best means to integrate Jews into French society. One of the best-known examples of

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[22]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 112.

this trend is the case of Orly Terquem (1782-1862), the first French Jew to discuss systematic religious reform. He came from a comfortable background in Metz, one of the consistorial seats. He gained an excellent education in secular subjects, particularly mathematics; it was his expertise in this area that brought him to Paris as a professor at the royal artillery academy. He intermarried, and gave his children a Catholic upbringing, which further removed him from Judaism.

Terquem was the most radical of the pro-reform voices in mid-century France. Among French reformers, he is most comparable to Samuel Holdheim, the German radical who called for a complete break with tradition in order to create a modern framework for Judaism. Terquem, like Holdheim, refused to adorn tradition to make it blend with the enlightenment thinking of his day. The issue of Shabbat, a central controversy in the discussion of religious reform, became a leading topic of his publications. He wrote the *Lettres Tsarphatiques* between 1831 and 1837 under the pseudonym Tsarphati ("the Frenchman"), emphasizing his desire to synthesize Jewishness and Frenchness.[23] In the letters, he ridiculed what he saw as outmoded customs; he called for "radical reforms", including the discontinuation of circumcision and moving Shabbat observance to Sunday.[24] It was apparent from his writings that to him the idea of Shabbat

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[23]ibid., 119.

[24]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 220.

itself had been lost, and was more important to recover the idea than to preserve the day on which Shabbat was kept.[25] Yet he provided no cogent philosophy for reform.

The moderate reformers in France included Samuel Cahen, Solomon Munk, and Albert Cohn. Cahen (1796-1862) is noted for translating the Bible into French. He served as a teacher at a consistorial school in Paris, and in this capacity published a catechism for the instruction of Judaism's basic tenets. Even in this small work, Cahen furthered his notion of moderate religious reform. In the preface to the British edition of 1863, the editor notes that

> It is therefore assumed that the Hebrew community of this country, participating as they do in the common advantages of an improved system in other departments of education, are no less ready and desirous to join in promoting a similar progress in that knowledge most essential to our happiness, the "knowledge of the Lord."[26]

The editor had previously mentioned that the catechism had been in use in the consistorial schools of Paris for "several years", and that it would be useful in presenting those aspects of Judaism that remained vital.

In his instructional publication, Cahen exhibits his inclination toward moderate religious reform. Although he retains much of the traditional ritual behavior in his catechism, Cahen moves away from acceptance of the oral law as

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[25]Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity: a History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (Oxford, 1988), 166.

[26]Samuel Cahen, A catechism of Religious and Moral Instruction for Children of the Hebrew Faith (London, 1863), preface.

authoritative. In answering the question "what do you understand by the Law of God?" he writes "all the precepts in the Bible." To explicate what, specifically, is meant by "Bible" he writes that it is "that collection of writings, transmitted to us by our ancestors, in which are the belief and hope of the Israelite."[27] There is no mention of post-Biblical law.[28]

Additionally, Cahen was the editor of the *Archives Israélites*, the periodical that became the leading voice for pro-reform ideas in France. Terquem, as well as many moderate reformers, published much of their work in the *Archives*. Throughout his guidance of the periodical, Cahen demonstrated that gradual reform would be more successful than any radical break with tradition.

Solomon Munk (1803-1867), a leading Jewish scholar, and Albert Cohn (1814-1877), the administrator of the Rothschilds' endeavors in France, were avid supporters of Cahen's version of religious reform. Both men attacked Terquem for his radical leanings, yet neither supported the status quo. In 1836, Munk and Cohn joined their mentor in asking the consistory in Paris for permission to hold modified services for the High Holidays for "enlightened Jews." They were

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[27]ibid., 6-7.

[28]Yet Cahen does include a discussion of Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith.

refused.[29]

Another champion of religious reform was Gerson Lévy (1784-1864). Like Terquem, he was from Metz. While maintaining a career in bookdealing and teaching, he was influenced by what he saw as the need for modernization of the synagogue service.[30] Lévy's desire was to found an association to worship in a modernized, liberalized service for Shabbat and holidays. This service was to be decorous and dignified. Conversation among congregants would be prohibited, as only the choir, along with the service reader, would be allowed to pray out loud. Further, so as not to disrupt the congregants' concentration, the service would be abbreviated. Enough support was never gained for Gerson Lévy's plan, and it was not enacted.

Likely the most important steps toward religious reform in mid-century were taken by a member of the clergy. Solomon Ulmann, a liberal who became chief rabbi of the central consistory in 1853, took the only major pro-reform rabbinical initiative when, in 1856, he called for a conference to consider ritual modification.[31] Eight consistorial chief rabbis attended and voted on issues ranging from the allowance for non-Jews to play the organ in synagogue on Shabbat and

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[29]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 133-34. See also Meyer, Response to Modernity, 168.

[30]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 204.

[31]Meyer, Response to Modernity, 170.

festivals to the elimination of the vengeful *av ha-rahamim* prayer, which was seen as a vestige of the unenlightened past. Ulmann, who himself favored moderate reform yet remained faithful to Halakhah, specifically refused to refer to the conference as a new sanhedrin, and held that its decisions were not binding on the consistory system.

The calls for change found no support in France at the time. Some had no desire for religious reform; others had no need. The result was that those leading Jews who would have favored a new vision of Jewish religious practice became disillusioned with traditional Judaism and struggled with deep spiritual conflict. Many would-be reformers of the early and mid century turned from Judaism; several, including prominent members of the Jewish elite, married non-Jews.[32]

One of the main problems that faced these early French advocates of reform was that they could not identify fully with the radicalism of their German counterparts. Even the radicals among the French reformers found it difficult to import and support ideas from Germany, France's bitter political rival. Along with the religiously conservative nature of French society, this recoil from German influence would delay acceptance of religious reform among the Jews of France.

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[32]Berkovits, The Shaping of Jewish Identity, 114.

The Alliance Israélite Universelle

The era after 1870 could have been one of great growth and productivity for French Jewry, for French society had accepted, to a greater extent than before, the freedoms offered by democracy and its ideals. Jewish religious productivity and innovation, had it been desired by a majority of French Jews, could have flourished, yet it was not nurtured. Because the Jewish population stagnated after the Second Empire period, the critical number of Jews that would have been necessary to achieve this level of progress was not reached. The acculturation of the 1830's had become the assimilation of the 1870's.[33] Assimilation and the benefits of open society led many French Jews away from interest in Jewish affairs. Even the most influential and motivating personalities, including the previously mentioned Crémieux, and Chief Rabbi Isidore Ulman, like his predecessor Solomon Ulmann, could not persuade France's Jews to become more active as Jews.

This mass assimilation led those few who remained dedicated to Jewish improvement to devise new ideas of Jewish identity. By 1860, members of Crémieux's circle of followers established what they hoped would be a "worldwide union of Jews for cultural and political mutual assistance."[34] The men who founded the Alliance Israélite Universelle were not

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[33]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 363.

[34]ibid., 364.

blindly optimistic about the conditions their fellow Jews faced in France, or in other parts of the world. They were "spiritualists more than believers; liberals and moderates more than socialist or radicals. They combined to an astonishing degree a firm belief in science, its methods, and its empiricism with a Utopianism or indeed what was at times a very unrestrained variety of messianism."[35]

From the outset, the founders of the Alliance had two primary aims.[36] First, they wished to promote Jewish emancipation and spiritual progress among Jews everywhere. Second, they intended to "support in all possible ways all those who suffer because of their Jewishness." By 1870, when Crémieux returned to the Chamber of Deputies, the Alliance had 13,000 members, from France, Germany, Austria and England. Its growth coincided with the great rise of European nationalism, and, eventually, many could not justify the international scope of the Alliance. In 1871, the English members of the A.I.U. created an "Anglo-Jewish Association", while two years later, their Austrian counterparts formed the Israelitische Allianz.

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[35]Michel Abitbol, "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: Analysis of a Discourse (1830-1914)," in Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., The Jews in Modern France, (Hanover, NH, 1985), 36.

[36]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 364.

Antisemitism and the Dreyfus Case

Though the Alliance attempted to counter antisemitism whenever and wherever it arose, antisemitism became the greatest obstacle to Jewish progress in the later nineteenth century. Spurred on by men like Edouard Drumont, antisemitic elements thrived in France during the last decades of the last century. For Drumont, the "Pope of Antisemitism", the Jew symbolized all the aggressions directed against France. "A symbol of 'foreignness', and even more of perversity and evil, the Jew could not escape from his nature and even less give the lie to it."[37] By the 1880's, inflammatory antisemitic publications ceaselessly declared "*le juif - voilà l'ennemi!*" (the Jew - there's the enemy!).

This racial antisemitism, based on German models, was popular among downcast aristocrats, out-of-luck merchants, Boulangists, and reactionaries. They formed themselves into the National Antisemitic League of France; these opponents of the Third Republic, or *revanchards*, considered themselves ultra-patriots. Dubnov points out that they "hated Germany, yet imitated German antisemitism."[38] The virulent racial theories that the *revanchards* promoted were opposed by Ernest

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[37]Zeev Sternhell, "Roots of Popular Anti-Semitism in the Third Republic," in Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., The Jews in Modern France, (Hanover, NH, 1985), 115.

[38]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 610.

Renan,[39] who had previously pointed to differences between Aryan and Semitic races while crediting the Jews of the diaspora with having absorbed elements of foreign cultures. He further argued that the ancient prophets of the Jews created "Christianity before Christ."

The broad outbreak of antisemitism in *fin-de-siècle* France caused the Dreyfus case to become the central political issue as the century came to a close. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, accused of communicating sensitive information to the German army, was stripped of his rank and his honor in a public ceremony.[40] After he partially served his sentence on Devil's Island, forgery of the incriminating documents was admitted; he was rehabilitated, restored to rank, and received the Legion of Honor. After his reinstatement, the antisemites "agitated toward the worst attacks against the Jews in modern French history."[41] They yelled "death to the Jews!" and "we spit on Zola!" proving again that this episode was far more than an isolated case of antisemitism. Rather, antisemitism was rooted deep within French culture, as well as the anti-progressive issues that surround it.

The Dreyfus case brought about two great changes for French Jewry, and France as a whole. The Catholic church,

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[39]The role and influence of Renan's work on Jewish liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century will be assessed in a subsequent chapter of this thesis.

[40]Over 1,000 works have been published on the Dreyfus Affair.

[41]Dubnov, History of the Jews, 610.

representative of the official religion of the state, still retained great authority in French society. Yet the Dreyfus case helped lead to the separation of church and state.[42] The new government administration, which came to power in 1902, sought to rid French politics of the clerical-nationalist component which had exercised such influential leverage throughout France's history. The government replaced Catholic congregational schools with secular ones, consequently eliminating parochial education as the basis of French political life. Additionally, the antisemitic upsurge of the 1890's, which culminated in the Dreyfus case, stemmed the flow of assimilation that had plagued French Jewry since the end of the eighteenth century.

For the Jews of France, the nineteenth century ended very much as it had begun. They found themselves in a precarious position, somewhere between integration into society and isolation from it. Their community situation may be summed up as one historian describes the Dreyfus family situation: "their story is a chronicle of two faiths - religious and national - that were often, but not always, in conflict. While some members of the family departed from the Judaism of

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[42]This issue, the separation of church and state, remained the major obstacle that inhibited the institutionalization of religious reform in France. It is in this light that French antisemitism, which helped lead to the separation of church and state, becomes relevant to the establishment of the Union Libérale Israélite. The separation did not occur in France until 1905, and will be discussed in a following chapter.

their ancestors and others observed it, they all held firm to the belief that Justice found its deepest roots in French soil..."[43] If the two, religion and political equality, were to come together, it would be necessary to synthesize them in a manner not previously achieved in France. It was against this background that an independent liberal religious institution, the Union Libérale Israélite, would finally emerge on French soil.

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[43]Michael Burns, Dreyfus: a Family Affair 1789-1945, (New York 1991), xv.

CHAPTER TWO
"Back to the Prophets"
Liberal Ideology as a Background to the Establishment of the Union Libérale

The hallmark of the Reform movement in Judaism has been the reintroduction of prophetic ideals as the central focus for religious thought and behavior.[1] Many theological innovators relied upon the calls for social justice of the Jewish prophets of the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.E. to legitimate their claims that modern religion must be based on the very same values.[2] Not surprisingly, post-emancipation Jewish reformers, in order to propose a liberal understanding of Judaism, would turn back to their tradition in a similar fashion.

This reappropriation of the prophets represents a divergence from the strict ritualistic interpretation of tradition, and was quite evident among the Jewish reformers in Germany. Their break from certain traditional practices, which led to the stressing of a social values agenda, can be traced back as far as the late 18th century. Early reform in Germany arose among Jewish thinkers who were dissatisfied with uncompromising adherence to traditional practice. In France, however, the basis for breaking with tradition came from outside the Jewish camp.

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[1]See Eugene Borowitz, Liberal Judaism (New York, 1984), 284-300.

[2]See James Darmesteter, "Religions of the Future", Selected Essays (Boston, 1895), 1-15.

The reacquisition of prophetic ideals of behavior was first put forward first among the French by a non-Jew, Ernest Renan. His appreciation for Judaism's role in the history of civilization, and his unique ability to advance his view, stimulated the establishment of a liberal Jewish ideology in France. It was his foremost disciple, James Darmesteter, who further developed Renan's work, calling it "Prophetism." Darmesteter, a Jew marginally connected to the Jewish community, in turn directly influenced those who would create an independent liberal Jewish entity in France. These two, Renan and Darmesteter, more than anyone else, made the greatest impact on progressive Jewish religious thinking during the era leading up to the separation of church and state.

Ernest Renan and the Appreciation of Judaism's Contributions

Joseph Ernest Renan (1823-1892) was born into a traditional Catholic family in Brittany. It is interesting that he became prominent as a rebel from tradition, as Brittany was known as "the region which preserved the ancient Christian faith in its greatest purity."[3] Renan himself later reflected that the people of his home were more gravely spiritual and profoundly thoughtful than any other people in France. As a young man, he was called to the seminary of

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[3]James Darmesteter, "Ernest Renan", Selected Essays (Boston, 1895), 180.

Saint Nicolas du Chardonneret, where he began preparations for a career in the priesthood. There, he learned the three elements of how he would conduct research throughout his life. These were the German model for biblical exegesis; a view of the world that came from study of the natural sciences; and the method of analysis of historical philology. He was taught a critical method that allowed him to conflict with every conclusion of orthodoxy.[4] Renan concluded that the very texts he studied showed all the characteristics of ordinary human literature.

Disillusioned with his Catholic education, Renan dreamed of a neo-Christianity "freed from all dross of superstition, preserving its moral efficacy, and capable of remaining or becoming again the great school of humanity and its guide in the future."[5] He accepted no reconciliation for the contradictions among the gospels, and believed that quotes in the Christian Bible from the Hebrew Bible were inaccurate; therefore, the New Testament was not reliable, and not as inspired as Hebrew scripture. He further concluded that "the *elohim* are not hidden aloft in the eternal snows, they are not to be met with, as in the time of Moses, in the mountain defiles; they dwell in the heart of man."[6] This

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[4]ibid., 183.

[5]ibid., 188.

[6]Ernest Renan, History of the People of Israel (Boston, 1905), xxvii-xxviii.

personalization of religion was a theological foundation of Reform Judaism.

According to his student Darmesteter, Renan created religious criticism in France.[7] After his break from orthodox Christianity, "Renan's work did not place emphasis on the 'good', but on the 'true'."[8] Further, a later Reform rabbi pointed out that "one thing counted with him - in all his studies and writings - truth. Truth was the basis of his religion."[9] Renan believed that "the great religious movement of Israel swept the world along with it",[10] and therefore dedicated much of his life to the study of Israel and its ancient history.

Included in the *Literary History of France*, which was published by the French Institute, were Renan's treatises on Jewish writers and rabbis of Medieval France. These essays were "remarkable for their learning and lucidity, and accompanied by memorable introductions and summaries from his own pen."[11] With his contributions to this work, Renan helped raise the investigation of Judaism among the higher, respected disciplines. As an esteemed devotee of Spinoza, he

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[7]Darmesteter, "Ernest Renan", 238.

[8]ibid., 238

[9]Hyman Enelow, "Ernest Renan, or, a Non-Jew's Appreciation of Judaism", Selected Works (Kingsport, TN, 1935), 139.

[10]Renan, History, xiii.

[11]Enelow, 140.

delivered the memorial address at the Hague on the 200th anniversary of the philosopher's death. Placing his imprimatur on recognition for a thinker of Jewish descent, he bolstered the position of religious liberalism in France, as well as acceptance of Judaism's place in academia.

Yet Renan's greatest significance to the emergence of liberal Judaism in France is his argument concerning the contributions that Jews and Judaism have made to Western civilization. There are three components to this discussion that stand out in his thinking.[12] The first component Renan offers is that Jews gave religion to the world. It was not a political contribution, nor a notion of purity of the Jewish 'race'. Rather, the Jews offered "true religion": a religion of the spirit, of faith, of goodness, and of justice. He believed that Judaism has made morality come into religion; religion has become morality. "They (the 'Israelitish' prophets of the 9th century B.C.E.) were fanatics in the cause of social justice."[13] Material sacrifice is no longer central to religious behavior; what is essential is the disposition of the heart and the uprightness of the soul.

Renan also wrote that "Jewish history has been the delight of eighteen centuries, and...it is still extraordinarily effective in the amelioration of morals."[14]

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[12]ibid., 141.

[13]Renan, History, viii.

[14]ibid., xi.

This leads to the second component of what Judaism has contributed to civilization. Renan understood the debt that his faith owes to Judaism, and that when one wants to deepen Christianity, one must study Judaism.[15] He saw the beginnings of Christianity in the Jewish prophets of the 8th century B.C.E., and contended that it was only when Christianity was tied to Roman politics that it separated entirely from Jewish prophetic ideals.

The third component to Renan's argument answered the question- "does Religion have a future"? His answer was "yes", but it will be the religion of truth, justice, and ideal. This is the religion he felt had been identified with the Jews. Judaism itself would have to flourish in the future, as it embodies "true" religion. In Renan's estimation, France fell behind other countries during the Renaissance because it rid itself of almost all its Jews around the year 1500. He then accepted that the Revolution was the fruition of the prophetic ideals of Israel. It was in modern, liberal society, with emancipation extended to all, that the visions of the ancient prophets would be realized.

In such a model, Renan believed that "there is room for everyone to fashion his own romance."[16] He felt that people would need to be in ongoing conflict with their religious

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[15]"Quand on veut approfondir le christianisme, c'est le judaïsme qu'il faut étudier." This was a catchphrase of Renan's work.

[16]Renan, History, xxv.

beliefs in order to continue to grow spiritually.[17] In a liberal society, or one that allows for liberalism and plurality, one can create an opening for religious constructs that vary from the traditional pattern. "No one exerted a profounder (sic) influence on the doctrine, the thought, and the imagination of his countrymen", wrote James Darmesteter.[18] It would take the student who mentioned this of his mentor to bring his ideas to the Jews of France.

James Darmesteter and Prophetism

Darmesteter (1849-1894) was born in Lorraine, the son of a bookseller whose family had lived in the region since the early 1790's. After the death of his grandfather in 1852, the family moved to Paris. They struggled to survive, and did not usually maintain a nourishing diet nor proper medical attention; Darmesteter remained frail throughout his life, never having grown fully.

Yet, even with economic disabilities, the family labored to ensure that their children received an excellent education. Darmesteter was sent to the primary school of Saint Gervais, and then was to proceed to the Talmud Torah of the Consistory. Most students from the Talmud Torah continued at the Rabbinical College. Yet having excelled and received a

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[17]Darmesteter would later realize this to be the concept of "becoming". See below.

[18]Darmesteter, "Ernest Renan", 178.

scholarship to the Lycée at the Collège Charlemagne, he moved away from mainstream Jewish learning.

In his public education, Darmesteter was drawn to the classical disciplines, with their reliance on logic. He was granted a bachelor's degree in science and letters, and pursued advanced instruction in letters and law. Influenced by the work of Renan, he entered the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in 1872, in order to study Semitics. As he learned to connect the history of a people with the history of its language, he began to use philology as a tool with which to study the development of faiths and traditions. His fields of interest varied; yet some of his greatest work focused on the his own background, the history of Judaism.

In emulation of Renan, Darmesteter wrote that "fully to understand religions, a little skepticism is necessary' but what is also needed is the imagination of a believer."[19] His understanding of 'belief', and therefore 'religion', was also reminiscent of Renan:

> Its (the work he did in Renan's footsteps) novelty consists in having made prophecy the center of interest of the history of Israel, its power of attraction, in the unlooked-for kinship existing between the heart of the prophets and the heart of the twentieth century.[20]

He further accepted that what was unique about Jewish prophecy

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[19]James Darmesteter, "The Prophets of Israel", Selected Essays (Boston, 1895), 21. This is parallel to what developed as the Reform tradition of questioning religious authority in order to strengthen one's beliefs via the answers found.

[20]ibid., 23.

is that it became the "all-powerful weapon, not of charlatan and of fools, but of those inspired, in whom the mind and the conscience of modern humanity found their first successful and lasting impression."[21]

Darmesteter felt, as did Renan, that the prophets represented a break in the religious tradition that preceded them. Concerning this, he wrote

> the miracle of a uniform, continuous revelation, ever present and complete from the moment when it descended from heaven, is supplanted by the no less miraculous history of a progressive revelation proceeding from the heart of man.[22]

He understood that at its beginnings, a religion tends to be progressive, restating the ideals that it inherited in terms that appear to be new or revolutionary. Yet

> since it is the nature of a religion, when once organized through dogma and by means of a priesthood, to become fixed and hardened, a time comes when science and divine conscience, incarnated and solidified, stand opposed to science and the ever-changing and progressing human conscience. This is precisely what has happened to Catholicism in the course of the last centuries, and consequently it is at present a resisting force, instead of an active and progressive one.[23]

It is from this starting point that Darmesteter delineated his views of the prophets, their significance, and how their values should be appropriated by modern society.

To begin his reasoning, Darmesteter declared that "in truth, the century following Elijah gave birth to a new

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[21]ibid., 24.

[22]ibid., 26.

[23]Darmesteter, "Religions of the Future", 3.

phenomenon; a god became the instrument of morality."[24] He felt that this occurrence was the culmination of two centuries of "intense moral crisis" within the collective human soul. It was a decay of the standards in the region occupied by Semitic peoples that led to the rise of the prophets. He insisted that all the salient points that the prophets would make, entirely, were contained in the earliest two:

> All the essential doctrines of prophecy appear in the first two prophets remaining to us, Amos and Hosea; the former occupied with social justice, the latter more religious, and concerned with morality and with God.[25]

Nothing was added to the prophetic tradition of Judaism after the writings contained within these two books of scripture.

Darmesteter summed up his understanding of the prophetic message in producing four axioms: that which is not based on justice must perish; God has revealed justice to Israel; Israel should realize justice; justice *will be* realized some day.[26] For Darmesteter, these principles expressed the universal and eternal hope that he saw springing from Judaism. He drew this sentiment from the prophetic literature.

> God can never entirely abandon his chosen people. The sinners only among them shall perish. Israel and Judah shall be reunited. God will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David, and by closing up the breaches and removing the ruins will rebuild it as it was before.[27]

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[24]Darmesteter, "Prophets", 38.

[25]ibid., 44.

[26]ibid., 51. Italics added.

[27]ibid., 47. Paraphrase of Amos 9:9-10.

To survive, religious people must turn back to the values that had been originally brought forth by the prophets. Therefore, Judaism, reconstituted, would flower in the future as the model for modern religion.

Just as Ezekiel required prophetic conduct of the people after the Babylonian exile, so too must people of today turn back to the religion of the prophets to conclude their exile from truth, from God.[28] This turning back was to be the constant involvement of the individual in his own improvement. This embodied the notion of 'becoming':

> The notion of 'becoming'-the perpetual transformation of things which never are, but are always on the way to being is...a view eminently historical, elevated, and sanctified by the feeling of an active ideal which moves onward to its realization through this incessant flux and metamorphosis.[29]

Darmesteter did not believe that these progressive, prophetic notions had been lost over the centuries. He knew that they had been lost as an emphasis in the religious mind of western culture. The modern introduction of these concepts into society, according to Darmesteter's judgment, was due to the "rebirth of science in the 16th century, the destructive philosophy of the 18th century, and the Revolution." These three factors returned the question of the ancient prophets to the fore: could there be a realization of justice on earth without the support of a reward beyond the tomb? "For this

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[28]ibid., 86ff.

[29]Darmesteter, "Ernest Renan", 190. This describes the dynamism that is associated with Reform Judaism, at its optimum.

reason, these old pages (the prophetic writings) still appeal so strongly to minds that have thrown off belief in gods."[30]

Yet, following the prophets' models for behavior *is* demonstrating belief in, and understanding of, God. Quoting Isaiah, Darmesteter argues "What need have I of all your sacrifices? says the Lord...Cease to do evil! Learn to do good, devote yourselves to justice."[31] For Darmesteter, this is religion; it is service to God.

Though nothing of note, thematically, was to supersede the initial messages of the prophets, Darmesteter did believe that the effectiveness of these messages changed, due to the progressive ability of humanity to understand them. "In turning toward the prophets, humanity is not retrograding twenty-six centuries; it is they who were twenty-six centuries in advance. Humanity was too young to read them."[32]

It is only now that humanity has matured that the eternal truths of the prophets become clear. In Darmesteter's words, humanity needed the time to ready itself to appreciate the messages delivered twenty-six centuries previously. In this light,

> these ancient words, fierce and violent, have more vitality at the present time, and answer better to the needs of modern souls, than all the classic masterpieces of antiquity. Therefore these stray pages, sent forth twenty-six centuries ago among two semibarbarous tribes,

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[30]Darmesteter, "Prophets", 101.

[31]Isaiah 1:11, 17.

[32]Darmesteter, "Religions of the Future", 9.

and exposed to the vicissitudes of chance, constitute a production that will live forever.[33]

Darmesteter asserted that the claims of prophetic faith had a certain immediacy as well. The ideals that he held so highly were not only eternal, but were to take hold, he was sure, if not in his lifetime, in the century to follow.

> They (the prophets) uttered in words of inextinguishable ardor the cry of a noble instinct, in a form so simple, so universal, so free from the fleeting fancies of religious poetry, so purely and triumphantly humane, that, after twenty-seven centuries, disciples of Voltaire upon hearing it wonder to find their own conscience bow before it. The historical power of the prophets is exhausted neither by Judaism nor by Christianity, and they hold a reserve force for the benefit of the coming century. The twentieth century is better prepared than the nineteen preceding it, to understand them.[34]

Hoping that humanity would embrace the prophetic ideals he thought to be the core of a successful modern religion, Darmesteter looked ahead to a time when Judaism, grasping the best of its historical precepts, would serve as the example for all religions to follow. He postulated that "the religion of the 20th century is to be found in the cries of Amos and Lucretius:[35] it will arise out of the fusion of prophecy with science."[36]

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[33]Darmesteter, "Prophets", 43.

[34]ibid., 102.

[35]Darmesteter uses Lucretius, who rallied science against the limitations of ritualistic religion, to balance his notion of Amos, whose social justice agenda would be the new religious ritual.

[36]Darmesteter, "Prophets", 104.

From both Renan and Darmesteter, the liberal Jews in France could gain support for a modern understanding of Judaism. These two "prophetists" taught that "religion is, or should be, the highest expression of science and of the human conscience."[37] They saw that the religious establishment would have to adapt to the progressive ideology that emerged during the 19th century. Renan and Darmesteter observed that the Church, and thus French society as well, had become stagnant in its strict hierarchical authority. As long as French politics were tied to the Church, no independent religious institution would be allowed to exist; this would constitute a threat to the state. It would not be, therefore, the Catholic church, the majority, that would lead French faith into the years ahead.

As Renan and Darmesteter viewed the situation, it would be the Jews, a tiny remnant of a once glorious people, who would, in reclaiming their historical prophetic wisdom, help guide religion for the future. As Hyman Enelow interprets Renan:

> The Jewish people has rendered the greatest service to the world. Joined with different nations, in harmony with the various national units, it will continue to do in the future what it has done in the past. By laboring with the liberal forces in Europe, it will contribute in an eminent way to the social progress of humanity.[38]

The work of these two scholars laid the religious foundation

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[37]Darmesteter, "Religions of the Future", 3.

[38]Enelow, 144.

for the creation of an independent liberal Jewish organization in France. Yet the appearance of a Reform institution could not happen until after the official separation of church and state. This separation did occur in 1905. By that time, the ideological precedents for religious reform augmented the pressure mounted against the traditionalism of French society; in the Jewish community, the emergence of the Union Libérale Israélite would be the direct result of this process.

CHAPTER THREE
The Founding of the Union Libérale Israélite

The Struggle for Consistorial Approval

The inaugural service that opened the liberal synagogue in Paris in 1907 did not mark the beginning of the Union Libérale Israélite. Rather, it was a continuation of the efforts that a liberal group had been making for at least twelve years. As early as 1896, Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn publicly urged the institution of a Sunday lecture series to meet the needs of those who were not able to attend the regular Shabbat services. Several of those involved with the Sunday lectures would emerge as active proponents of the establishment of the Union Libérale.[1] "During the mid-nineties a small circle began to form in Paris, which, after a decade, would emerge as an independent Liberal synagogue."[2] "Unfortunately", according to Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz, who writes on the connection between Zadoc Kahn's efforts and the founding of the Union Libérale, "there isn't a single trace of the existence of this initial group."[3] "But", reports

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[1]For a more complete discussion of the connection of Zadoc Kahn's Sunday sermon series to the founding of the Union Libérale, see Stephen Berkowitz, Sur les traces de l'origine de l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1994). The copy used is an offprint of an article Berkowitz was preparing for HaMevasser, the Union's current periodical, received from the author.

[2]Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity: a History of the Reform Movement in Judaism (Oxford, 1988), 221.

[3]S. Berkowitz, "Sur les traces." The idea that this earlier manifestation of the Union is not documented is confirmed by the research of David Philipson, Michael Meyer, and this author.

Berkowitz, "it seems that the ULI had known a previous life. According to Rabbi Louis-Germain Lévy, a group, under the name of Union Libérale Israélite, was created around 1895 and had begun to study the possibilities of a 'modernization of worship'."[4]

Aside from the account of Kahn's favorable stance toward the Sunday lectures, written records of the activities of the Union Libérale appear only after 1900. In August of that year, the members of the Union petitioned the Paris Consistory for permission to open a private chapel.[5] According to Philipson, this group was led by "Alphonse Pereyra, Theodore Reinach, Salvador Levi, Gaston Bach, P. Sacerdote, Max Frank, Frederic Simon, and Mesdames Eugène Simon, Brandon-Salvador, Anatole Dreyfus, Edgard Hertz, and Heilbroner."[6] In its meeting in January of 1901, the Consistory responded by declaring that it did not have the power "either to authorize or refuse such a request."[7] Obviously, this was not a definitive answer, and served only to set the issue,

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[4]ibid.

[5]L'Univers Israélite, August 6, 1900.

[6]David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism (Cincinnati, 1907), 424. However, no separate reference to the involvement of Pereyra is to be found. On the Union's laity, especially Reinach, see chapter 4.

[7]L'Univers Israélite, January 18, 1901.

temporarily,[8] aside.

From 1901 until 1905, when separation between church and state was achieved, the liberal Jews did not "lack defense and propagation of their ideas-neither via pen nor speech."[9] Berkowitz writes:

> In effect, before opening the actual house of worship, the ULI existed as an association from 1900. At that time, led by Alphonse Pereyra, with the active support of Mrs. Eugène Simon and Marguerite Brandon-Salvador as well as Theodore Reinach, Salvador Lévi and Gaston Bach, the ULI developed quickly and succeeded in attracting a hundred families from Paris and its environs. From 1900 to 1906, the ULI requested, several times, the support of the Consistory to allow them to conduct services and educate the children as one of the consistorial synagogues. Before the Consistory had refused to grant their request, they had hoped for the decision to create an actual synagogue, a step that would be made possible by the 1905 law concerning the separation of church and state.[10]

Though the Consistory tried to quell the efforts of the liberal group, their push toward establishing a "private chapel" for use of the Union reached a high point by 1905. In the autumn of that year, an unsigned and undated document published by the "provisional committee of the liberal Jewish community" was circulated, again proposing the idea to found

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[8]Due to the impending separation between church and state, it appears that the Consistory was insecure in its authority to generate policy innovations. This discussion was tabled because the Consistory did not know how its sanction of the operation of an independent liberal synagogue would reflect on consistorial authority, granted by the state, over the religious life of the Jewish community.

[9]J. Bricout, "Chez les Israélites Français", Revue du Clergé Français, 40 (1908), 283.

[10]S. Berkowitz, "Sur les traces."

an independent liberal synagogue. In it[11], the following defining statements were made:

> We are Jews, for we intend to keep the Jewish doctrines and traditions that have lasting worth; we intend to cultivate the genius of Judaism which is simpler, elevated, human, and divine. We are liberal, for we no longer wish to entertain beliefs or practices which have become incompatible with the legitimate demands of higher thinking and contemporary life. Only the institutions and practice that preserve the virtue of moral and spiritual promotion [will be maintained]. Shabbat and the festivals will be kept, yet without the thousand little prescriptions accumulated via pietistic exaggeration or rabbinic quibbling.[12] As for Shabbat, a Sunday service will be introduced, for those not disposed themselves to the Saturday service, for instruction, edification, and elevation.[13]

The Consistory was concerned that the founding of such an independent entity would create a schism in French Jewry that it could not overcome. Yet they wished to sustain a small liberal group and did not want it to separate from the greater Parisian Jewish community. In a new circular, reprinted in the Univers Israélite on February 23, 1906, the provisional committee specifically expressed that it did not wish to cause the schism feared by the Consistory. After this claim, they forwarded the "general principles that they wished to apply

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[11]Bricout, 287-288.

[12]In his discussion, Bricout indicates that to support this point, the circular later refers to Yoma 85b: "Shabbat was created for humanity, and not humanity for the Shabbat."

[13]The reasons given for a Sunday service and the description of the service that followed is worded in almost the exact terms found elsewhere throughout my research. See also Louis-Germain Lévy, "Raison d'être de L'Union libérale israélite" in Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite, p. 5 and below.

toward realization of their modest[14] reform":

> 1. For Shabbat, a service on Sunday morning is instituted, to offer to those not available on Saturday the occasion for instruction and edification;
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> 2. To reduce the duration of this service to one hour, the prayers and ascents to be for the most part in French. There will be, on certain days under the control of the directing committee, a sermon, entrusted to non-rabbinical[15] orators, conforming to the ancient tradition which merits a place of honor;
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> 3. To render more thorough instruction, better adapted to the results obtained by the modern criticism that only enhances the grandeur and originality of Judaism;
>
> 4. To offer each [individual] complete freedom to follow traditional practices and ceremonies; to better understand that they (traditional practice and belief) neither eclipse nor replace the essentials of the religion that reside in the harmony of collective worship supported by the eagerness of individual moral belief.
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> 5. Ladies, as well as the gentlemen, will be permitted to sing during worship services.
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> 6. As is [customary] in our country, men uncover [their heads] as a mark of respect, this practice will be observed in our Temple.[16]

The listing of these principles is followed by what becomes the second half of the mission statement later published by

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[14]"Modest" is included in the text of February, 1906 to calm the Consistory's concern that the activities proposed by the Union would be radical. In subsequent editions, the term is removed.

[15]In the version prepared the following October, the non-rabbinical orators are to be Jewish, to appease the conservatives within the Consistory. This earlier copy represents the liberals' desire to choose any speakers, even non-Jews, they wished. Additionally, in the October edition, "Union" was changed to "Association Cultuelle", to denote that this group was not in competition with the "legitimate" congregations of the Consistory.

[16]L'Univers Israélite, February 23, 1906. The last two provisions listed here certainly mark the Union's proposed program as distinct from the norms of consistorial Judaism, encouraging both equality of women and reform of Jewish custom.

the Union. In defense of this program, Marguerite Brandon Salvador, a member of the provisional committee, reported to the Univers Israélite that:

> These reforms, about which the liberals are concerned, are not for detachment [of the liberal community] from the orthodox. They do not intend to create their own sanctuaries, and they reserve the right to come, to swell the number of faithful orthodox, to all the services for the major festivals that unite the Jews by one same thought of dutiful memory.[17]

At the rabbinical conference of June 1906, Rabbi Louis-Germain Lévy argued in favor of the position of the Union Libérale in Paris.[18] Lévy, who held a consistorial post in Dijon, was a pro-reform agitator allied to the efforts of the Union. He was able to secure a majority that was favorable to his recognition of the Union's proposed program. Resolutions concerning certain ideas, such as the abolition of references to sacrifice, polygamy, and calendrical and scriptural changes, were left in doubt even after the extensive discussions that were held.[19] However, this relaxed attitude on the part of the rabbinate was significant; it gave new hope to the members of the Union that their request for establishing a permanent liberal congregation might be granted. Accordingly, the provisional committee sent the

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[17]L'Univers Israélite, February 9, 1906.

[18]Lévy's involvement with the practical implementation of reform can be traced to a speech he gave at a conference of liberal Christians the year before. See Meyer, Response, 222.

[19]For a more complete discussion of the 1906 rabbinical conference, see Bricout, 291-292.

following letter to the Consistory:

To Mr. President and Messrs. Members of the Consistory,

Sirs,

We have the honor of asking you to look favorably upon our request for a location, dependent upon your administration, at which the Union Libérale might be able to celebrate a service on Sunday morning from 10 to 11 o'clock.

This location could be, for example, the consistorial room at rue Saint-Georges, or the chapel adjacent to the synagogue on rue de la Victoire.

The service will be officiated by one of the members of the French rabbinate, chosen by the Union Libérale.

The one who takes this position will be given the treatment of rabbi, like that of any others newly beginning the execution of congregational duties.

This Sunday service will be composed of prayers offered in French and Hebrew, of one religious lecture given in French, and religious songs in French.

We hope, sirs, that our request will be favorably welcomed, for we sincerely desire not to be separated from the greater Parisian community that you lead.

If you determine it useful to consider other additional deliberations, we are entirely at your service, but we must insist on obtaining a definite response from you before the end of the present month of December.[20]

We ask that you address the response to Mr. Salvador Lévi, 19 rue Condorcet.

We hope for the assurance of your complete consideration.

For the Union Libéral Israélite de Paris,
The Provisional Committee[21]

An immediate reply, which the committee desired, was not made. A lengthy letter of response from the Consistory was published in the Univers Israélite on March 22, 1907. In it, the Administrative Council, the body authorized to consider

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[20]Now that success seemed imminent, the committee aimed to avoid a repetition of the 1901 decision, the indefinite deferral of their petition.

[21]L'Univers Israélite, January 4, 1907.

such requests, informed the Consistory that "regarding the letter of December 10th, and considering the earlier related circulars, regrettably it is unable to welcome the request of the Union Libérale. This resolution is adopted unanimously."[22]

The Univers Israélite reporter commented that the Consistory felt that:

> the absolute autonomy that the Union libérale is claiming is irreconcilable with the responsibility and authority that rests with the Consistory. It would be preferred to keep quiet this sensitive point so that other groups do not detach themselves from the Consistory and find themselves, like the Union, in such a delicate[23] situation; further, that the various grave modifications that the Union libérale apparently view as the "character of Judaism" not be put forth.[24]

Bricout argues that in the 1901 response, the Consistory "hid behind" the law, because it was afraid to challenge the close relationship between church and state. In 1907, he continues, it hid behind what it saw as "the practices of the majority of members of the Association."[25] The Union reacted without bitterness, but not without sadness. In responding to the Consistory's decision, the members of the Union announced in the Univers Israélite that they merely wished to "effect reform, not provoke revolution."[26]

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[22]L'Univers Israélite, March 22, 1907.

[23]i.e. negative.

[24]ibid.; Bricout 295.

[25]Bricout, 295.

[26]L'Univers Israélite, March 15, 1907.

However, the Administrative Council of the Consistory, noting the Union's patience and perseverance, did not fight against reform *ad infinitum*.[27] It is likely that Chief Rabbi Kahn, who had supported the notion that modifications might assist an organized appeal to the uninvolved, helped to obtain a new, positive decision concerning the Union's request. The Administrative Council had believed that a majority of the "Members of the Association" (i.e. Consistory members) rejected the Union's proposed program. When it became apparent that this majority supported the Union's endeavors, the Consistory gave a different response.

The Council held that the Union would remain responsible for maintaining traditional ritual, without instituting or authorizing any new forms of worship. Nonetheless, the members of the Union finally were given satisfaction. The positive decision was made on March 12th, 1907. The members of the Union wasted no time. They chose a rabbi, and by December of that year, they were ready to open their synagogue at Rue Copernic. At this time, Louis-Germain Lévy left Dijon for Paris to become the rabbi and guiding force behind the Union Libérale Israélite, the first independent reform institution in France.

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[27]I'm unclear as to why they changed their position.

Louis-Germain Lévy, Rabbi of the Union Libérale Israélite

In the second[28] issue of the Rayon, the monthly publication of the Union, the leadership is listed as follows:

M. Salvador Lévi, président
Mme. Brandon-Salvador, vice-président
MM. Charles Kapferer, vice-président
Paul Sacerdote, secrétaire
René Hyman, trésorier
Mmes. Edgard Hirtz
Emile Leven
B.-J. Shoninger
Eugène Simon
MM. Lucien Bach
Max Frank
Le docteur Pierre Kahn
Justin Lévy
Ed. Mamelsdorf
Frédéric Simon
Louis Simon
Rabbin: M. Lévy (Louis-Germain)[29]

This listing gives no distinction to the role played by Rabbi Lévy (1870-1946), who, even in his first five years serving the congregation, had become the most influential personality in the Union. "The real leaders then were Rabbi Louis-Germain Lévy, who managed the congregation since 1907 and the so-called 'assistant preacher' Aimé Palliere."[30]

Lévy, in his adherence to the prophetism of Darmesteter, came to represent liberal Judaism and the thinking of the

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[28]The first edition, published a month earlier, included neither a listing of the leadership nor a mission statement by the Union. These were inserted beginning with the second issue. It is also interesting to note that the Union did not begin publishing its official magazine until almost five years after its founding.

[29]Le Rayon, vol. 1, #2, October 1912, back inside cover

[30]Marcel Greilsammer, letter to the author, August 28, 1994. For more on Palliere and other lay leaders of the Union, see chapter four.

time. The Univers Israélite reported that "the liberal movement in Judaism is a return to the high, grand, magnificent doctrine of the prophets."[31] In describing Lévy, Marcel Greilsammer, a former president of the Union, wrote:

> Rabbi L.G. Lévy had been a graduate of the Paris Rabbinical Seminary and was a consistorial rabbi of the Dijon congregation when he was convinced to join the existing liberal group. He was a Doctor in Philosophy, more rational than mystic and influenced by the scientist (sic) spirit of the beginning of the century. He was learned and very intelligent, but more interested in philosophy and history than in the education of the youth.[32]

In 1904, Lévy wrote Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque: La Religion du XXe Siècle, a book that signified his role as the liberal intellectual among France's rabbis. In a review in the Jewish Quarterly Review, it is said that

> If the bones of French Judaism are dry, he is one of those who will help to breathe the breath of life into them so that they may live. One may not agree with all he says, but one feels better for hearing what he has to say.[33]

The book is divided into two sections, followed by a short conclusion. The first part of the book, "La Religion devant la Science", is Lévy's understanding of the relationship between religion and science. Each, religion and science, has its own appropriate sphere of influence. Science is concerned with understanding the phenomena of nature, and

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[31]L'Univers Israélite, September 22, 1905. For a discussion, se Bricout, 285-286.

[32]Greilsammer, letter to the author.

[33]Jewish Quarterly Review, 1908, 871.

its proofs must be accepted unconditionally. Religion, while it glorifies these phenomena, is not free to pose that a supernatural being can violate the natural laws which have been proven by science. However, current knowledge of science does not necessarily contain all the answers sought by humanity. Science might be able to answer questions of "how" things occur, but not "why."[34]

He continues with a lengthy examination of how morality emerges from the strivings of both science and religion. Lévy believes that life is dependent upon both the "good" and the "true."[35] He completes the first section discussing the nature of God. Lévy admits that one cannot know God unless one is God.[36] Holding a somewhat Maimonidean view, he acknowledges that our understanding of God is only partial, shown in periodic, brief glimpses. Our knowledge of God is limited by our restricted ability to conceive the Divine.[37] God is Spirit, a spontaneously productive activity. After explaining this, Lévy suggests that the human desire to better know the Unknown constitutes religion as "the belief in a superior power, of an essentially ethical nature, with which

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[34]"Quand la science a fini de parler, nous n'avons pas pur autant fini d'interroger. La réponse aux 'comment' ne satisfait pas les 'pourquoi'." Louis-Germain Lévy, Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque, 1904, 13ff.

[35]ibid., 18ff; see also Renan.

[36]Derived from the medieval concept of ijtihad, conjoinment with the Active Intellect.

[37]ibid., 23.

man enters into communion and cooperation for [the goal of] moral behavior."[38]

The second part of the book, "Le Judaïsme devant les affirmations de la Conscience moderne", is a study particularly of Judaism. Lévy states that Judaism is not but *one* religion among the others, but *the* religion.[39] He specifically defines this to be liberal Judaism, being in essence the moral urgings of the prophets in concert with the best thought from throughout history.[40]

He then offers a fairly detailed synopsis of his conception of proper modern liberal Judaism. After having asserted that "the character of modern conscience is the [recognition of the] horror of superstition,"[41] Lévy shares this view:

> Judaism, that which we French Jews of the twentieth century conceive, is in no way contrary to even one of the legitimate demands of modern conscience, yet it [also] responds in a more satisfactory manner. Religion without mystery, without revealed dogma, without official theology, without priests, opposed to all superstition, and thirsty for clear knowledge, accepts the criticism of the truth shown by illumination to be actual truth; Judaism applauds scientific effort and fully accepts its proven results.[42]

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[38]ibid., 27ff.

[39]ibid., 64.

[40]ibid., 35-36.

[41]ibid., 38.

[42]ibid., 63-64. The supporting arguments are rich with quotations from the traditional literature, showing Lévy's strong command of it.

In his conclusion, Lévy bolsters his position by tying it to the thought of Renan and Darmesteter. According to Renan, Lévy reminds the reader, "Judaism, which served in the past, will serve again in the future."[43] This Judaism that will serve in the future is none other than that conceived by Darmesteter, "born out of the fusion of prophetism and science."[44]

To understand Lévy's personal religious views, it is helpful to study a work that was written for a more popular audience. In "Raison d'être de l'Union libérale israélite", he gives more insight into his own philosophy, and presumably into how he would guide the Union.[45]

He begins the piece with an exposition of his opinion of tradition:

> Tradition is eminently respectable in representing a long effort of reflection, appropriation, struggle, and tests. It is sacred because it contributes to human experiences and divine revelations.
>
> However, tradition shows that what it offers to us did not always exist.[46] it [continually] replaces previous traditions: Abraham broke with the traditions

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[43]ibid., 69.

[44]Lévy believed this so strongly that the quote was put on the cover of the book. Much of Lévy's thought, as proposed in Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque, is repeated in two later works. See "Je pense, donc je crois", Trois Entretiens (Paris, 1910), and La Religion Moderne (Paris, 1913); both emerged well after Lévy had begun his duties with the Union Libérale.

[45]"Raison d'être de l'Union libérale israélite" originally appeared in an early issue of le Rayon. It was later reprinted in Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite, May-June 1920. Pagination is cited from the latter edition.

[46]And is therefore not eternal.

> of his idolatrous fathers, the prophets of Israel were reformers, the rabbis of the Talmud supplied their share of innovations.[47]

He shows this trend to be the precursor to modern reform, and that liberal Judaism flows directly out of the tradition:

> Liberal Judaism holds equally sacred the quest for truth and moral enthusiasm; it intends to combine the illumination of intelligence with the power of the heart. It wants to join the true, the beautiful, and the good, but not in a state of abstract ideas-for this would be a false statement; it wishes for a state of ideas excited and living, colorful, rekindling and touching all the powers of the soul.
>
> However, it needs an authority[48] that controls and determines the ideas, sentiments, aspirations and intuitions. It is to reason that this role has been allotted; the last word is left to it. We repel error, extravagance, fantasy, superstition, and morbid mysticism.[49]

After this explication of liberal Judaism, Lévy proceeds with a discussion of the difference between "content" and "form" in a religious context. He claims that in terms of content, there are certain beliefs that Jews can no longer accept. These include the idea that creation had a fixed date; sinaitic revelation; miracles; and divine and scriptural authority. He again states that God cannot abrogate the laws of nature, and that the Bible is a collection of reflections and human experience.

Regarding form, he allows for separation between one's

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[47]Lévy, "Raison d'être", 3.

[48]The French "faculté" can be rendered as authority, power, decisor, etc. Lévy intends to show this authority in liberal Judaism to be reason, not the hierarchical "rabbinical authority" which was traditionally understood by the consistory.

[49]Lévy, "Raison d'être", 4.

public and private practice.

> For the latter, we allow for the judgement and conscience of each to follow or not follow the established customs and rites. We are not preoccupied with the public cult, and are inspired both by Jewish genius and contemporary demands.[50]

Lévy also includes his conception of the human relationship with God. In commenting on "I am what I shall be", he suggests that "I am" a God who does not wish for worship out of fear or from calculation, but rather out of love. Lévy cites a statement attributed to Rabbi Simon in the Zohar: "Lord, I do not speak like one of your prophets - when I hear your voice I am seized with fear." He responds to the Zohar stating "now is no longer a time for fear, but one for love."[51]

His personal views end with a return to discussion of Jewish morality. It is his insistence on the power and importance of Jewish morality that brings him to the fore of the liberal movement, and to the leadership of the Union Libérale. Lévy writes that "Jewish morality is the most highly dignified among civilized people."[52] He echoes the tone of the earlier passage concerning God, saying that though it is one's duty to obey God, "it is not because He is stronger, but because He is the living law of Goodness."[53]

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[50]ibid., 5.

[51]ibid., 6-7.

[52]ibid., 7.

[53]ibid.

In conclusion, Lévy ties his personal ideology to his mission for the Union Libérale:

> It is for the development of this messianic era, of the city of freedom, justice, dignity and concord, that we work. The Union Libérale works among all the ranks, Jews and non-Jews; it welcomes every man as a brother, from wherever he comes; it offers the teachings of frank and clear reason, of living spirit, superior emotion, valiant activity, joy and generosity.[54]

With these sentiments, Lévy accomplishes two objectives. He sets himself apart as a fiercely ardent liberal ideologue, and therefore portrays the Union Libérale as the leading edge in French liberal religion. As well, he discloses his opinions about how the Union should conduct itself and distinguish itself from the rest of French Jewry. Lévy's influence would guide the Union Libérale through its first three decades.

The Inaugural Service at rue Copernic

Many of those who wished to break from the Consistory's firm control over Jewish ritual practice were the same people who had been involved in the Sunday lecture series initiated by Chief Rabbi Kahn. Viewed by the participants to be in line with the intellectual atmosphere that they believed had dominated fin-de-siècle religion, the lectures were among the only liberal innovations allowed by the Consistory during the years directly preceding the separation of church and state in France. In fact, Marguerite Brandon-Salvador, a member of the Union's provisional committee, published a letter in the

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[54]ibid., 8.

Univers Israélite that declared that both Catholicism and Judaism trailed the Protestant Church in the implementation of liberal policies.

She notes especially the lack of effort that had been made to address the fact that many French people were turning away from their ancestral faiths. She writes that:

> Judaism and Catholicism are locked into the same orthodoxy; but Protestantism, on the contrary, has suddenly appeared as a liberal group that for forty years has, without being held back by a single difficulty, endeavored to give rapid expansion to religious thought.[55]

In the letter, she also points to Pastor Wagner, a Protestant minister who was likely supportive of the efforts of the Union Libérale, as an appropriate example of a modern liberal clergyman.

This influence of liberal Protestantism is a theme that extends through the initial history of the Union. It is picked up prominently in one of the earliest issues of the Rayon. In the January 1913 edition, a large section of a circular entitled "The Liberal Protestant Church of Brussels" is reprinted. It argues that "modern religion should be derived from liberal thought", and that this liberal religion would be "uplifting of the spirit and heart." In its conclusion, the article states that liberal religion holds "Nation higher than the Individual; Humanity above the Nation;

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[55]L'Univers Israélite, April 5, 1907. For more on Brandon-Salvador's role with the Union Libérale, see chapter 5.

the Universe above Humanity; and above all, the Supreme One."[56]

It is in this light that the inaugural service of the Union's synagogue at rue Copernic becomes more than a celebration of its establishment. It is the first opportunity for the members of the Union, led by Rabbi Lévy, to enact the convictions that they had used to support their struggle for official recognition. Moreover, the dedication ceremony of December 1, 1907 can be examined as the first example of the liturgy the Union would create and employ.

The cover of the service booklet, which was disseminated prior to the day of the ceremony, includes a quote from Numbers, "O God, the God of the Breath of all Flesh."[57] This set the reverential tone for the service. Yet even before the doors of the sanctuary would be opened, the respectful attitude that was intended was criticized. The cover also advertised the date of the event, "the Sunday of Hanukkah, the 1st of December, 1907."[58] In the Univers Israélite that was published just before the opening exercises at rue Copernic, an editorial was printed that outlined the upcoming program to commence the activities of the Union at that location. A main

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[56]Le Rayon, vol. 1, #5 (January 1913), 19. It is interesting to note that the members of the Union preferred turning to the liberal Protestants of Brussels for support of their agenda, rather than to the liberal Jews of Germany.

[57]Office d'inauguration du temple de L'Union libérale israélite (Paris, 1907), front cover.

[58]ibid.

point of denigration is made out of that one line, as the editor claims that "there are two Sundays in Hanukkah this year. How are we to know which they mean?"[59] The Univers Israélite attempted to point out the ignorance of Judaism displayed by the members of the Union. From the outset, tension would surround the activities of the Union.

The service itself,[60] which began at 10:30 in the morning, was introduced by an organ prelude.[61] Rabbi Lévy opened the worship proclaiming "in opening this house of prayer, our primary thought goes to God who has allowed us to attain this hour of joy and this day of festivity."[62] He then led the congregation in reciting *shehekhianu*. The choir, under the direction of Emile Chelli, intoned the "*Boroukh habô*" of Samuel David. Lévy lit the eternal light, accompanied by a thematic interpretation of Genesis 1:3, "let there be light."

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[59]L'Univers Israélite, November 29, 1907. The French Jewish press, mainly an agent of the Consistory, customarily was unkind to the efforts of the Union. A better example may be that it did not include coverage of the inaugural service in a subsequent issue. After complaint by the Union's leadership, the editor replied two weeks later that "we have taken note and consider this matter closed."

[60]The service was based on those of the Reform Congregation of Berlin and the Jewish Religious Union of London. See Meyer, Response, 223.

[61]The use of the organ itself might be seen as a strictly reform practice, yet I have been assured that "even the traditional synagogues, all but the most orthodox, used it until 1968." Marcel Greilsammer, letter to the author, August 28, 1994.

[62]Office d'inauguration, 3.

He explained to the congregation that the eternal light held multiple meanings for them:

> It represents the sovereign wisdom that guides the world and is completely enlightened.
> It represents the people Israel, who, over the course of its history, has kindled the sacred fire of human thought and who, along the path of the ages and as a reward for its great suffering, has maintained the high and pure doctrine of truth.
> This light announces the future era, in which all darkness will dissipate, when superstitions shall disappear, and when the joy of reciprocal recognition and brotherly tenderness will reign.[63]

After completing the lighting ceremony, the service continued with passages taken from the congregation's prayerbook. The specific readings used are listed on the top of page 6 of the service booklet, with the accompanying note: "the pages indicated are from the prayerbook of the Union libérale israélite." This is the earliest reference to the Union's Des Ailes à la Terre.[64]

The following readings were included at this point in the service: Solomon's prayer upon opening the Temple in Jerusalem, found in I Kings, chapter 8; the passage *barukh she'amar*,[65] rendered into French; "*yehi kavod adonai...*", also rendered into French, as "Eternelle est la gloire du

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[63]ibid., 4.

[64]ibid., 6. The earliest independent reference to the Union's prayerbook is found in Bricout, 299. By matching the pagination listed in the Office d'inauguration with the copy of Des Ailes à la Terre found in the Hebrew Union College library, one can verify that it is the same volume as was used in 1907. For discussion of Des Ailes à la Terre, see Chapter 4.

[65]When transliterated in the Office d'inauguration, the Hebrew is rendered in the ashkenazic pronunciation.

Seigneur qui se complaît en ses creatures"; the *barekhu* and a short form of *kedushah* in both Hebrew and French; the words *ahavah rabbah ahavtanu* in Hebrew introduce a French version of the passage, completed by the Hebrew blessing, *barukh ata adonai haboher b'amo yisrael b'ahavah; shema* and *v'ahavta* in both Hebrew and French. The Torah was taken from the ark accompanied by the music of Samuel David, and a portion from the week's portion, *vayeshev*, Genesis 40:1-15,[66] was read. This part of the service was concluded with prayers for the community, the republic, and humanity, the return of the Torah to the ark, and the music of Naumbourg.

The highlight of the day's event, a lengthy discourse by Rabbi Lévy,[67] came after the Torah reading. In it, Lévy returned to familiar motifs, particularly the compatibility of modern religion with the advances of scientific discovery. Not only his messages had a familiar sound to them. Much of his actual wording is taken from his previous works on the subject, mainly Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque. But his point seems to be somewhat deeper on this occasion. More than putting forward the grandness of liberal religion, Lévy wishes to make a practical defense for the institution he now heads, and those who have joined him in its operation. In his

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[66]These verses are the account of Joseph's first dream interpretation while in prison in Egypt.

[67]Office d'inauguration, 6-22. The text of the sermon is introduced in the service booklet by the same quote from the Zohar concerning Rabbi Simon as discussed above.

conclusion, he again explains that "we are Jews...we are liberals...and we are French",[68] asserting that there is no contradiction among these traits which are to be found in each of the Union's members.

Lévy concluded his remarks with the priestly benediction. The choir launched into Psalm 118:1-4,[69] in a version written by Mr. Chelli, its director. The congregation recited "Eternal, our God, implant in all Your creatures the respect for Your Name." The traditional melody for *Adonai Malach* was sung, and *kaddish* was recited. Thus concluded the first liberal worship service conducted by the Union Libérale.

The Issues that Concerned the Union Libérale Israélite

No analysis of the establishment of the Union Libérale as an independent institution would be complete without a discussion of the issues that it viewed as important. From an examination of the early series[70] of the Rayon, it is possible to glean what was most important to the members of the Union in its earliest stage. There seem to be five categories of concerns, and they reflect both the endeavors

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[68]ibid., 21-22. Compare this to the circular of autumn 1905 and the later "Raison d'être." Much of the material used in defense of the Union is repeated throughout the early period.

[69]The familiar refrain of the Hallel.

[70]The "early series" refers to the issues of the Rayon that were published from 1912-1914, before an eight-year hiatus. Most of the material discussed here is taken from the first year. For a discussion of the later series of the Rayon, see chapter 5.

that the Union undertook and the intellectual pursuits that were significant to the membership.

The first category includes matters specific to the Union Libérale. In October of 1913, Rabbi Lévy wrote of "a new stage for the Union", in celebration of its fifth anniversary. On their efforts, he quotes Proverbs 11:24: "the one who gives freely is enriched."[71] The original version of "Raison d'être" is published in January 1913, expounding the philosophy and program of the Union. It is consistent with the Union's earlier proposals of its aims for liberal Jewish activity. However, it was able to include the insight that the goals of the Union were to be met in the future, but that the program was currently in operation. In April of 1913, Salvador Lévi, the Union president, responded to an article that appeared in the Univers Israélite covering the Union's conference on Spinoza. In its coverage, the Univers made disparaging remarks about Spinoza and connected him to the Union Libérale.[72]

The second category dealt with liberal Judaism around the world. It included an article entitled "sur le judaïsme libéral", which discussed historical precedents for reform attitudes;[73] "les débuts du judaïsme réformé en Allemagne",

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[71]Le Rayon, volume 1, #2 (October 1912), 3.

[72]ibid., #8 (April 1913), 18.

[73]ibid., #4 (December 1912) 5.

a history of early reform efforts in Germany;[74] "Reform Judaism in America", a reprint of an article by Hyman Enelow on early Reform history in the United States.[75] An excerpt from Geiger's Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte, accompanied by a claim that Geiger was "one of the most ardent champions of Jewish Reform of his time", served as a highlight of the Union's attempt to link itself to the established Reform community.[76] "Voix libérales", a review of a liberal rabbinical conference in Posen,[77] was used to demonstrate a alliance with the intellectual activity of that community.

The third category was that of general Judaism, ranging from the educational value of the Bible to essays on Yom Kippur, the pilgrimage festivals, and the delineation between halakhah and aggadah.[78] This is closely related to the fourth category, that of general Jewish history and affairs. Aside from articles and essays about such topics as the "history of the Marranos"[79] and "Jewish and Moslem Calendars",[80] this category also includes material about

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[74]ibid., #9 (May 1913), 21.

[75]ibid., #10 (June 1913), 9.

[76]ibid., #8 (April 1913), 4.

[77]ibid., #7 (March 1913), 1-7. One of the earliest attempts to connect to a liberal Jewish community outside of Paris.

[78]ibid., #10 (June 1913), 1-9; #1 (September 1912), 5; #6 (February 1913), 7-13; #3 (November 1912), 5.

[79]ibid., #4 (December 1912), 12-15.

[80]ibid., #8 (April 1913), 11.

problems faced by the Jewish community, both locally and abroad. In the first issue, an article was written about actions to be taken concerning the protection and welfare of young people who come to Paris unaccompanied by adult supervision.[81] Soon thereafter, the danger to Jewish families posed by devil worshippers is exposed, explaining "their confused religion is a melange of Christianity, Islam and Judaism", and only can bring harm to its adherents.[82] A recurring theme that is treated through the first years of the Union's activities is the ritual murder accusations made against the Jews. Prompted by the Beilis case in Russia, the Union endeavored to cover the most recent news about the plight of the accused. By translating the work of non-French writers about the subject, the Union focused a great deal of energy on this issue, as well as others that endangered the greater Jewish world.

The fifth category should not be surprising. It displays the Union's interest in general thought and philosophy. Under this heading could be included articles written about the general liberal movement,[83] the moral unity of religions,[84] and the "beautiful and the religious."[85] Yet it was not

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[81]ibid., #1 (September 1912), 18.

[82]ibid., #2 (October 1912), 17.

[83]ibid., #5 (January 1913), 16-20.

[84]ibid., #7 (March 1913), 1-5.

[85]ibid., #2 (October 1912), 4.

limited to these themes, which would be natural points of interest for a liberal religious organization. Nor did the members of the Union confine themselves to consideration of Western ideas. The best illustration of this is an article published in the third issue of the Rayon on the Chinese doctrine of Tao.[86]

Two other areas are contained within each issue of the Rayon during its first year of publication. One is that each month, in the section "Nouvelles", an overview of the major activities of the liberal communities around the Jewish world is given. Additionally, the addresses of contact people in regions with smaller Jewish populations are listed. The other feature that appears regularly is a set of book reviews. The books reviewed range from essays on Jewish life and customs to general religious history and philosophy to discourses on morality and ethics. It is yet another contribution that the members of the Union made to their continued growth as a liberal intellectual society.

The prophets, as the liberal Jews of France learned from Renan and Darmesteter and received as interpreted by Lévy, represented the rule of morality and ethical behavior as always validated by the progress of scientific inquiry. In moving toward the establishment of their institution, the members of the Union Libérale leaned upon the principles they

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[86]ibid., #3 (November 1912), 20-22.

had gained from the liberal religious teachings of the 19th century. In inaugurating their synagogue and celebrating the founding of their organization as an independent liberal religious institution, they repeated the very words they had used in arguing for their recognition. Originallly, they were content to make use of the same arguments and same language that had launched their efforts. But to sustain their fledgling movement, they would need to create their own design, without the assistance of the greater Parisian Jewish community. Their own leaders, their own liturgy, their own educational system, and their own intellectual program would be needed to secure the Union's future, and take the founding members beyond their initial accomplishment.

CHAPTER FOUR
The Early History of the Union Libérale Israélite

After its founding, the Union Libérale's early history was made up of several components. Of them, none were more important than the involvement and significance of the lay leadership, the liturgy that was used, and the intellectual life that was fostered. An examination of these areas is necessary to understand fully the accomplishments of the Union during its first years.

Lay Leadership

The initial lay leaders of the Union Libérale were listed on the back inside cover of the second issue of Le Rayon.[1] Of the sixteen people mentioned, only one, Marguerite Brandon-Salvador, is among the most interesting and meaningful cases which demand inspection.[2] Another two such instances, Aimé Pallière and Theodore Reinach, are never included in listings of the committee of directors. Each of these three, Brandon-Salvador, Pallière and Reinach, symbolize novel aspects of the Union's practices concerning its membership and direction.

Brandon-Salvador had encouraged the establishment of an independent liberal Jewish institution since Zadoc Kahn's efforts to initiate a Sunday lecture series. Having been

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[1] Le Rayon, volume 1, #2 (October 1912).

[2] Certainly, others, especially Salvador Lévi, the Union's president, were important in the early stages of the Union's growth and development. However, their inclusion did not signify any innovations in involvement in Jewish organizational life.

involved in the birth of the Union from the mid-1890's, she represented two beliefs held by the Union's adherents. First, she was an educated and committed woman, and symbolized the egalitarian aspect of modern liberal religion. From the time of the Union's earliest stirrings, traditional elements within the consistory were wary of the involvement of women in the Union's activities. Yet, women such as Brandon-Salvador became active, vocal participants on behalf of the Union's founding and early activity.[3]

Secondly, she belonged to a Jewishly knowledgeable laity, whose intellectual and spiritual needs had not been met via the conventional routes preserved by the consistory. The Union would reach out to those disaffected by the standing Jewish community, attempting to revitalize their understanding of Judaism and how it could become relevant once again in their lives. Accordingly, Brandon-Salvador had proven her intellectual worth in publishing A travers les Moissons, a book in which she compiled readings from the Bible, Talmud, and medieval Jewish sources. She then divided them thematically, assigning one to each day of the standard calendar.[4] Her example was held up by the Union as demonstrating its awareness of the woman's role in modern

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[3]See, for example, her letter to the Univers Israélite, April 5, 1907.

[4]This accomplishment was held in such high esteem that after its founding, the Union Libérale sold her book along with the major pieces written by Rabbi Lévy, the work of Reinach, as well as the Union's own liturgy.

liberal religious activity. The Union also attracted non-Jews who showed an interest in Judaism. The most celebrated example of this is the case of Aimé Pallière. Pallière (1875-1949) was born into the intensely Catholic atmosphere of Lyons, and dedicated himself early on to the priesthood. Yet, also at an early age, he was intrigued by Judaism, mainly due to his study of the Hebrew Bible.

At the age of twenty, he came under the influence of Rabbi Elijah Benamozegh of Livorno, who remained somewhat of a spiritual master for Pallière throughout his life. He wished to convert to Judaism. However, in his correspondence with Pallière, Benamozegh told him

> it is a privilege to enter into the Synagog: 'if you desire at every cost, that it should be so, if no argument to the contrary can swerve you, then welcome in the name of God. *Benedictus qui venit in nomine domini.*' But know well, read this word and meditate thereon, reread it again, meditate again, for it holds for you the key to the entire religious question: to be at one with truth, in the grace of our God, to belong to the true religion. You need not embrace Judaism in the way you think of doing, I mean by submitting to the yoke of our Law.[5]

Benamozegh continued, explaining that the proper course to follow

was to "return to the ancient principle":

> Mosaism for the Jews, and the religion of the patriarchs for the Gentiles. And as this religion whose triumph the patriarch foretold for Messianic times, as the religion of humanity converted to the worship of the true God, is no other than *Noachism*...[6]

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[5]Aimé Pallière, The Unknown Sanctuary (New York, 1928), 134.

[6]ibid., 135.

Therefore, Pallière was convinced not to convert, but remain a "Noahide", who, after "learning Jewish Scripture and Talmud, could act as a 'messenger' of Judaism."[7]

In reflecting upon Pallière's involvement with the Union, Marcel Greilsammer wrote

> ...he was accepted as a writer and lecturer even by traditional rabbis, but the Union Libérale was the only congregation which admitted him as a preacher in its synagogue, a role which he fulfilled from 1922 to 1939. He was as mystic as Rabbi Lévy was rational; nevertheless, they cooperated in the leadership of the Congregation. Pallière was an excellent speaker and his sermons of *neila* - the anniversary of his discovery of Judaism, were famous. He also took care of the Talmud Tora and of the liturgical music.[8]

Pallière chronicled his journey from Catholicism to the brink of Judaism in Le sanctuaire inconnu. An English edition was published under the title The Unknown Sanctuary.[9] In it, Pallière maintained an appreciative attitude toward the church, even though he had separated from it years earlier. However, he refused to admit that Judaism was wrong in continuing its hope for the coming of the Messianic era, rather than accepting that it had been realized previously in the person of Jesus. His message was one for both Christians and Jews: for Christians, he reminded them of their roots in

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[7]Marcel Greilsammer, letter to the author, August 28, 1994.

[8]ibid.

[9]Aimé Pallière, The Unknown Sanctuary (New York, 1928). The English edition, translated by Louise Waterman Wise, the wife of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, was published two years after the original. The book itself is a rather dry account of Pallière's thoughts about his spiritual journey, and offers little on his connection to the Union Libérale.

the prophetic ideals of Judaism; for Jews, he kept them aware of their messianic mission. For the Union Libérale, Pallière's work was significant in that he synthesized, under the auspices of religious progress, the eternal values of Judaism with the realities of life in a modern, non-Jewish world.

Theodore Reinach (1860-1928) represented something totally different for the Union Libérale than did either Brandon-Salvador or Pallière. Whereas both Brandon-Salvador and Pallère signified the Union's attempt to bring in elements not generally associated with the leadership of a Jewish religious organization, Reinach indicated the Union's need to prove its legitimacy by involving members who were accepted outside the small realm of French liberal Judaism.

Reinach, along with his brothers Joseph and Solomon, came to national prominence as a pro-Dreyfus activist.[10] His legal studies were crowned by an honors graduation from law school, after which he was accepted to the bar of the Court of Appeals. Yet rather than devote himself to the law, he continued with study of science and history. By 1909, Reinach was elected to the French Academy. He also gained acceptance into many other scholarly societies. After a stint as an artillery commander during World War I, the French government sent him to the United States to lecture on behalf of the

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[10]His Histoire sommaire de l'affaire Dreyfus, first published in 1904, is somewhat of a first-hand account of the proceedings.

Allied powers.

His academic pursuits also covered various areas of Judaism and Jewish life. In 1884, he published Histoire des Israélites depuis leur dispersion,[11] which went through several editions. His contributions to Jewish knowledge included encyclopedia articles on such thinkers as Alexander Kohut, Henri Weil, and Theodor Gomperz. He was one of the founders of the Société des Études Juives, and was published regularly in its review. Yet none of these proved to be as important as his Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaisme.[12] This compilation of the contributions of ancient authors concerning Judaism remained useful to scholars and students for many years after Reinach's death.

Reinach also served as a lay religious ideologue for the Union Libérale. He held a strong belief in the future of Judaism, combined with the necessity of liberal reform. He believed that Judaism and Christianity, in order to progress, needed to move beyond their historical animosity.[13] However, he did not see that the two could merge. His understanding of the differences among the various religions, even the liberal ones, is outlined clearly in "The Problem of Universal

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[11]This work, too, was later distributed by the Union.

[12]Published in Paris, 1895.

[13]Some accused him of supporting complete assimilation.

Religion."[14]

Reinach divides human spiritual activity into two categories. One is the area of "receptive" knowledge, including the fields of physics and geometry. These are the areas in which human growth is gained by greater observation of external material. The other category is that of "creative" activity, including art and human rights. These are the areas in which progress is achieved through the ever-increasing abilities of human reflection and ingenuity. Religion, Reinach says, is creative, not receptive.[15]

Religion itself is broken into three component parts: dogma, worship, and morality. "Dogma", according to Reinach's explanation, entails the expression of religious truths, without the interference of opinion, faith, or hope. "Worship" is made up of the rituals involved in communicating with God. In ritual, religion is elevated to an art, and all but rejects universality.[16] "Religious morality", customarily, Reinach reminds his listeners, is founded on revelation. An "inspired book" is what Reinach would classify

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[14]This short essay, delivered at the Congress of Religious Progress held in Paris from July 16-21, 1913, was reprinted in le Rayon, volume 1, #12 (October 1913), 3-6. The Congress also heard addresses given by Rabbi Lévy and Stephen S. Wise.

[15]It is interesting to note that he states here that religion comes from within the human spirit, and not from some outside source, such as God.

[16]I think Reinach comes to this conclusion because the methods he deems to be communication with God are highly exclusive, if not in themselves, in how they are used.

as revelation. Morality seeks out justification for conformity to certain fundamentals of human behavior, to human social uniformity. Real religious morality, therefore, is particularistic, for, in each religion, it is dominated by a unique set of religious concepts.

Contributions from each of these three areas make up a specific religion. Because the three components can vary widely from one religion to another, Reinach concluded that one universal religion that satisfied the needs of each individual would never come into being. The future of religions will not be found in some artificial unity concocted out of them, but rather in greater attempts at harmony among them.

In such a way, Reinach not only advanced his notion of progressive religions,[17] but also made a statement for the direction of the Union. He showed that a realignment of religious priorities was necessary for Judaism, or any religion, to make healthy progress. However, for Judaism, and the Union Libérale in particular, this entailed neither the complete abdication of Jewish traditions, nor substituting other religious practices for them.

Reinach's influence on the early history of the Union can be recognized in that he was chosen to speak, along with Rabbi Lévy, at the commemoration of the Union's tenth anniversary.

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[17]Whereas Renan, Darmesteter, and even Lévy had referred to Judaism as the root of the future religion, Reinach mentions Judaism as but one of the future religions.

On December 2, 1917,[18] the members of the Union gathered to celebrate their first decade of success. They were treated to a sermon by Rabbi Lévy, entitled "Cherchez-moi et vous vivrez",[19] as well as the address by Reinach. But rather than reflect upon the achievements of the Union over its first ten years, Reinach uses the opportunity to examine the state of mind that has guided his fellow members over that time.

He begins, while marvelling at the great growth the Union has enjoyed, by claiming that the Union's success proves itself as the realization of the prophetic aspiration to create a liberal Jewish presence in the modern world. After praising both the efforts of Rabbi Lévy and the "selflessness of Salvador Lévi (the Union's president), who has supported the rabbi's pastoral functions with great zeal",[20] Reinach asked the question to which he would dedicate most of his essay. He asked "have we been revolutionaries or aristocrats?"

> If the Union has been revolutionary, it is because it has taken the best models from the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, Jewish philosophy - we have taken their wisdom and profound thought, and applied them in a modern context.
>
> If the Union has been aristocratic, it has been for a new type of aristocracy. These are aristocrats who, in

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[18]In keeping with the Union's ideology, which, originating with Darmesteter, held that Judaism was not a nationalist sentiment, no mention of Zionism is made throughout the event, even though the Balfour Declaration was issued but a month earlier.

[19]"Seek Me that you shall live"

[20]Theodore Reinach, "Ce que nous sommes", Dixième anniversaire de la fondation de l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1917), 4.

> reclaiming the ideals of the prophets, create communion between the rich and the poor, the wise and the simple, those who are completely faithful, and those "proselytes at the gate."
>
> We are neither. We are enlightened and reflective traditionalists, who are not content to rest on the merit of having inherited Judaism, but whose destiny it is to evolve in applying Judaism to the conditions of higher thought and modern civilization.[21]

He continues, restating that the members of the Union have always been concerned with both scientific and historical truth, and how they relate in fostering religious moral truth. He asserts that modern Jews can use traditional literature to gain some historical truth, as well as later, critical material for insights into scientific truth about religion.[22]

Acknowledging that the forces of enlightenment have always battled the forces of darkness and ignorance, Reinach states that it is by means of moral action that humanity overcomes the dark. Even worship itself is for the purpose of moral and intellectual elevation, and not for reenactment of a long-dead national drama. By striving for greater personal morality and understanding, people can bring themselves into closer proximity with the Divine.

This, Reinach concludes, was the presiding spirit behind the creation of the Union Libérale:

> to tear down barriers, eliminate all misunderstandings that serve to separate the enlightened Israelite and the French patriot of the 20th century. To definitively reconcile one's attachment to Judaism (as one's religion)

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[21]ibid., 5.

[22]Reinach juxtaposes material from Mekhilta with passages from Darmesteter as an example of such synthesis of sources.

> with one's attachment to France and French language (one's nation).[23]

He finishes his address by proclaiming that "our young community, at once very Jewish and very French, is fortunate to be both."[24] In this one last statement, Reinach not only gives voice to the non-Zionist sentiment that prevailed in Reform Judaism of the time, but also expresses the patriotic attitude that Jews had adopted toward the various countries in which they lived, especially during the war.

Early Liturgy

In his discussion of the Liberal Jewish liturgy that developed in France, Jakob J. Petuchowski wrote:

> the Union Libérale Israélite was founded in Paris, in 1903.[25] Its aims and objectives included the holding of "a service of one hour's duration, including a sermon, every Saturday and Sunday morning, from ten to eleven o'clock" as well as the provision that "the principal Hebrew prayers (for example, the *Shema* and the *Kedushah*) shall be retained; the others shall be read in French." The prayerbook which appeared ten years later, entitled *Des Ailes à la Terre*, was undoubtedly designed for such a type of service.[26]

Though it can be said that Petuchowski was correct in his judgement concerning the purpose of the Union's initial prayerbook, his conclusion that Des Ailes à la Terre wasn't

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[23]ibid., 11.

[24]ibid., 11.

[25]Petuchowski took the dates, as well as the Union's statement of objectives, from Philipson's The Reform Movement in Judaism.

[26]Jakob J. Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform in Europe (New York, 1968), 77.

published until 1913[27] is inaccurate. Meyer mentions that the first known independent reference to Des Ailes was made in 1908, in J. Bricout, "Chez les Israélites Français", Revue du Clergé Français, 40 (1908).[28] Further, it was discussed above[29] that the Office d'inauguration refers to the Union's prayerbook, using it for the body of prayers included in the opening ceremony.

As mentioned earlier, Des Ailes was based, at least in part, on the prayerbook of the Jewish Religious Union of London.[30] It begins with a section entitled "Prières Introductives",[31] which is made up of several traditional passages in both French and Hebrew. This section also includes *elohai neshamah*, in Hebrew with a French rendering; the first line of *vihi ratzon* followed by a French adaptation; a French translation of *barukh she-amar*; and a French version of *nishmat kol-chai*. This initial segment of the book finishes with *av ha-rachamim*, in Hebrew with a French interlinear translation.

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[27]ibid., 15; 77; 236.

[28]Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism, 446, note 146.

[29]See Chapter Three, "The Inaugural Service at rue Copernic."

[30]See A Selection of Prayers, Psalms and Other Scriptural Passages, and Hymns for use at the Services of the Jewish Religious Union, London (London, 1903).

[31]Des Ailes à la Terre (Paris, [1907]), 1ff.

"Hymnes et Exhortations"[32] begins with *adon olam*, which is the only selection given in Hebrew in the second section. Following, fifty assorted psalms are printed, suggesting that a variety be chosen for different services; after the psalms, twenty biblical passages and one from *mekhilta* are inserted, seemingly for the same purpose of choice.

The third portion of Des Ailes is entitled "Plein-Office",[33] and contains the weekday service. It begins with a French version of *yehi kavod*, followed by *barekhu*. Petuchowski notes that

> in addition to the standard response to the *barekhu*, this prayerbook also provides fragments of the prayer recited silently in the traditional service while the cantor chants *barekhu*. In this, the French prayerbook is rather unique among Reform liturgies.[34]

The *kedushah* is offered as the final part of a French version of *yotzer*, with the congregational responses given in both French and Hebrew. A vernacular rendition of *ahavah rabbah* is introduced by the first three Hebrew words of that prayer, and concluded with the Hebrew benediction. The first paragraph of the *shema, mi chamocha,* and *tzur yisrael* are given next. These three passages are produced in both French and Hebrew, in a linear fashion.

The *amidah* is also provided in both French and Hebrew. The first nine prayers of the traditional format are

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[32]ibid., 8ff.

[33]ibid., 78ff.

[34]Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform, 78.

preserved, while the tenth through seventeenth are deleted entirely. This version of the *amidah* ends with *elohai, n'tzor l'shoni mera*, the standard meditation following the eighteenth benediction. "The Torah Service, which follows, retains the traditional pattern."[35]

The fourth section of the book contains "Prières Finales",[36] concluding prayers used for the weekday, Shabbat, and Sunday morning services. It includes *hashkivenu, yisrael nosha, uv'chen ten pachdecha,* and *alenu*, each introduced by its initial Hebrew phrase; the body of each, however, is a French paraphrase, generally turning away from the particularism of the traditional text.[37] This section concludes with the traditional *kaddish*, in both Aramaic and French, with a complete Ashkenazic transliteration.

The next portion of the book is dedicated to the service for Shabbat eve,[38] the entirety of which is produced in both French and Hebrew. It opens with an excerpt from Psalm 29, rendered as "the Lord give us strength, and grant us the

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[35]ibid.

[36]Des Ailes, 100ff.

[37]For example, see *alenu* on pages 102-103. The French rendition is even more like the "thematic" interpretation of the Union Prayer Book than the traditional translation offered in the Order of Service of the Jewish Religious Union. See A Selection, 32.

[38]Des Ailes, 108ff.

benefits of peace."[39] *Lecha dodi*, minus its third stanza, is offered afterward. Psalms 92 and 93 precede the *barekhu*, followed by *ma'ariv aravim* and *ahavat olam*. *Shema* and *mi chamocha* are printed as in the weekday service, followed by *hashkivenu*[40] and *veshamru*. The seven prayers of the Shabbat *amidah* are given, with only the sixth abbreviated. The service for Shabbat eve is concluded by the *kiddush*, and a note to continue with "Prières Finales."

The service for Shabbat morning is offered in the sixth section of the book.[41] After indicating the use of selections from the first two sections of the book, the service begins with a French version of *nishmat kol-chai*. The traditional pre-*barekhu* verses, including *shochen ad* and *yishtabach* are included. The *shema* and shortened *amidah* are listed as in the Shabbat eve service. Petuchowski believed that

> although the prayerbook does not say so specifically, one would assume that the Torah Service (not reprinted as part of the Sabbath liturgy), as included in the weekday service, followed the Seven Benedictions and preceded the "Concluding Prayers."[42]

Yet, there is no other indication made in the book itself that

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[39]"Que l'Eternel nous donne la vigeur et nous accorde les bienfaits de la paix."

[40]In keeping with the universalistic tendency of Reform liturgy, the concluding benediction of *hashkivenu* is augmented to express "blessed is the Lord who spreads the shelter of peace over us, over all His people Israel, and over all peoples."

[41]Des Ailes, 124ff.

[42]Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform, 79.

this was the case. The final seven pages of Des Ailes[43] consists of "Sentences." These are quotations taken from the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Judah Halevi, Maimonides, and Rashi. In French only, these texts seem to be pithy morsels that the editors wished to include for contemplation by their readers.

The brief discussion of Des Ailes in Meyer's Response to Modernity reports that "it existed in two volumes by the time the Union began to publish its periodical, Le Rayon, in 1912."[44] This notion is corroborated by reviewing the front inside cover of the early series of Le Rayon, which lists the publications available through the Union. "Des Ailes à la Terre (Prières, 2 volumes)" is listed first.[45] No other reference to the second volume is to be found.[46] But there was another liturgical effort that arose out of Des Ailes; it was the Office Spécial pour la Jeunesse, the youth service that the Union created. Just as Des Ailes served the Union's goal for elevation and instruction of the adult membership, the Office Spécial was intended to do so for the children. The development of such a work would be expected, noting the priority the Union placed on children's education in its early

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[43]Des Ailes, 140-146.

[44]Meyer, Response, 446, note 146.

[45]Le Rayon, vol. 1 #2 (October 1912), front inside cover.

[46]This "second volume" might have been a prayerbook for the High Holidays and Festivals.

publications.[47]

The Office Spécial is a booklet of twenty pages. Its title page proclaims the words "remember that it is before God you stand when you pray!"[48] Page two consists of an "avis", a notice concerning proper etiquette during the worship service. One sentence stands out among them: "the prayers are to be uttered so that each one is distinct, but *without ever raising one's voice*."[49] After stating that the service begins with a chorus, a three-paragraph responsive reading leads into the main part of the liturgy.

The congregation is asked to rise, and recites together the decalogue in French. After the congregation returns to its seats, the "officiant" continues with a thematic understanding of the commandments' significance.[50] A three-page responsive reading, consisting of single-line statements and responses, is inserted before the *barekhu*.[51] This series is made up of lines from the Bible, and traditional liturgical responses in which the congregant directly address God.

The *barekhu*, which employs the first use of Hebrew in the

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[47]Though the Office Spécial dates from the later period to be discussed, it is more closely related to Des Ailes than the second prayerbook, Rituel des Prières. A revised youth service is included in Rituel des Prières. See Chapter Five.

[48]"Rappelle-toi que c'est DEVANT DIEU que tu te tiens quand tu pries!" Office Spécial pour la Jeunesse (Paris, 1907), 1.

[49]ibid., 2.

[50]ibid., 5.

[51]ibid., 7-9.

prayerbook, is initially rendered in French, and said only by the reader. The instructions that follow the reader's first line directs the choir to sing the passage in Hebrew. A French interpretation of the material that comes between *barekhu* and *shema* is offered as a short responsive prayer.[52] The first paragraph of the traditional *shema* is printed, in Hebrew and French, by individual sentence. The congregation is directed to "rise and chant the *shema*; the verses that follow will be read by the officiant in Hebrew and in French, as the congregation remains standing."[53]

After a silent prayer, an introductory reading for the *amidah* is read "in a low voice by one of the assistants."[54] The initial passages of the *amidah* are produced in a truncated French version, culminating in the Hebrew chanting of the *kedushah*. After "*kadosh, kadosh, kadosh...*", the intermediary lines are offered in French, followed by the congregational response "*baruch k'vod adonai mimekomo.*" It is concluded by the Hebrew of "*yimloch adonai...*", and a French version of *modim anachnu lach.*[55]

The Torah service that follows is introduced by the traditional lines of *shema* and *echad elohenu*. *V'zot ha-torah*

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[52]ibid., 10-13.

[53]ibid., 10.

[54]ibid., 13.

[55]ibid., 14-16. Each Hebrew response of the *kedushah* is also printed in ashkenazic transliteration.

is offered before the reading from the scroll, as well as *torah tziva lanu*, which is sung by the choir. The reading from the scroll is followed by a "prayer of choice of the reader",[56] and the return of the Torah to the ark, accompanied by the choir. The special hymn to be sung by the choir is printed in the text of the prayerbook. In it, God's favor is asked upon the parents and entire families of the participants.[57]

After an "allocution"[58] is given, a prayer is offered by one of the younger children of the congregation before the ark. It is a simplified version of the prayers on behalf of the community and nation; rendered into a form suitable for the youth, it includes universalistic notions of God's providence over the world.[59] The service was concluded with a congregational reading of a string of various statements, beginning with *shema*, concerning the religious ideology that the Union hoped to impress upon the children.[60] The words "summary of our beliefs" is included in the middle of the reading. The congregation is asked to rise, and the reader

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[56]ibid., 17.

[57]ibid., 17-18.

[58]This "allocution" was a short speech. For the education of the children, on themes taken from the weekly Torah portion or other related topics, it was probably given by a teacher, adult member of the Union, and by Rabbi Lévy on special occasions.

[59]Office Spécial, 19.

[60]ibid., 19-20.

pronounces a final prayer. The short service ends with a French rendering of the Priestly Benediction.[61] Representing a clear break from the consistory, the Union's liturgy set it apart from the rest of Parisian Jewry. Deleting certain references that were deemed offensive to the modern Jew, the Union joined other Reform communities is distancing itself from strict particularism. The universalistic interpretation used for other prayers that were retained also served to show that the Jews of the Union were not merely capable of taking on the role of participants in modern society, but were already doing so actively.

Intellectual Life

The intellectual life that was fostered during the Union's first years of activity moved beyond the model described in its early proposal for liturgy. Whereas the Union had initially suggested that

> there will be, on certain days under the control of the directing committee, a sermon, entrusted to non-rabbinical orators, conforming to the ancient tradition which merits a place of honor,[62]

the addresses that were delivered at the Union Libérale over the course of its early history were never limited to laypersons. Probably closer to Zadoc Kahn's intentions for the Sunday lecture series, it appears that the Union chose to

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[61]Numbers 6:24-26.

[62]L'Univers Israélite, February 23, 1906.

invite whomever they believed to be qualified to make an intelligent presentation. In fact, the Union took great pride in inviting rabbis from both the Continent and the United States to speak to its congregants.

For example, on November 7, 1909, the Union brought in Rabbi Joseph Leonard Levy from Pittsburgh to give a lecture at rue Copernic.[63] Levy used Exodus 14:15[64] to open a discussion on the social agenda accepted by liberal Judaism based on its intellectual journey. He surveys what he views as intellectual antecedents of the Reform movement, including examples from the Bible and medieval Jewish sources. Completing his survey, Levy mentions the more contemporary Lily Montagu and Claude Montefiore; he then remarks on the efforts undertaken by the "école réformée américaine",[65] and the liberal Jews of Germany and Paris. Levy concludes his speech with words of encouragement for his listeners.[66] He assures them that if they have courage, are faithful to themselves, and rely upon God, they will succeed.[67]

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[63]Joseph Leonard Levy, En Avant! Sermon prononcé au temple de l'Union Libérale Israélite de Paris (Paris, 1909). There are several examples of lectures given by visiting speakers. This is the only actual text I was able to acquire.

[64]"Tell the Israelites to go forward!"

[65]The school of thought of American Reform Judaism.

[66]Levy, coming from the United States, where Reform had already taken hold, realized that these relatively new co-liberals could use whatever emotional support they could gain in their endeavors to promote liberal Judaism in France.

[67]En Avant!, 22.

Much of the preaching responsibility did rest upon Rabbi Louis-Germain Lévy himself during the Union's first fifteen years of existence. Though the Union had suggested that its program would discourage sermons given by rabbis,[68] Lévy conducted most of the preaching, in addition to supervising the overall operation of the Union. Unfortunately, not many texts of Lévy's sermons have been collected or preserved. From the few that are available, it can be determined that he maintained himself as the primary voice of French liberal Judaism. He understood that his public addresses not only reflected on his character as a rabbi and leader, but also on the status of the Union, and liberal Judaism in general. He used the public forum to present his perception of the issues of the day and to raise those critical matters he felt were being ignored. This generally involved his efforts to harmonize the moral imperatives of prophetic Judaism with the advances of modern critical thought. Yet always, Lévy set his message within the scope of furthering his audience's Jewish consciousness.

On Rosh HaShanah, 5671,[69] Lévy delivered a sermon entitled "Souvenir et Responsabilité." He argues that the gift of memory makes Jews responsible for continually

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[68]Originally, this was to placate the consistory's uneasiness concerning the Union's functioning as an actual religious institution, rather than as a "cultural association." After the separation of church and state, and the decline of the consistory, this earlier compromise was ignored.

[69]October 4, 1910.

improving their behavior. Mentioning that Jews accept the *malkut shamayim*, the yoke of divine sovereignty, Lévy is persuasive in contending that the covenant between God and Israel cannot only be employed for protection; it demands that Israel stand up for just causes, for the betterment of humanity and the state.[70]

"Sème la Tendresse, tu récolteras l'Amour" was delivered on Sukkot of that same year.[71] Lévy connects the harvest holiday to a better understanding of human relations. He suggests that Sukkot is a festival that should be tied to bettering one's behavior toward one's fellows. He promises that if you "sow tenderness, you will reap lovingkindness." Because his congregants are no longer part of an agricultural society, Lévy understands this metaphor has an appropriate message for Sukkot.[72] It was from Lévy's lead that the adults of the Union gained much of their education.

However, the laity did play a significant role in the intellectual life of the Union. In addition to publishing their work in le Rayon,[73] congregants were called upon to present lectures to the congregation. There were several

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[70]Louis-Germain Lévy, "Souvenir et Responsabilité", Trois Entretiens (Paris, 1910).

[71]October 23, 1910.

[72]Louis-Germain Lévy, "Sème la Tendresse, tu récolteras l'Amour", Trois Entretiens (Paris, 1910).

[73]For discussion of the issues presented in Le Rayon, see Chapter Three.

members who were very well-educated, and quite capable intellects and orators in their own right. Though these lay efforts were received throughout the early history of the Union, no better example remains than the material collected in Entretiens donnés, which contains the texts to what seems to be a five-part lecture series held by the Union in May and June of 1920.[74]

The first essay included is Lévy's previously discussed "Raison d'être de l'Union libérale israélite."[75] In "Religion et Humanité",[76] Léon Brunschvicg, a member of the French Institute, offers his thoughts on the relationship between God and human conduct vis-à-vis modern scientific progress. He proposes that human attachment to God and the growing understanding of the natural world should only complement each other. Brunschvicg also comments on how greater knowledge should lead to higher standards of moral behavior. His final statement tells the audience that "if we escape moral discouragement, we will surely be living truly religious lives."[77]

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[74]Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1920). It seems that the publication of this set of essays coincides with a renaissance of the Union's intellectual activity. The years of World War I were marked by the interruption of the production of le Rayon. For more on the increased activity of the Union in the 1920's, see Chapter Five.

[75]See above, Chapter Four.

[76]Léon Brunschvicg, "Religion et Humanité", Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1920), 11-15.

[77]ibid., 15.

The next lecture was delivered by Reinach. Based on his extensive work in the history of Judaism, he presented "Israël et Prosélytisme."[78] He offers a background to Jewish proselytism, involving ancient and contemporary examples. He then continues with a discussion of the interaction between Judaism and the other religions of the world, especially Buddhism. Reinach makes a lengthy digression, concluding that one's appreciation for another religion might draw one toward it; these "semi-converts", who have always been present in society, must be treated with respect, and their contributions gladly accepted.[79] This, he states, is noble behavior.

Dr. Pierre Kahn, a Union congregant and ex-chief of the clinic of the Medical Faculty of Paris, offered "L'instinct religieux chez l'infant."[80] He outlines the religious development of children, espousing that positive religious instruction is one of the greatest gifts parents can provide, and one of the strongest foundations people retain as they mature. His topic deals with one of the major goals the Union set for itself: that better understanding of children and their needs will lead to more effective religious education and supervision.

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[78]Theodore Reinach, "Israël et Prosélytisme", Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1920), 17-32.

[79]It seems that Reinach may be voicing his support for Pallière, the "semi-convert" par excellence.

[80]Pierre Kahn, "L'instinct religieux chez l'infant", Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérales Israélite (Paris, 1920), 33-40.

The final essay is entitled "Le Judaïsme et la Pensée contemporaine."[81] In it, Pallière refers to a familiar theme offered by Renan. He argues that not only does religion benefit from the advances of modern critical study, but that science, too, progresses when conducted according to the highest standards of moral behavior. Christians and Jews[82] can promote human enrichment when they work toward the fulfillment of moral imperatives.

This spirit, of effecting personal and collective improvement via adherence to moral teachings, stimulated the efforts of the Union Libérale during its early years of operation. Its leaders, liturgical productivity, and intellectual life were guided by a sense of ethical striving for social justice and betterment. From Lévy, the leaders learned that these prophetic strivings were the basis for modern Jewish ideology. Their intellectual goals involved reaching greater awareness of the responsibility placed upon them by the human condition, and the Jewish imperative for social action. As were many developing organizations, the Union's growth and activity were inhibited by World War I. Yet, in the early interwar years, the Union would regain momentum, furthering its program and establishing itself as a viable element of French Judaism.

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[81]Aimé Pallière, "Le Judaïsme et la Pensée contemporaine", Entretiens donnés à l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1920), 41-53.

[82]He also mentions Hindus.

CHAPTER FIVE
The History of the Union Libérale 1921-1933

World War I had directed energies away from many endeavors not directly related to the conflict. Though the Union Libérale did not shut down completely, its activities were curtailed sharply. The publishing of Le Rayon was halted after its second year; special programming for the Union's youth was not offered; liturgical innovation was not carried beyond the initial efforts of Des Ailes à la Terre.

The years from 1921-1933 were a very productive time for the Union. Regaining momentum after the war, the Union underwent a resurgence in creativity, and broadened the scope of its program. The later series of Le Rayon continued where it had stopped, offering a regular outlet for the members to express themselves in a public forum. The youth program was augmented, enhancing the Union's ability to meet its priority in children's education. The liturgy was reconsidered, and revised in light of the Union's own development. Additionally, the Union made several references to its early progress, indicating a certain sense of historical self-awareness.

Le Rayon: Organe Mensuel de l'Union Libérale Israélite

Le Rayon had begun as the Union's monthly magazine in September 1912.[1] When its publication was stopped after the

[1]See above, Chapter Three.

completion of volume 2 in 1914, no reason was given for the lapse. Similarly, when Le Rayon was restarted in 1921, no mention of the seven-year hiatus was made, nor any celebration upon its rebirth. Throughout its first series[2] it retained the same structure. Along the top margin of the front cover was given the volume number, the issue number, and the date.[3] Both the address of the synagogue and the cost of a year's subscription were given below the title. The rest of the cover was dedicated to the "Sommaire", listing the major contents of the issue.

The inside of the front cover listed the times at which regular services were held at rue Copernic. Underneath, the schedule of "Courses of Religious Instruction" was printed. Beginning with the second issue,[4] the magazine also listed the books that could be purchased through the Union. These were initially Des Ailes à la Terre, available for 3 francs, Marguerite Brandon-Salvador's A Travers les Moissons,[5] available for 4 francs, Reinach's Histoire des Israélites,

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[2]Whereas "early series" refers to Le Rayon from 1912-1914 and "later series" refers to Le Rayon from 1921-1933, "first series" refers to this whole set, containing volumes 1-14. A "new series" was published by the Union, beginning several years after World War II.

[3]For example, "1re Année-No. 11 15 Septembre 1913."

[4]Le Rayon, volume 1, #2 (October 1912).

[5]For discussion on Des Ailes and A Travers les Moissons, see Chapter Four.

available for 4 francs, and Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque[6] and La Famille dans l'Antiquité Israélite and Maïmonide by Rabbi Lévy, the first available for 1.5 francs, the second two for 5 francs each.

The first section of the magazine, usually around 20 pages, offered the various articles and essays that were printed in that particular issue. The second, much shorter, section was entitled "Nouvelles." It gave not only news of the Union and its membership, but also included references to major activities in the Jewish communities from around the world. Included in this section was a listing of "dons",[7] those gifts that had been made to the Union since the previous issue had been published. Periodically, the "news" section was followed by "Broutilles",[8] which encompassed any miscellaneous information that the editors wished to provide.

Also beginning with the second issue, the back inside cover was used to include the mission statement of the Union in each copy of Le Rayon. This statement was provided from the material the Union had written on its own behalf during its earliest stage of existence.[9] Below the mission

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[6]For discussion of Une Religion Rationelle et Laïque, see Chapter Three.

[7]In later issues, gifts were listed in "Bulletin Religieux", the opening section of the magazine. It also included reminders about upcoming events.

[8]"Trifles."

[9]See Chapter Three.

statement, the Committee of Directors, along with their addresses, was listed. On the bottom of the page was the note that "people are asked to direct payment of their subscription to Louis Germain Lévy, at 24 rue Copernic."[10]

Usually, only a small portion of the magazine was devoted to reporting the news of the Union and the wider Jewish world. Even important general Jewish affairs took a secondary position in relation to Lévy's primary objective. The main purpose of Le Rayon was developed under Lévy's strong influence. Throughout his career, it was Lévy's desire to harmonize the moral imperatives of prophetic Judaism with the advances of modern scientific inquiry. Therefore, Le Rayon became the Union's vehicle for its academic and creative pursuits. From the start, Le Rayon provided an outlet for scholarly material that was offered by both Lévy and the laity. For the most part, the magazine was not used simply to reprint lectures and addresses that had been given previously.[11] Le Rayon was an opening for fresh work, and pieces were written specifically for it.

Examples of this original scholarship are found throughout the later series of Le Rayon. In October, 1922,

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[10]It appears that Lévy's control extended even to the administration of subscriptions to Le Rayon.

[11]With the exception of a few instances where whole essays, such as those delivered to the Jeunesse Libérale from February-April 1926, were reprinted; also, brief passages that were then used for discussion, or excerpts from greetings by visiting notables were often given.

Lévy wrote on "The Grand Dilemma."[12] In this short essay, he handles the question of whether the origins of the world were according to chance or the creative will of God. He explains that the affirmation of God as the creator is but one problem faced in accepting the Biblical creation story. The greater concept relevant to modern liberal religion is humanity's role in the world's continuation. His solution is that humanity is intended to be God's partner in the perfection of the world.[13]

In October of 1925, Pallière includes a piece about "the Voice of God."[14] He states that "God's voice does not call to us only when we consent to listen." It is present at all times, waiting for humanity to heed its call. Pallière assures the reader that if one were to listen for that voice, one would come to know that God's presence at no time leaves His people. "You can hear it murmuring", he notes, "saying, 'I was not absent in your time of suffering, and I wish to adorn[15] your blessing.'" He concludes by telling the reader that "the greater your sacrifice, the greater your joy and

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[12]Louis-Germain Lévy, "Le Grand Dilemme", Le Rayon volume 4, #1 (October 1922), 2.

[13]Lévy reminds the reader that humanity is created for this purpose: "*naasey shutaf shel ha-kaddosh baruch hu b'maaseh bereshit.*"

[14]Aimé Pallière, "La Voix de Dieu", Le Rayon volume 7, #1 (October 1925), 9.

[15]or, "be recognized for."

sense of wholeness, and the closer you become to God."[16] This piece is significant, for it shows Pallière's understanding of humanity's relationship with God. He remained an important figure in the Union for another fifteen years, and maintained a role of profound influence on its agenda and ideology.

David Berman, a rabbi from Brussels, was a regular contributor to Le Rayon, beginning in the mid-1920's. In April of 1930, he offered an essay on "the Cup of Elijah",[17] and its significance for use in the modern *seder*. Thus, Berman states that Jewish hope for the coming of the messiah remains a central idea of Judaism. He does not address the difference between the concepts of messiah and messianic age, but, rather, concentrates on the symbolism Elijah holds for the future of the world. "Judaism has been superbly inspired toward greeting the messiah," he concludes, and that even in times of great distress, "Elijah's torch has reinvigorated our failing hearts." According to Berman, Passover, with Elijah as a principal figure, is the holiday most closely associated with the "glorious and immortal destiny" of the Jews.

In each of the scholarly articles published in Le Rayon, traditional themes are taken up and analyzed or expanded

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[16]Pallière transforms the ancient idea of sacrifice upon the altar to his modern understanding of religious sacrifice in service to one's fellows.

[17]David Berman, "La Coupe D'Elie", Le Rayon volume 11, #7 (April 1930), 6.

through the lens of modern religious thought. The authors of the various works included are not satisfied with reproducing the positions held by Judaism over the centuries. Under the influence of Lévy, the contributors read the textual material they wished to examine, inclining toward a critical, scientific understanding of it.[18] Instead of simply offering their readers the basics of Jewish concepts and information, they carefully cast their writings within a modern liberal construct. Le Rayon, therefore, served not only as the voice of the Union Libérale, but also as the mouthpiece for liberal Jewish ideology in France.

The Youth Program

From its earliest writings, the Union promised to make the education of its youth one of its highest priorities. For the children, the Union intended

> to render more thorough instruction, better adapted to the results obtained by the modern criticism that only enhances the grandeur and originality of Judaism.[19]

The development of a complete program for the youth, however, was interrupted by World War I. As the Union went through its programmatic revival during the 1920's, so too was the issue of youth activities given greater priority. By 1923, the "Jeunesse Libérale" was holding monthly youth services at the

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[18]This is true even of Pallière, who, maintaining more traditional personal practice even though he never converted, understood the agenda that Lévy wished to promulgate.

[19]L'Univers Israélite, February 23, 1906.

synagogue,[20] with various other activities planned throughout the month.

The first references to the Jeunesse Libérale occurred under the "Bulletin Religieux" in Le Rayon of December, 1922.[21] This first mention of the Jeunesse as an organized group was an announcement of the coming first religious service. From that time, a worship service for the Jeunesse was held on the first Sunday of every month. It appears that the Jeunesse was first organized for the benefit of the adults; they did not wish that their children would attend religious events that were not under the Union's direction. Eventually, the Jeunesse became more than just a loose association of the children of the adult members. It was an age-appropriate version of the activities of the Union, sharing its goals and ideology. Aside from its worship services, the Jeunesse sponsored its own lectures, social programs, and, eventually, its own newsletter. All these activities were encouraged by the Union as its parent organization.[22]

In early 1926, the Jeunesse sponsored a three-part lecture series, simply entitled "Entretiens donnés à la

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[20]This service, which employed the Office Spécial pour la Jeunesse, was based on the liturgy of Des Ailes, from the earlier period. For a discussion of Office Spécial, see Chapter Four.

[21]Le Rayon volume 4, #3, 3.

[22]Like NFTY, its counterpart in the United States, the Jeunesse Libérale began as a programming group for young adults, ages 15-22, rather than specifically for high-school aged children.

Jeunesse Libérale." The first installment was a talk delivered by Rabbi Julien Weill. Weill was a consistory rabbi in Paris, and the author of several works on Jewish thought. His area of expertise included Spinoza and Maimonides. In his lecture, he discussed the relationship between "Religion and Superstition."[23] Weill offered an overview of the history of the study of superstition and its vestiges in modern religious practice, including liberal Judaism. Moving from this relationship, Weill informed the audience that greater understanding of religion and its roots is one of the most important ventures to be undertaken. He bases his conclusion on "*talmud torah k'neged kulam*", "the study of torah is equal to them all." He does not wish to tell them that greater study will lead them to more ritual practice; he wants them to know that greater understanding can make them aware of the foibles of over-reliance on tradition,[24] and protect them from not living up to the hopes of modern liberal Judaism.

One month later, Emile Leven, vice president of the National Student Service, a public agency concerned with education, shared his thoughts on "Solidarity."[25] He emphasized the idea of religious solidarity: The members of his audience would become the future leaders of the Union, and

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[23]Julian Weill, "Religion et Superstition", Le Rayon volume 7, #5 (February 1926), 3.

[24]or superstition.

[25]Emile Leven, "Solidarité", Le Rayon volume 7, #6 (March 1926), 3.

they would need to work together, even through times of dispute. During the discussion that followed Leven's speech, Pallière[26] added that a sense of cooperation is particularly important when a small group wishes to attain specific practical goals. The discussion concluded when a young member of the Jeunesse, Marcel Greilsammer, pointed out that two types of solidarity must operate for them. One is the wider cooperation that envelops all of humanity, the other the sense of cohesion that drives smaller homogenous groups.

The last of these lectures sponsored by the Jeunesse was delivered by Rabbi Maurice Liber, the current Chief Rabbi.[27] He offered an address on "the Seder throughout the Ages."[28] The description of the event in Le Rayon is much shorter than those concerning the previous two lectures. The article states that Liber surveyed the traditional *seder*, taking the audience through the *haggadah* and an historical overview of its development. In conclusion, the article refers to a discussion that was held as part of the event, noting that the *seder* has always been an appropriate time to recall and honor the piety of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs of Judaism.

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[26]These lectures were open to the adult members of the Union; several of the adults not only attended, but offered their insightful comments to the discussions.

[27]In 1935, Liber collaborated with Weill, who succeeded him as editor of the Revue des Études Juives, on an essay on the philosophy of Maimonides.

[28]Liber, "Séder à travers les âges", Le Rayon volume 7, #7 (April, 1926), 2.

In that same issue of Le Rayon, the editor announced that

> our youth services, since their creation, and especially this year, have been a great success. Soon, subscribers to the Rayon will receive a supplement, the Petit Rayon, which will extend the successful program of our services for the youth.[29]

The inclusion of Le Petit Rayon began the following Fall, with the first issue of volume 8.[30] The scope of Le Petit Rayon was the same as its parent publication. Granted, its articles and news items were geared to a younger reading audience. The major difference between the two versions of the monthly magazine was that whereas Le Rayon's priority was the scholarly treatment of subjects according to higher thinking, Le Petit Rayon placed greater emphasis on themes basic to Judaism. This included overviews of the holidays, historical events, and customs that remained relevant to the Union.

Yet, the main activity of the Jeunesse Libérale remained its regular schedule of worship services. Following the 1925 publication of the Union's new prayerbook,[31] the Jeunesse abandoned the Office Spécial in favor of the youth service that was included in the Union's liturgy. The service itself[32] is almost an exact replication of the Office Spécial,[33] with considerably less Hebrew. The only Hebrew

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[29]ibid., 6.

[30]Le Rayon volume 8, #1 (October 1926).

[31]See below.

[32]Rituel des Prières (Paris, 1925), 220-234.

[33]Again, for discussion of Office Spécial, see Chapter Four.

printed in the text of the service is *mah-tovu* at the beginning, intoned by the choir, the line *bayom ha-hu* after a French version of *amidah*, and the concluding song, *ein keloheinu*.

Otherwise, the service follows the same format as its predecessor. Its only difference from the Office Spécial, aside from being included in the Union's prayerbook itself, is that it specifically refers to the participation of the rabbi. This service was used by the Jeunesse Libérale from the time of its introduction through the remainder of the Union's early history.

New Liturgical Productivity-Rituel de Prières Journalières

In Le Rayon in January, 1923, the editors suggested a project to review Des Ailes for the purpose of revision.[34] They included a loose sheet, on which the readers were to sign their approval of this project, returning the form to the Union.[35] The new prayerbook that resulted from this project was the most impressive achievement the Union made during this period in its history.

In putting together a newly revised liturgy, the members of the Union dealt with two conflicting notions. One was that the existing service, Des Ailes, had strayed too far from the

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[34]Le Rayon volume 4, #4 (January 1923), 4.

[35]Two copies of this form still sit inside the cover of the January 1926 issue in the collection of the Hebrew Union College Library.

traditional formula for many congregants. The other was the need to continue using a service that was distinctly liberal. In the previous January's Rayon, Pallière defended the use of the vernacular in liturgy. He believed that

> although retention of Hebrew adds elegance to the service, it is possible to create a public worship ceremony with liturgy in the vernacular without taking away form its beauty and edifying value.[36]

The liturgy that was compiled maintained a vast use of vernacular language, but also included a much greater use of Hebrew in providing material that could be used for a wider variety of Jewish events.

The new prayerbook, entitled *t'fillot kol ha-shanah*, Rituel des Prières Journalières, contains an extensive preface, in which the Union's understanding of traditional liturgy, as well as its own, is described. The first several pages of the preface are dedicated to a historical survey of Jewish liturgy.[37] Under this heading is a description of the various traditional rites,[38] followed by an explanation of the translation and adaptation of traditional prayers in a modern context. In doing so, the Union attempts to connect its liturgical endeavors to the religious innovations introduced in other Reform communities, especially those found in the Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship of the United

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[36]Le Rayon volume 3, #4 (January 1922), 8.

[37]Rituel des Prières, iff.

[38]*minhag polin, minhag sefardi,* etc.

States. Concluding this overview is a brief explanation of the division of the service into its component parts.[39]

The next part of the preface is entitled "Notes sur les Principales Prières du Rituel."[40] To begin, the traditional introductory material is divided into individual sections that are assigned to each week of the month. *Adon olam* and *yehi kavod* are assigned to the first week; *yigdal, elohai neshama,* and *rachum v'chanun* are assigned to the second week; *ribon kol ha-olamim* is assigned for the third week; and *baruch sheamar, male mischalot libi,* and *anah bakoach* are reserved for the fourth week.

Next are listed those prayers that remain fixed in position for all services.[41] This begins with *yishtabach* and is followed by *barechu*, which is described as the invitation to prayer. The reader is then assured that the "translation does not take away from the beauty of the original."[42] *Shema* is introduced with a lengthy discussion, maintaining that this remains the central statement of Judaism and Jewish identity. It is followed by *emet v'yatsiv*, which concludes with the prayer for redemption.

The *amidah* is discussed next, and is offered in a style

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[39]Introductory benedictions, the *shema* and its blessings, *t'filla*, etc.

[40]Rituel des Prières, ivff.

[41]ibid., viff.

[42]ibid., vii.

closely related to that of Des Ailes. Specifically mentioned is the *kedushah*, which is offered as the sanctification of God's name. The editors take the opportunity to develop this prayer's significance in terms of their liberal agenda. For the Union, the *kedushah* represents humanity's recognition of its mission for continuing elevation toward the divine. *Kaddish* is explained before *alenu*. Though several of the traditional forms of *kaddish* are included in Rituel des Prières, only the mourner's version is discussed at length. The editors take the opportunity to discuss the value of memory, both that of an individual and that of a community, and suggest it as one of the enduring values of Jewish practice. The *alenu* concludes this listing of the fixed liturgical readings. It is discussed as one of the fundamental prayers of Judaism, though it is rendered in the prayerbook in more universalistic terms.

An explanation of the prayers specific to Shabbat and festival evenings is inserted after the fixed prayers are discussed.[43] This section begins with the "inauguration of Shabbat", which is defined as the inclusion of special psalms and hymns that honor Shabbat and the creation of the world. Specifically mentioned is *lecha dodi*, along with the recognition of its author, Shlomo Alkabetz Halevi. The text of the prayerbook provides the first, second, fifth, and last two stanzas of the song. The shortened *amidah* for Shabbat is

[43]ibid., xff.

mentioned, followed by the inclusion of the *kiddush*, which is also seen as a "sanctification of the day."

The prayers for Shabbat and festival mornings are considered next.[44] These include *nishmat kol chai, anim zemirot,* and *ein kelohenu.* Interestingly, the editors then introduce an afternoon study session for Shabbat. They encourage the reading of passages from *pirkei avot* to be included as a regular element of Shabbat celebration. *Havdalah* is included in the new liturgy as well; the editor explains that it serves as the distinction between sacred and profane, and that the light of the candle used for *havdalah* signifies the light of edification.[45]

"Special Prayers" are discussed after *havdalah*.[46] *Hallel* is described as "the set of praises prescribed in the talmud from the sections of the psalmist." The editors note that *hallel* is offered at Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Hanukkah, and Rosh Hodesh. *Avinu malkenu*, the great prayer asking for forgiveness, is expressed as the entreaty made during the days of awe that, if offered sincerely, makes peace with God. Finally, *maoz tzur* is included as the "popular song and highlight of the Hanukkah celebration."

"Notes sur la Lecture de la Loi" is included after the

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[44]ibid., xiff.

[45]This is similar to Lévy's explanation of light in the inaugural service at rue Copernic. See Chapter Three.

[46]Rituel des Prières, xiiiff.

discussion of the various prayers.[47] After a brief explanation of the reading cycle and the origins of the *haftarah*, a chart of the readings is included in the text of the preface.[48] It divides the year's readings into the 54 *parshiot*, listing *parashah* name, appropriate verses, and the theme of the portion. The following pages take up a review of the Jewish calendar and the holidays. brief descriptions are given of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, followed by the three Pilgrimage Festivals, Hanukkah and Purim. A "short history of the liturgy"[49] follows the discussion of the holidays. It is a one-page essay on the history of the current liturgy, tracing it from Talmudic times to Amram Gaon, through Saadiah to the Mahzor Vitry, finally including references to Zunz and the historical work of Ismar Elbogen.

The preface concludes with a very interesting list of the "Attitudes During Prayer."[50] It states that

> Ordinarily, the worshippers at the synagogue remain standing or seated.[51]
>
> The assembly rises and remains standing :
>
> During the morning service:
>
> From the end of the second benediction before the *shema*

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[47]ibid., xivff.

[48]ibid., xvi-xvii.

[49]ibid., xxii.

[50]ibid., xxiii. "Attitude Pendant la Prière."

[51]The editor offers that this is opposed to the "oriental" custom of rising and sitting individually.

until the end of its recitation;

During the recitation of the *amidah*;

From the moment the Torah is taken from the ark until the presentation of the law;

For the prayer for the community and for the country, just after the return of the scroll to the ark;

For the recitation of final *kaddish*.

During the evening service:

From the end of the second benediction before the *shema* until the end of its recitation;

During the recitation of the *amidah*;

During the *kiddush* on Friday or festival evenings;

For the *alenu*;

For the final *kaddish*.

Whether morning or evening, the congregation sits during the sermon of the rabbi.

Otherwise, the congregation rises upon the arrival of the rabbi at the beginning of the service, and for the benediction given by the rabbi after the sermon.

Following the preface, the services are printed in Rituel des Prières according to the guidelines offered in the opening of the book. There are, however, other pieces included in the prayerbook that are not discussed in the preface. Most strikingly, there is a greater use of Hebrew throughout the liturgy.[52] As well, special insertions are provided for Hanukkah, Purim, and Tisha B'Av.[53] Following these special inclusions is a formula for the counting of the days of the

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[52]With the exception of the "office pour la jeunesse", which all but deletes it.

[53]Rituel des Prières, 210-216.

Omer.[54]

The revised youth service, as discussed, is published as part of the main prayerbook.[55] Another youth-oriented segment is contained after the "office pour la jeunesse." This is the "Ceremonie de Bar-Mitzva."[56] This special service is included as part of the Torah service at the Bar Mitzvah celebration. A long appeal to God is followed by *shehechianu*, which precedes the reading from the scroll. After the reading of the Torah portion, the "young bar-mitzvah" reads from the *haftarah*, in French, with the blessings before and after. Upon returning the scroll to the ark, the rabbi invokes the *birkat kohanim* upon the child, while the choir chants the blessings in the background.

In this new prayerbook, the *haftarot* for every Shabbat are printed,[57] including the special readings for the holidays. *Kiddush* is printed, with the variations for the festivals and Rosh HaShanah, under the heading "prayers for home worship."[58] This also entails an abbreviated *birkat hamazon*, which consists of only the first paragraph which follows the traditional *zimun*. Special prayers for the new month, before death, the blessing of children, before travel,

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[54]ibid., 217.

[55]For discussion, see above.

[56]ibid., 235-240.

[57]ibid., 243-332.

[58]ibid., 343-357.

and upon visiting a grave are also printed, completing the Rituel de Prières' wider selection of material.

The inclusion of a more complete liturgy allows for the Union to formalize a greater variety of material for regular religious occasions. Over its first fifteen years of existence, the Union changed according to the needs of its members. No longer satisfied with their modern celebrations of Shabbat and holidays, the members wanted to bring their liberal sensibilities to bear on a broader range of religious experience, while hoping to maintain a strong course of intellectual activity. This return to a more traditional framework of religious life, in terms of liturgy, represents that the members of the Union were more comfortable with traditional ritual than they had been (or were willing to express) during the earlier stage of communal operation. Petuchowski writes that "the Paris prayerbook[59] is not quite as 'radical' as might appear at first sight."[60] The new prayerbook also indicated that the Union was secure in its own existence. It no longer saw a need to contrast sharply with the consistory, as had been the case in 1907. Though the consistory held no sway over the Union between the separation of church and state in 1905 and the opening of the synagogue at rue Copernic in 1907, the Union was not sure of this at the

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[59]and therefore the Union itself.

[60]Jakob J. Petuchowski, Prayerbook Reform in Europe (New York, 1968), 237.

time. As the consistory, as a governing body, wasn't even a concern of the Union by 1925, the Union did not need to pay lip service to it. In the end, the Rituel des Prières was a return to material that its members found familiar and useful for the many aspects of Jewish life.

Retrospectives

As early as 1917, the Union had become historically self aware. This is evident in that the members celebrated the tenth anniversary of the opening of their synagogue at the rue Copernic.[61] From that time, the Union's congregants recognized the significant milestones in its history and marked them accordingly. This gives the study of the early history of the Union the perspective of the members who journeyed through this period.

For the Union's 15th anniversary, Lévy reviewed its accomplishments in Le Rayon.[62] His conclusion about the first fifteen years of the Union's activities is similar to the hopes he expressed for its future when he first became its rabbi:

> We demand always to progress, for the greater glory of God, of truth, and of love. It is to you, readers and friends, that we are indebted for your constant

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[61]See Ce que Nous Sommes: Dixième Anniversaire de la fondation de l'Union Libérale Israélite (Paris, 1917). When Le Rayon was first published, upon the fifth anniversary of the Union, only glancing reference was made to the occasion.

[62]Le Rayon volume 4, #4 (January 1923), 5.

assistance, active support, and ardent faithfulness.[63]

Upon the Union's 18th anniversary, in December of 1925, the Union was pleased to receive a letter of congratulations from Rabbi Abram Simon, the president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.[64] Representing the entire body of the CCAR, and really all of American Reform Judaism, Simon expressed his hope that the Union's future be successful, without the problems it had faced during its very initial years. Also, this marked a desire on the part of the Union that it be more involved with it liberal counterparts in other countries.

In January of 1926, the Union commemorated the passing of Marguerite Brandon-Salvador, who had died the previous December 17.[65] This was also taken as an opportunity to recount some of her accomplishments as an instrumental person with the Union. She was the first of the major personalities to die after the Union's inception, and the membership used the example of her life to celebrate in the activities that they had created and would continue to develop, rather than solely to mourn the passing of a loved one.

The 20th anniversary of the founding of the Union was

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[63]Here, Lévy also gives credit to the involvement of the laity.

[64]Le Rayon volume 6, #4 (January 1926), 2.

[65]Le Rayon volume 7, #4 (January 1926), 4.

marked by a beautiful essay in Le Rayon by Rabbi Lévy.[66] In it, he urges the members of the Union to remember that the program of the Union, both what it has accomplished so far, and that which it will attain in the future, is representative of their ongoing relationship with God. As they undertake new projects, God's work is furthered: "The great and eternal work of God - *mechadesh bechol yom tamid maaseh bereshit* - we are collaborators in it." Again, he calls attention to the Union's desire for constant perfection. "With the aid of the Most High", he concludes, "we advance from task to task, from light in light, from blessing to blessing."

Theodore Reinach, who had been not only a strong leader within the Union, but who also was accepted as a leading figure in the liberal intellectual world, died in October of 1928. Again, as when Brandon-Salvador died, the Union chose to honor him by using his death to mark a significant passage in the Union's history. In Le Rayon, his loss was called "irreparable."[67] He was eulogized as a great thinker, among the likes of Renan and Darmesteter. Memorial tributes were offered by the leaders of the French Academy and the various other societies to which Reinach belonged. The Union's position was that if this great man, who was accepted by all, was a notable member the Union, the Union itself was worthy of recognition by the other elements of French Jewry.

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[66]Le Rayon volume 9, #4 (January 1928), 5.

[67]Le Rayon volume 10, #2 (November 1928), 3.

The last work of historical self-appreciation from the early history of the Union came during its 28th anniversary. On that occasion, Lévy offered the essays that comprise Le Judaïsme Libérale. One of the essays is a piece entitled "Le Judaisme Liberal en France."[68] In it, he relates the history of "reforms" that were made in France, dating back to Napoleon's Sanhedrin. Yet he does not use this opportunity to connect the efforts of the Union solely to the work of earlier liberal elements in French Judaism. Rather, he wishes to show that the Union is a natural outgrowth of the progression of liberal religion in the West. In conclusion, he states that

> in an organic movement, there must be a rapport between tradition and the acquisitions of modern spirit, between scientific reflection and spiritual enthusiasm, between practical discipline and the liberal sentiments of reason. Therefore, the Union Libérale continues to pursue its method of instruction, edification, and elevation.[69]

Though Lévy reiterates the program outlined by the Union thirty years earlier, his approach represents a great journey that the Union has undergone. Initially, the members of the Union had joined together to create a small institution that would handle the religious and intellectual needs of a small

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[68]Louis-Germain Lévy, "Le Judaisme Libérale en France", Le Judaïsme Libéral (Paris, 1935). The text is identical to "Rapport sur le Judaisme Libéral en France" which Lévy delivered to the First Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Berlin in 1928. The exception is that in the version delivered to the Union Libérale, his conclusion reaffirms the ideological sentiments they had shared over the first 28 years of existence.

[69]ibid.

few who were disappointed by the consistory. They soon realized that the number of people dissatisfied by the performance of the consistory was not just a few. Additionally, the consistory fell apart after the separation of church and state. Over the first thirty years of its existence, the Union's activities moved well beyond the needs of a handful of liberal Parisian Jews. Though the Union did not grow to foster a movement like its parallels in the United States, it did introduce liberal Judaism, which has survived and flourished, to France. By the end of its early history, the Union Libérale was much more than a breakoff from the mainstream of Parisian Judaism; it was a viable religious alternative for the Jews of Paris and its region. It was a national representative to the World Union for Progressive Judaism, a major voice for both liberalism and Judaism in the world. With its contributions to liturgical expression, intellectual productivity, and leadership of the Progressive movement, it could no longer be viewed as merely a footnote in the history of Reform Judaism.

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