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Some Aspects of Liberal Jewish Views
of
"Reward and Punishment"

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for ordination

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1987

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DIGEST

This thesis is based upon the fact that "reward and punishment" is one of the universal concerns of mankind. The understanding of this concept has undergone significant change throughout the history of Jewish experience. With the growth of liberal Judaism in the late nineteenth century, this "doctrine" was once again re-evaluated.

Religious concepts, and in particular the liberal Jewish understanding of "reward and punishment," have been communicated through three different avenues: the writings of theologians, liturgy and educational materials. By analyzing the concepts of "reward and punishment" expressed in each of these areas, this thesis has attempted to provide a better understanding of how this concept has developed during the past century.

The writings of some of the pre-eminent liberal theologians were examined; including Kaufmann Kohler, Leo Baeck, Samuel S. Cohon, Mordecai Kaplan, Emil Fackenheim, Eugene Borowitz and Harold Schulweis. Each one of these thinkers confronts the issue of "reward and punishment." Upon examination of their writings it was found that they could be divided into two major categories -- pre-Holocaust and post-Holocaust. It was found that those thinkers who did the greater part of their writing before the Holocaust were more willing to confront the issue of "reward and punishment" openly. Furthermore, it was found that those authors

generally asserted a belief in divine "reward and punishment." In contrast to this, those thinkers who did the greater part of their writing after the Holocaust tend to avoid the question or indirectly address the issue of "reward and punishment." Furthermore, when they did address the issue, they did so in a speculative manner. It would seem that ever since the Holocaust theologians have become less certain about the existence of divine "reward and punishment."

This examination of liberal liturgy led to a similar conclusion. Post-Holocaust liturgy expresses ambivalence towards "reward and punishment." Through the examination of a number of specific prayers which address the question, it was found that the more recent the liturgy the more inconsistent is its treatment of "reward and punishment."

Examination of educational materials showed a similar pattern. All of the pre-Holocaust educational materials examined directly addressed the issue of "reward and punishment." For the most part, they assert a belief in divine "reward and punishment" which comes in a future life. The post-Holocaust materials again avoided the issue. When addressed at all, the belief that "the reward for doing a good deed is the deed itself" is generally asserted. Through our examination of To See the World through Jewish Eyes, the new U.A.H.C. curriculum, it appears that in the future the question of "reward and punishment" will once again be directly addressed in our religious schools.

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of humankind men have wondered, "Is there an incentive for doing good in this life?" Men have constantly tried to determine whether there is some ultimate form of divine "reward and punishment" for deeds that we perform in this life. So often, it seems that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer, and as a result men have wondered, "Is there an eventual compensation for doing good?" Some have believed that "reward and punishment" comes in this life, while others have believed that "rewards" and "punishments" are meted out in a life to come. Some have believed in a physical "reward and punishment," while others have believed in only a spiritual "reward and punishment." Still others, especially in this century, have completely rejected the concept of "reward and punishment."

"Reward and punishment" has been one of the most troubling theological/philosophical questions throughout the centuries. The concept and its development occupy a major portion of the Bible. The biblical author struggled with the issue from the outset in chapters two and three of the Book of Genesis. Adam and Eve are given a command by God, and warned not to disobey it. They are told that they will die if they eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and bad. Sure

enough, ate from the tree, and punishment followed.¹ In each one of the major Genesis narratives, the point is emphasized: there is a price to be paid for disobeying the will of God, and there is a reward to be gained by obeying His will. The stories of Noah and the ark, the tower of Babel, and of Sodom and Gomorrah each, in their own ways struggle with the question of "reward and punishment." In each of these cases the society as a whole was judged and the society as a whole paid the price for disobeying God's will. Yet, the single righteous individual is often saved, for he and his family have earned the right to be saved.

Furthermore, in the Book of Genesis, God established His covenant with the patriarchs. In each of the covenants which God established, He assured the patriarch -- whether it be Abraham, Isaac or Jacob -- that "if you follow my command then I will help you to prosper and make your descendants as numerous as the sands of the sea." To our patriarchs and their descendants, God held out the hope of "reward and punishment" in this life. By the time of the writing of the Deuteronomy and the development of the Deuteronomist's view of history and the world, the attitude towards "reward and punishment" had already changed slightly. For the Deuteronomist, a nation's destiny is determined by her actions. Obedience to God's will brings reward -- victory and prosperity -- but disobedience brings punishment --

¹ Genesis 2:15 ff.

suffering and failure. For the Deuteronomist, all "rewards and punishments" are extracted in this life; there is no afterlife. For the Deuteronomist, "reward and punishment" is not distributed on an individual basis, but, rather, the society as a whole is judged and rewarded or punished accordingly. Those nations that follow the will of God are rewarded, and conversely, those that disobey the will of God are punished. For the Deuteronomist, this is especially true regarding the fate of Israel. When she obeys God's will, she is victorious in battle, her crops are plentiful and there is peace within her borders. But when she disobeys the will of God, there is famine and war, and eventually her people are led into exile. Deuteronomy 11:13-17 is a prime example of this philosophy. Furthermore, throughout the books of Joshua, Judges, and Kings this theme is repeated over and over:

Because King Manasseh of Judah has done these abhorrent things...assuredly thus said the Lord, the God of Israel: I am going to bring such a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.... I will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down.¹²

With the rise of the latter Prophets, particularly Jeremiah and Ezekiel, there was a growing sense that "reward and punishment" must take into account the actions of the individual. These prophets preached a theory of "reward and punishment" which emphasized individual responsibility. It

¹² II Kings 21:11-13.

stated that each individual was rewarded and punished according to the merits of his own actions. For these Prophets, too, "reward and punishment" was limited to this life. At the same time, these Prophets did not dismiss the deuteronomic view of national responsibility and culpability.

Thus if a man is righteous and does what is just and right... if he has followed My laws and kept My rules and acted honestly -- he is righteous. Such a man shall live -- declares the Lord God. Suppose now, that he has begotten a son who is a ruffian, a shedder of blood, ...He shall not live! If he has committed any of these abominations, he shall die; he has forfeited his life.²

The rabbis found that they could not accept the idea that "reward and punishment" was limited to this life. They observed wicked nations prospering and righteous ones suffering; they also saw righteous individuals suffering greatly while the wicked prospered. The rabbis, who believed that God was just, believed that God would eventually bring justice to the wicked and blessing to the righteous. Within rabbinic theology, the idea of an afterlife became more fully developed: "reward and punishment" was believed to occur in the afterlife. It was often asserted that the wicked may prosper in this world on account of the few righteous deeds that they did perform, but in the next world they would suffer their punishment. On the other hand, the righteous may suffer in this world for the few sins that they performed, but they would surely receive their everlasting reward in the world to

² Ezekiel 18:1-13.

come. "Reward and punishment" became an important element in rabbinic theology. Solomon Schechter wrote: "Though the rabbis never tired of urging the belief in reward and punishment, and strove to make it a living conviction, they yet displayed a constant tendency to disregard it as a motivation for action."⁴ The rabbis strongly believed in "reward and punishment" but did not want it to become the chief motivating factor for obedience to God's will. Rather, they urged the people to follow the advice of Antigonus of Sokho: "Be not like servants who minister to their master upon the condition of receiving a reward; but be like servants who minister to their master without the condition of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you."⁵ Frequently we read in rabbinic literature that one ought not act for the sake of a reward, but one should remember that there is an eventual reward. Furthermore, it is with the development of rabbinic theology that the concept of "heaven and hell" becomes more fully developed.⁶

The development of "reward and punishment" did not end with the rabbis. Jews of the medieval era also struggled with the concept, and tried to find an acceptable explanation for the problem. "In the devotional literature of the Middle Ages

⁴ Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, (New York, Schocken Books, 1961), p. 162.

⁵ Abot 1.3.

⁶ It should be noted that within mainstream Judaism 'heaven and hell' have never been fully developed concepts.

there is hardly a single work in which man is not warned against serving God with any intention of receiving reward, of course the religionist is strongly urged to believe that God does reward goodness and does punish wickedness."⁷ Thus, in the Middle Ages "reward and punishment" continued to be a major concept within Judaism. Moses Maimonides, the most important of the medieval Jewish philosophers, also included the concept of "reward and punishment" amongst his thirteen principles of faith:

The eleventh fundamental principle is that the Exalted One rewards the one who observes the commandments of the Torah, and punishes the one who transgresses its admonitions. The greatest reward is the world to come and the greatest punishment is extinction....This is proof that God knows both the one who serves Him and the transgressor, and rewards the one and punishes the other.⁸

Although he included this as one of his principles, Maimonides did try to deemphasize the importance of "reward and punishment." He asserted that the ideal was to perform mitzvot out of love for God. "This matter (of serving God out of love) thus becomes clear, and it is evident that this is the intent of the Torah and the fundamental basis for the beliefs of our Sages..."⁹ Maimonides realized that the concept of "reward and punishment" plays an important role for

⁷ Schechter, Aspects, op. cit., p. 163.

⁸ Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah: Tractate Sanhedrin, trans. Fred Rosner, (New York, Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), p. 156.

⁹ Maimonides, Commentary, op. cit., p. 139.

those who are not "sages" as well as in the education of children. He believed that, for those people, the concept can provide a major source of motivation for the performance of mitzvot. But, he asserted, those who are sages or wise men do not need such motivations, for they perform the mitzvot out of the truest of principles. Furthermore, Maimonides rejected the belief in physical "reward and punishment." Rather, all rewards and punishments will be of a purely spiritual basis in the world to come, he asserted.

The development of the concept of "reward and punishment" did not end in the Middle Ages or with Maimonides. It continues to be a concept that is constantly changing, but continues to be a belief strongly held by many. According to a recently conducted USA Weekend poll, 80% of all Americans believe in heaven and 67% believe in hell; 72% of Americans rate their chances of going to heaven as good to excellent, and believe that nearly one in every four of their friends will go to hell.¹⁰

This thesis examines the views of modern liberal Jews with respect to "reward and punishment." The writings of some of the pre-eminent liberal Jewish theologians of this century will be evaluated: Kaufmann Kohler, the first systematic American liberal Jewish theologian and former president of the Hebrew Union College; Leo Baeck, the leader and theologian of

¹⁰ Jean Becker, "We Believe -- and We Believe We're Going to Heaven," USA Weekend ((December 19-21, 1986), p.4.

liberal Jewry in Germany during the period preceding the second World War; Samuel S. Cohon, one of the most influential Reform theologians in the middle of this century, and the prime author of the "Columbus Platform" of 1937; Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Reconstructionist Movement and one of the great thinkers associated with the Conservative Movement; Emil Fackenheim, among the first liberal theologians to deal with the implications of the Holocaust; Eugene Borowitz, a leading Reform theologian and one of the chief authors of the "San Francisco Platform" of 1976; and, Harold Schulweis, a Conservative rabbi, a student of Kaplan, and a chief proponent of "Predicate Theology". Also, this thesis will examine how beliefs in "reward and punishment" are reflected in liberal Jewish liturgies and how those beliefs have changed over the last 100 years will be considered. Finally, an examination of some of the educational materials that have been used in liberal Jewish religious schools will be presented. It is this author's belief that only by an examination of all three of these interrelated areas -- thinkers, liturgy and educational materials -- that one can arrive at a true synthesis of what liberal Jews have believed about "reward and punishment," and how those beliefs have changed during the past century.

CHAPTER I

THE POSITION OF CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM:

The Views of Kaufmann Kohler

One of the most important figures in the development of Reform Jewish thought, especially between approximately 1880 and 1920, was Kaufmann Kohler. Born in the Bavarian town of Furth in 1843¹, Kohler had spent his childhood steeped in orthodoxy. As a young man, he studied Talmud with some of the preeminent scholars of his day, including Jacob Ettlinger and Samson Raphael Hirsch. Then he made a fateful decision to study at a German university. Exposure to the scientific study of the Bible lead Kohler to break from his traditional upbringing,² and soon he became a disciple of Abraham Geiger, whom he had avoided while he was studying with Hirsch.

Following Geiger's recommendation, Kohler began a successful rabbinic career in the United States. He served in Detroit (1869 -1871), at Temple Sinai in Chicago (1872-1878), and finally at Temple Beth El in New York (1879-1903). In 1903, at the age of sixty, he assumed the presidency of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

Throughout his life, Kohler continued in the traditions

¹ Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History" in Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years, ed. Samuel A. Karff (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1976). p. 54.

² Ibid.

of Geiger and David Einhorn, his father-in-law. From Geiger he adopted a "historical, evolutionary understanding of Jewish tradition."³ At the same time, he carried on Einhorn's rationalist Reform tradition.⁴

Kohler was the principal author of the "Pittsburgh Platform" of 1885, the theological and pragmatic statement of Reform Judaism until the mid-1920's. He also was the author of numerous articles, including some in The Jewish Encyclopedia. His major work, Jewish Theology Systematically and Historically Considered (1918) (German original in 1910), was not published until near the end of his life. "He had undertaken the same [the writing of Jewish Theology] 'only with the understanding that it should be written from the view-point of historical research, instead of mere dogmatic or doctrinal system.'"⁵ In his Jewish Theology, Kohler did not so much attempt to formulate a new theology, as attempt to compile a historic compendium of Jewish theology.⁶

For Kohler, no belief was more indispensable than the belief in divine providence. Kohler, a rational theist, believed that God is actively involved in the running of the

³ Ibid.

⁴ Meyer, Op. cit., p. 55.

⁵ Lou H. Silberman, "Theology and Philosophy: Some Tentative Remarks" in H.U.C.-J.I.R. at One Hundred Years, op. cit., p. 393.

⁶ Silberman, Op. cit., p. 397.

world. Furthermore, Kohler believed that a belief in divine providence was essential for humanity. According to Kohler, without a belief in an "all wise-power who rules the world for a sublime purpose,"⁷ man would fall apart from fear. For God, the goal and aim of the world is that it should be a "good" world. Therefore, His providence leads the world and humanity towards goodness.

For Kohler, providence consisted of two distinct elements: first, it had to be operative in the world; and second, it follows "in accordance with the divine plan for the government of the world."⁸ According to Kohler, Judaism affirms the role of a wise and benign providence in the world: a providence which is intended to improve the world. Within Jewish thought, according to Kohler, there are no events which are not preordained by God.

Providence can be divided into two different kinds: general and special providence. General providence controls the rise and fall of nations; it controls the general plan of history. According to Kohler, general providence is "centered upon the truth which is entrusted to Israel."⁹ Special providence, on the other hand, is that which directly effects the individual: his actions and his relationship with the

⁷ Kaufmann Kohler, Jewish Theology: Systematically and Historically Considered, (New York, Ktav Publishing House Inc., 1968). p. 162.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 169.

world as a whole. According to Kohler, special providence arose in response to human longing for an explanation of how the world operates. While the concept of special providence provides that explanation, it also creates a new question; the issue of free will. If God's providence is controlling and directing the world, then does the individual, or nation for that matter, have control over ones actions? Or, are all ones actions preordained? According to Kohler, Judaism offers two conflicting beliefs: predestination and free will. Judaism teaches that man's actions and life are predetermined but man is still free. Man cannot allow his belief in predestination to influence his choice of actions. Rabbi Akiba perhaps said it best: "All is foreseen but freedom of choice is given."¹⁰ According to Kohler, the whole concept behind the High Holidays points to this essential teaching of Judaism. During the Yamin Noraim man's destiny is judged in accordance with his actions. During this period, man is asked to repent of his past actions and pursue a different course of actions, a course leading towards the good. Furthermore during this period, God judges the actions of all men and rewards and punishes them according to their merit. According to Kohler, such a conception and such a holiday season make no sense if man does not have free will.

Kohler showed that Judaism has always struggled with this essential conflict between free will and predestination. He

¹⁰ Aboth, 3.16

asserted that within Jewish philosophy free will has generally been considered to be the higher value, whenever the two have come into conflict. According to Kohler, this has been true even to the point where philosophers have been willing to concede some of God's omniscience in order to maintain the concept of free will.¹¹

For Kohler, God's providence can be compared to a parent's care for his child. When the child is young, the parent makes decisions for him, but, as the child matures the child is allowed more and more control over his own fate. According to Kohler, divine power first works for man, and only later does it begin to work both with man and within man. Thus, man gradually becomes a co-worker with God in the process of creating the world.¹²

It is in this manner that human beings markedly differ from the lower animals. Only man, according to Kohler, is given free will. But with free will, man is also given responsibility. He is held accountable for his actions. This concept of man's responsibility for his actions already exists in the biblical story of Cain and Abel. According to Kohler, the story of Cain and Abel shows us that the moral freedom of man is not impaired by hereditary sin.¹³ Judaism believes that man is not born with 'original sin'.

¹¹ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 171.

¹² Kohler, Op. cit., p. 173.

¹³ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 231.

For Kohler, and within Judaism as a whole, sin is a religious conception. It is an offense against God which provokes His punishment.¹⁴ Sin is an offense against the divine order of holiness, and can cause an estrangement from God.

According to Kohler, sin arises out of the weakness of the flesh. It is associated with the desires of the body and of the heart; it is not necessarily associated with the soul. According to Kohler, the repetitive nature of man's sinning makes succeeding sins easier to commit. In other words, having sinned once, the second sin is easier for man to commit. The second makes the third still easier.

In the early stages of Israelite religion, sin was chiefly associated with disregard or wrongful observance of the cultic rites. But with the rise of the prophets, sin was no longer solely related to cultic practice. Rather, sin became associated with non-righteous behavior. Under the prophets and throughout latter Judaism sin became associated with man's conduct and ethical practices. This conception of sin led to the idea that sin is man's desecration of the Divine in man. Sin is known to man chiefly through his consciousness of his guilt -- guilt which causes pain and separation from God. According to Kohler, this sense of guilt and separation will continue within the individual until he has achieved teshuva.

¹⁴ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 238.

Kohler, although accepting the idea of teshuva, does not reject the concept of God's wrath being inflicted upon man in order to punish him. Within the Bible descriptions of God's wrath are only "emanations of His holiness, the guide and incentive to moral action in men."¹⁵ According to Kohler, the biblical authors understood God's wrath to be God's way of teaching humans how to act: where we today would use the word 'conscience', the biblical author used figurative language to express the same idea. For the biblical author, God's wrath was part of moral education, much as a parent's indignation at a young child is considered part of the child's education.

For Kohler, the foremost manifestation of God is God's hate of falsehood and violence.¹⁶ The longer a man continues to sin, the longer the wrath of God will continue to burn. According to Kohler, there is a direct, proportional relationship between man's sin and God's wrath. Kohler drew an analogy between God's wrath and a gardener in a garden. Just as a gardener must weed his garden, in a similar way God weeds out evil from the soul of man through use of his wrath.¹⁷

According to the biblical authors, God's wrath is provoked especially by violation of the social order, by desecration of sancta, by attacks upon the covenant between

¹⁵ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 108.

God and the Jewish people, and by attacks upon the poor, the widow, and the orphan. God's wrath is provoked when those who are less fortunate in society are deprived of their rights. Furthermore, within the biblical conception, divine holiness is felt as a moral force within the world, a force which is trying to remove the "dross" from man.

Under the influence of the prophets, this idea was somewhat modified. God became the judge of all creatures and nations. All of them are judged by fire.¹⁶ Under the influence of the Persians this idea continued to develop. With the assimilation of Persian thought into Judaism, the idea of the "world to come" began to take root. The "world to come" was conceived as a place of bliss: a place of reward for those who are deserving of God's ultimate reward. In conjunction with the "world to come" was the development of the idea of hell or gehenna as a place of punishment. It was conceived that the "day of judgement" will be the day on which all the evil doers will fall to gehenna. In time, even this conception of a physical heaven and hell was rejected by many Jews. According to Kohler, superior men began to realize that the "the reward of a good deed is a good deed and the punishment of sin is sin."¹⁷

God is not perceived merely as a wrathful God seeking justice and only justice. God is also perceived as a

¹⁶ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁷ Aboth, 4.2.

compassionate and long suffering God. If this were not true, God would have destroyed the world long ago due to His wrath at the sight of wrong-doing. God does not take delight in the death of sinners, but rather hopes that they will repent and mend their ways. Judaism has always held forth the promise of God's patience. God waits for man to find his way to a higher state or degree of holiness. It is by holding out this hope for change in man -- this hope that man will drive himself to a higher form of holiness that Judaism transforms the oppressive power of guilt into an uplifting power. Guilt can become man's catalyst for change.

Within Judaism more emphasis has generally been placed upon the attribute of God's mercy than on attributes of God's punitive anger. According to Kohler, this emphasis can be seen most clearly in the biblical account of the Golden Calf. In that story, God's patience and forgiveness are seen as higher attributes than are God's anger and punishment. Within Judaism, Divine patience is not as dependent upon faith as it is in Pauline Christianity. Rather it is offered as "an incentive of moral improvement."²⁰

Although Kohler stated that within Judaism much emphasis is placed upon God's attributes of patience and mercy, he also believed that the Jewish people were sustained through the centuries by the belief that God is a God of justice and will not allow wrong to go unpunished. Judaism holds that evil

²⁰ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 117.

does not befall an individual unless the individual is deserving of it. As the Bible states: "The judge of all the earth cannot act unjustly."²¹ Kohler admitted that in our daily life it is often difficult to comprehend God's justice. So often, as we view the world from our human perspective, it seems that reality runs counter to the idea of justice in the world. But, in spite of this perception, Kohler asserted that we live with a belief in God's justice. We continue to hold onto the moral axiom that there is justice in the world. We continue to believe that right and justice are not simply affairs of the state, but that they also are the affairs of God. In spite of appearances in the world, Kohler insisted that we continue to believe that violations of the "rules" of justice and morality are also a violations of God's cause in the world.²²

The feeling of equity -- that there is justice and "reward and punishment" in the world -- is deeply rooted in human nature, according to Kohler. Furthermore, all justice is based upon the universal principle²³ that those who break the moral code of society or of God will pay a price for having chosen to break that code. "Reward and punishment" is Judaism's compression of this doctrine. The doctrine was classically stated in Maimonides' eleventh principle:

²¹ Gen. 18:25

²² Kohler, Op. cit., pg 118-123.

²³ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 298.

The eleventh Principle of Faith. That He, the exalted one, rewards him who obeys the commands of the Torah, and punishes him who transgresses its prohibitions. That God grants reward to man in the future world, and that his strongest punishment is kareth.²⁴

As is seen, this doctrine has continually undergone changes in the process of its growth. Kohler attempted to posit a modern understanding of the concept of "reward and punishment."

Our modern conception of time and space admit neither a place or a world period for the reward and punishment of souls, nor the intolerable conception of eternal joy with out useful action and eternal agony with out moral purpose.²⁵

In light of modern anthropology, physiology etc we [moderns] reject the idea that the disembodied spirit of man is after this life to take on again the shape of the body, and, when found guilty on Judgement Day, to undergo corporal punishment, such as the culprit on earth is liable to, or in case of guiltlessness to enjoy sensuous delights like any mortal man.²⁶

Kohler, although unwilling to accept the idea of a physical "reward and punishment," was not willing to reject the idea entirely. He believed that maintaining the idea serves educational purposes, and more importantly, that it helps to explain the world in which we live. Maintaining a belief in "reward and punishment" helped Kohler to maintain what he considered to be the highest principle within Judaism:

²⁴ Maimonides commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10.1.

²⁵ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 309.

²⁶ Kaufmann Kohler, Heaven and Hell in Comparative Religion, (New York, The MacMillan Co., 1923), p. 151.

justice.²⁷

Kohler believed that heaven and hell are to be found within each individual's heart. Heaven and hell are our creations on this earth in this life. For Kohler, reward-- or heaven -- is the happiness we experience when we live our lives in harmony with God and God's 'will'. Punishment, on the other hand, is the soul's distress, its inner discord with man's primal source. Punishment and reward are to be found in each person's relation to his own heart and world.²⁸

However, for Kohler, death is not without its purposes. Our modern ideas require that every death lead to a higher goal. In Kohler's thinking, each death leads the survivors to strive for a higher goal, for the goal of 'the good.' Our ethical view has led us to reject the doctrine of eternal damnation. We have learned to realize that punishment must improve the society and the individual. According to Kohler, if we are to accept that God is a just God, then we must believe that God would not punish an individual without a purpose. Punishment without the possibility for improvement is senseless to Kohler; therefore, a just God could not condone such action. "Still more must the punitive justice of God have the improvement of man for its purpose, or else it would be cruel and unworthy of God."²⁹

²⁷ Kohler, Op. cit., P. 124.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Kaufmann Kohler, Heaven and Hell, Op. cit., p. 152.

Thus, Kohler does not reject the essential idea of "reward and punishment," but he does sharply reform it relative to traditional conceptions of "reward and punishment." In his reformation of "reward and punishment" Kohler continued in the tradition begun by Antigonus of Sokho and continued by Maimonides. "But after all, threats and bribes are at best pedagogic methods for children, not for men. True morality must do away with all selfish motives. The good ought to be done for its own sake, and evil be shunned because it is evil."³⁰

³⁰ Kohler, Op. cit., p. 152.

CHAPTER II

THE PERMANENCE OF JEWISH FAITH:

The Views of Leo Baeck

Leo Baeck was perhaps the most influential and important liberal rabbi in Germany in the period immediately preceding World War II. Baeck was born in Lissa, Germany in 1873. As a young adult, he first studied at the Conservative Theological Seminary at Breslau. In 1894 he transferred to the Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums. While he was studying at the Hochschule he also pursued studies in philosophy at the University of Berlin. At the University he was greatly influenced by the writings and teachings of Dilthey. Upon graduation from the Hochschule, he served as a rabbi first in Oppeln and then later in Dusseldorf.

In 1912 Baeck returned to Berlin to serve as one of the community's rabbis. Upon his return to Berlin he was also appointed to the faculty of the Hochschule. He became a member of the Central-Verein and the leader of the liberal Jewish community in Berlin.

In 1933 Baeck assumed the full responsibilities of his leadership role. Shortly after Hitler's assumption of power, Baeck is reported to have remarked that "the 1000 year history of German Jewry has come to an end."¹ He became the President of the Reichsvertretung, which was in charge of the entire German

¹ "Leo Baeck," Encyclopedia Judaica vol. 2, p. 77.

Jewish community. Since the Jews had become second-class citizens, they needed their own "government," and Baeck served as the head of that "government." Rather than succumb to the Nazi plan, Baeck enlivened the Jewish community, urging it to sponsor adult education and cultural programs. Although Baeck was offered many opportunities to leave Germany, he choose to stay in Berlin as long as other Jews were there. Baeck became more than just a symbol of German Jewry; he became its very heart during these years.²² In 1943, Leo Baeck was deported to Theresienstadt. There, although he did not serve in an official capacity in the "Jewish" administration of the camp, he did serve as a moral leader and as a center of resistance. Even while in Theresienstadt, Baeck refused to acquiesce to the Nazi design. His teaching became his life. "From seven to eight hundred persons would press into a small barracks in order to listen to his lectures on--Plato and Kant!"²³

After the war Baeck moved to London and served as the head of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. From 1948 until his death in 1956, Baeck intermittently taught at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

During the course of his life, Baeck published only two major works, although he was the author of hundreds of articles. His second major work, This People Israel (1955-

²² Albert Friedlander, Leo Baeck: Teacher of Theresienstadt, (Chicago, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 43.

²³ op. cit., p. 46.

57), is essentially a history of the Jewish People. His first book, The Essence of Judaism (first edition, 1905), served to thrust Baeck to the head of German Jewry.

In 1901, Baeck published a polemical article against Adolf von Harnack's Wessen des Christentums. This article served as the basis for The Essence. Harnack had claimed that the essence of Christianity was the teaching of Jesus. Furthermore, those teachings could be summarized in two short sayings: the fatherhood of God ... and ... the brotherhood of man.⁴ Harnack claimed that he was trying to present the religion of Jesus rather than the religion about Jesus; he believed that modern Christianity had become the religion about Jesus and not the religion of Jesus. Harnack's Wessen des Christentums caused a major stir throughout the German scholarly world and Baeck was extremely opposed to many of Harnack's views. He challenged Harnack on his assertion that as long as Christianity "retained the old testament it would be paralyzed and unable to make any progress."⁵ Baeck attacked Harnack as an apologist and as someone who did not really understand either the time of Jesus or Jesus's use of words.

It was against this background, and in a sense, as a response to Harnack, that Baeck wrote the first edition of The Essence of Judaism. Baeck opened The Essence by asserting

⁴ op. cit., p. 51.

⁵ op. cit., p. 52.

that Judaism is not a religion that begins and ends with one prophet, but rather, that in Judaism there is a succession of prophets which continues to this day in the form of ongoing revelation. It is upon this premise that Baeck traced the religious ideas of Judaism and Judaism's role in the world.

Baeck opposed the idea of creating a system of thought, but his writings are based upon a number of differing assumptions. Perhaps the most important of these assumptions is the reality of ethical monotheism. For Baeck, this was the essential element within Judaism, and it also served as the guiding principle in his life. The essence of God is the moral law, according to Baeck. God secures morality in the world:

In other words, the essence of this religion is piety, righteousness of life. The attitude of man, to whom God has given life and the commandment, to his God, the only God, is the essential thing-- this piety with its two poles, the certainty of being God's handiwork and the certainty that he is called to live and work for God.*

According to Baeck, the moral law and the ethical imperatives which it contains are available for man to accept and understand. By definition, according to Baeck, the reality of ethical monotheism calls for loyalty. Israel is the people who must be loyal to the one and only God. In exchange for its loyalty, Israel achieves a special state of holiness in the world. By adherence to the moral imperatives, which are the will of God and which are known by humanity, Israel is

* Leo Baeck, God and Man, (New York, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958), p. 28.

able to achieve holiness.

Baeck realized that faith in ethical monotheism can not be a blind faith. Rather, he believed that there is proof for that faith and a reason to maintain that faith. For Baeck, the basis of faith was man's consciousness of being created by the one God. Man is not only conscious of being; he is also conscious of the fact that he, himself, is a creator and is called upon by God to create. This viewpoint is unique to Judaism.

With it [the feeling of being created] is united another essential element by means of which Jewish religiousness attains its completion and wholeness: the consciousness of being able to create and of being called upon to create. To be both created and yet creator, is the Jewish world of religion, its one and its all.⁷

Man's ability to create effects not only his own life, but it has an effect upon the entire world in which he lives. "Man finds that by doing good he is enabled to create something, to give to the good a concrete existence, and thus also to form and shape his own life, to make the good constitute his life."⁸

By doing the good, Baeck argued, one also establishes a relationship between himself and God. In fact, Baeck argued, within Judaism there has always been a relationship between

⁷ Leo Baeck, The Essence of Judaism, trans. Victor Grubwieser and Leonard Pearl, (London, MacMillan and Co., 1936), p. 119.

⁸ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 120.

man and God.⁹ From God, man receives not only life and the feeling of being created, but man also receives commandments. God also demands righteousness: He tests and judges man. Man is able to prove his love of God through his actions. "It is by fulfilling the commandment that man can serve God and prove his love to Him."¹⁰ For Baeck, the love of God was the first and most important commandment. Man's love of God and feeling of being created, combined with the fact that man is God's creation, creates an inseparable bond between man and God. Yet, man is not God's only creation. God did create the entire world and all that is therein. Man, though, is God's special creation. Man is the only creation that has moral responsibility. Man is the only one of God's creations which can respond to a commandment. Because man is the only being that can respond to God in this manner, man can and ought to respond to God, instead of ignore God. Man is to actively serve God.¹¹ Furthermore, the fact that man can serve God makes human life radically different from all other forms of life. God has already given man's life significance. By choosing to follow God's moral commands, man adds greater significance to his life. God gives man the free choice whether to follow His commands or not; man can choose to be a moral individual or not. Man stands before God as an ethical

⁹ Leo Baeck, God and Man, op. cit., 1958), p. 35.

¹⁰ Baeck, God and Man, op. cit., p. 36.

¹¹ Baeck, God and Man, op. cit., p. 36.

being. "The good is placed clearly and distinctly before him as the law of his life, as something which he is to realize and possess, wherein he is to prove his special peculiarity."¹² If man succeeds in choosing the moral life and in becoming an ethical being, then according to Baeck, clearness and definiteness will enter into his life. "By dint of the good deed man approaches God; in it he finds God ever anew and with it he makes God his God."¹³

Furthermore, Baeck argued, through the performance of good deeds, man will be able to enter into the "Kingdom of God." The "Kingdom of God" is a world of the good -- a world in which the Divine may be found and a world which serves God; it is a world in which the commandments of God alone rule. Within Judaism, according to Baeck, the "Kingdom of God" is not something which God confers upon man, but rather, man must earn it; he must achieve it. Through his actions, man introduces God into this world and thus creates the "Kingdom of God."

The kingdom of God means in Judaism not something merely ecstatic, or something which is purely supermundane and of the world beyond; it signifies nothing but the state of life that man who, in free and ready obedience, has set himself to obey God and to serve Him, so that in that obedience he shapes his life and lives in the world in which reign the eternal moral law and the commandment of God, in which, by virtue of man's deeds, the world beyond is brought down into this world, and there and here

¹² Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 124.

¹³ Ibid.

become as one.¹⁴

Man should choose the good alone. By choosing the good, he recognizes God's divinity and oneness. "As monotheism means the One God, so also it means the one command, the one righteousness, the one path, and the one morality."¹⁵ Evil, or the rejection of the one God and His command, does not enable man to make God his God. By choosing evil, man places himself outside the kingdom; it is man acting without a goal or without value. For Baeck, man acting without a goal or without values is amongst the greatest evils imaginable. Furthermore, Baeck argued, God reacts when man rejects Him. "This reaction of the Divine against godlessness and unholiness is called in the Bible the jealousy of God, His wrath."¹⁶

Baeck believed that if God is to remain God, then God must have His wrath. A God without wrath would be like a God dwelling above the world, above its moral needs and above the moral command. Such a God would be removed from the world and would thus cease to function in the world. Baeck asserted that man needs a God who will have and show his wrath, so that he will respect Him and resolve to do the good. For Baeck, the reality of God's wrath, and the possibility of that wrath being turned against one for failure to do the good, serves as

¹⁴ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 126.

¹⁵ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁶ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 133.

very strong motivation to do the good. This theme is found throughout Judaism: it is the performance of mitzvot because of yirat shamayim, fear of God.

According to Baeck, Judaism emphasizes man's continuous responsibility for his actions. Each man must render an account of his actions unto God. Life has the potential for a Divine quality, but only if man realizes that quality. Man's ability to make judgments makes it all the more important for Baeck, that man achieve that Divine-like quality.

Baeck believed that man may help himself to bring the divine quality into his life through the act of confession. Baeck did not believe that confession is important for God, rather, he believed that the act of confession is important for man. It is meaningful for man; it is not merely a ritual. The act of confession reminds man of the ideals that he is trying to achieve, and of how far he has yet to go in achieving those ideals. For Baeck, confession was a form of self-examination which helps to bring the ideals into man's mind.¹⁷

Baeck maintained that a belief that there is no judge and no judgement is the root of all sin.¹⁸ By choosing to ignore God's command, man sins. "Man makes himself guilty by opposing that which God demands, not merely lagging behind it, by abandoning or rejecting the commandment of God, thus

¹⁷ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 160.

¹⁸ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 162.

turning away from the freedom in which his origin and his purity are to find their realization."¹⁹ The sin is each man's own sin. Judaism knows only the "sin of the individual."²⁰ In Judaism, as opposed to Christianity, the emphasis is placed upon man's personal sin rather than "original sin." For Baeck, sin is a fate which the individual prepares for himself by making himself an object rather than a human being. Furthermore, Baeck asserted that sin is not an act of faith, but is an act of judgement of human action.²¹

Baeck did not believe that sin was without its consequences. By committing sins man must pay a price, "He commits it (sin) and becomes thus the victim of his own deeds, or, as it is also put, punishment befalls him as the consequence of what he has done. The commanding, judging God is the punishing God."²²

Baeck regarded sin as a mistake. Like all mistakes, it cannot be undone, but man can, in a sense, nullify it. Man can always remove himself from a 'state' of sin through proper actions. Most important amongst those actions is teshuva-- not repentance, but return -- return to the moral commandments given to man by God.²³ Judaism always holds out the

¹⁹ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 163.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 164.

²³ Baeck, God and Man, op. cit., p. 45.

opportunity for man to start again. "It lays the emphasis on the decision made by man and on the path that he now treads."²⁴ The responsibility for teshuva lies solely with man: there are no intermediaries between man and God.

Baeck asserts that every immoral act that man performs is not only an affront against a fellow human being, but more importantly, by definition, it is an affront to God. All wrongs are done against God. For Baeck, there was no such thing as a wrong done "merely to an individual."²⁵ Every immoral act is a profanation of God, but also, he argued, every moral/ethical act brings man closer to God and closer to the holy.

Baeck realized that it would be possible for an individual to perform the mitzvot and the ethical commands that God demands without ever really thinking about his actions. However, Baeck asserted, when the commands are done out of rote, as if they were the "law," then they become unconnected with the Infinite. When the commands are upheld without the proper intentions, Baeck argued, they cease to really be commands. They become a form without content. Further, the thought which is almost always associated with the commandment, the thought of the blessed and happy reward that follows the fulfillment, then becomes meaningless."²⁶

²⁴ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 48.

²⁵ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 134.

²⁶ Baeck, God and Man, op. cit., p. 41.

For Baeck, the kavanah, the intention behind the performance of the commandment, is just as important as the actual doing of it. Such a viewpoint is clearly based upon the saying of Antigonus of Sokho "Be not like servants who serve their master because of the expected reward, but be like those who serve a master without expecting a reward; and let the fear of God be upon you."²⁷

Baeck realized that there are "rewards and punishments" to be found within the Bible. Furthermore, he believed that at certain times in the history of the Jewish people the laity have needed and valued the concept of "reward and punishment." "Reward and punishment," Baeck argued, especially found its way into Judaism through eschatological and mystical ideas. But limits were always set to the degree of punishment which any one person could suffer. One example he cited is the fact that, in Judaism, the period of punishment for one's sins has always been limited to either one or seven years.²⁸ It has always been believed in Judaism that nobody deserved "eternal damnation." On the other hand, the reward for the "good" is peace eternal.²⁹ Baeck believed that, as time progressed and as the Jewish people matured, it was understood that what God demanded of the people was purity, freedom and

²⁷ Aboth, 1.3.

²⁸ In present day Judaism the maximum period which a soul spends atoning for its sins is limited to one year.

²⁹ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 189.

unselfishness. Furthermore, as the people matured, they came to realize and accept that in the work of goodness lies its own reward. Men like Maimonides soundly rejected the idea of heaven and hell, and even to some extent, the concept of "reward and punishment." Maimonides asserted that the concept of "reward and punishment" was intended only to motivate children and common people to do the good. In mainstream Judaism, life in this world came to be of primary importance.

Baeck did not ultimately let go of the concept of "reward and punishment." He felt that he must hold on to it, although in an altered form. He asserted that the hope for a reward is very different from the demand for a reward, i.e. holding out one's hand and waiting for a reward.³⁰ For him, the concept of reward includes many different factors, such as the ethical demands, the consequences of one's actions, and the outcome of one's deeds. Responsibility, judgement and reward were all closely intertwined for Baeck. His basic notion was that every deed has its effect. Sin leads to punishment because God must avenge guilt. On the other hand, good deeds lead to reward, for God must reward faithfulness. "The hope of reward bears witness to man's faith in the future, or, as might be said to his individual messianic conviction."³¹

Furthermore, Baeck argued, the religious yearning of the soul is expressed in the hope of an eventual reward. The

³⁰ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 133.

³¹ Baeck, Essence, op. cit., p. 189.

tension that each and every individual feels between what is and what ought to be is expressed through one's hope in an eventual reward. According to Baeck, the yearning for happiness, the yearning for the world that ought to be, is in a sense, inbred in man and this leads to his desire for a reward.

Although Baeck did not clearly state this he does seem to imply that the reward is life and peace eternal in the world to come. On one level, Baeck accepted the old rabbinic dictum that this world is but a place of preparation for the world to come.

In conclusion, Baeck did accept the concept of "reward and punishment." He would have liked to eliminate the concept, but was not able to. He realized that it is, perhaps, an inbred need in man. He therefore encouraged individuals to do good deeds for their own sake, without demanding a reward, but with the assurance that the possibility of reward does exist.

CHAPTER III
COLUMBUS PLATFORM REFORM JUDAISM:
The Views of Samuel S. Cohon

Samuel S. Cohon was the Reform Movement's preeminent theologian during the second quarter of the twentieth century. He was born in Russia in 1888, and as a child in Russia, Cohon studied in a Yeshiva. There, he gained a reverence for Judaism, a knowledge of modern Hebrew literature, and a broad familiarity with world literature. In 1904, at the age of sixteen, he left Russia for the United States. Upon arriving in this country, he first resided in Newark, New Jersey. There he acquired his high school education and also a deep appreciation for the writings of Kaufmann Kohler and David Neumark. His appreciation for the writings of these two men led him to apply to the Hebrew Union College. He was ordained by the College in 1912. That same summer he married and entered the congregational rabbinate.

He served in the congregational rabbinate until 1923 when he was recalled to H.U.C. to succeed Kaufmann Kohler as professor of Jewish Theology. During his years in the active rabbinate he was instrumental in founding a teacher's training college in Chicago, in creating four new Reform congregations, and in creating America's first city-wide chaplaincy post. He was also instrumental in founding the forerunner of today's B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation.

Upon his return to the College, and for the next thirty-

five years, he "spoke with consecration and enormous scholarship, as the foremost interpreter of Modern Judaism."¹ He represented Jewry in the first "Exchange Lectures" between Jewish and Christian seminaries. He served on the editorial board for successive editions of The Union Prayer Book, and he also prepared the revised edition of the Union Passover Haggadah and the Rabbi's Manual. In 1937 he was one of the principal authors of the "Columbus Platform." Upon his retirement from the College in 1956, he was transferred to the Los Angeles campus of H.U.C. to establish its graduate department. Until his death in 1959, Cohon's schedule as Professor Emeritus remained as busy as that of his earlier years.² During the course of his life, he published numerous volumes on both the scholarly level and on the popular level. His most important works include: Judaism: a Way of Life (1948) and Jewish Theology: A Historical and Systematic Interpretation of Judaism and its Foundations (1971).

For Cohon, the idea of God implies that we can know at least something about Him, and/or that God's actions may be understood, to some extent, by human beings. God, for Cohon, is the living and creative essence in the world, the ultimate ground of existence, and the unique and self-conscious

¹ Religious Affirmations: Samuel S. Cohon 1888-1959, (Los Angeles, Privately Published, 1983), jacket.

² Ibid.

intelligence.³ According to Cohon, God does not change with time, but, rather, our understanding of God changes through time. The fundamental aspect of Judaism's God idea, and Israel's chief contribution to the world is ethical monotheism.

The Jewish doctrine of ethical monotheism affirms (1) the reality of the living God; (2) He is best conceived as personal - not in the sense of anthropomorphism but of individuality, intelligence, and will; (3) He is the creative principle who called the universe into being, and sustains it by His wisdom and might; (4) He makes for order not only in physical nature but also in the life of man. He is the power not ourselves, who makes for and wills righteousness and love.⁴

For the Jew, belief in God has been "a solemn consecration to the highest spiritual and moral reality."⁵ The Jew voluntarily submits himself to God's will: a call to "holiness, to duty, to righteousness, to mercy and to truth."⁶

Within this ethical monotheistic system, God's will is translated into moral patterns which shape the destiny of man and nations. Nations come to be seen as Jeremiah saw them: as clay in the hands of the potter.⁷

According to Cohon, social experience has led the Jewish

³ Samuel S. Cohon, What We Jews Believe, (Cincinnati, U.A.H.C., 1931), p. 141.

⁴ Samuel S. Cohon, "The Idea of God in Judaism", C.C.A.R. Yearbook XLV, (Cincinnati, C.C.A.R., 1935), p. 228.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeremiah 18.

people to conceive of God as the embodiment of the moral will. God demands that we obey His law in our relations with one another. Within ethical monotheism, God's will must be done by all, from the highest to the lowest of individuals.

Injustice is the ruin of empires; justice, their only defense. What the law of gravitation is to the physical order, the law of righteousness is to humanity. This stern reality has served as the foundation of the doctrine of retribution. It has played a prominent role in Jewish thinking and has saved us from sentimental illusions. The middat harahamim has been balanced by the middat haddin.¹²

According to Cohon, we live in and through God in a manner similar to the way in which nature lives in and through God. We are related to God. Cohon believed that "our conceptions of God must translate into general human values if they are to be religiously fruitful."¹³ Religion stresses our communion with God. This communion with God expresses itself in an enrichment of feeling, a higher standard of conduct, and an enlargement of our mental vision.¹⁴ With religion in our lives, evil loses its absoluteness because, according to Cohon, when we accept religion and thereby accept God into our lives, we live with the reality that above the void there is God.

Man, for Cohon, was neither all matter nor all spirit, but, rather, he was a combination of the two. Judaism rejects

¹² Cohon, "The Idea of God in Judaism," op. cit., p. 220.

¹³ Cohon, What We Jews Believe, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁴ Cohon, What we Jews Believe, op. cit., p. 163.

the notion that the body is evil. Judaism does accept the fact that the body is subject to the laws of nature, including; matter, growth, decay, change and disease. In the same way that the physical body can be affected by disease, so, too, can the soul of man be affected by both health and sickness. For Cohon, and for Judaism as a whole, the spirit is the Divine element within each and every individual. The spirit does not come into man fully complete; rather, man's life-long task is to strive to complete the soul.

Human beings often experience conflicts between their conscious mind and sub- or un-conscious minds (which Cohon labeled as our "spirit" or "soul"). Religion's function is to help integrate these two elements of the human being:

It [religion] is born of the inner need of unity....All religion may be viewed as a way of integrating personality, belief, knowledge, worship, consciousness of sin, and striving for atonement. It is aimed at binding man together as a spiritual unity.¹¹

Religion helps man to channel his whole self -- the conscious and the un-conscious, perceptions, feelings and will -- toward useful goals. For Cohon, these useful goals were to realign our thoughts and actions with the values that make life worthwhile, and to be conscious of our fellow men and of God in all of our actions.

Religion helps man in many facets of his life. First, religion enriches his life. "Religion strikingly affects our

¹¹ Samuel S. Cohon, Judaism: A Way of Life, (Cincinnati, U.A.H.C., 1948), p. 37.

perceptions."¹² Through religion, man's life is invested with meaning and purpose. Religion grants man a stronger grip upon reality and helps man to remove the inner discord that effects him. Religion endows life with enchantments and broadens man's range of experiences. Through religion, man is provided with confidence in the outcome of things. Religion offers man goals to strive for and faith in his own values.

Second, religion serves the function of liberating man from fear. Religion enriches man's mental outlook and strengthens his will. "By centering his ideas around the belief in a righteous and loving God, religion liberates man from the bondage of fear, which holds the lower animals in fetters and which clings to him as part of his biological heritage."¹³ Religion, for Cohon, takes all fears and sublimates them by confining them to fear of God. "The antidote and corrective of many a fear and worry is a religious life, expressing itself in a heroic submission to the will of God and His higher moral purpose."¹⁴

Third, religion helps man to achieve deliverance from evil. "Religion makes its greatest contribution to human well-being by lifting the crushing burden of evil from the hearts and minds of men."¹⁵ According to Cohon, in a

¹² Cohon, op. cit., p. 38.

¹³ Cohon, op. cit. p. 41.

¹⁴ Cohon, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁵ Cohon, op. cit., p. 49.

materialistic conception of the world, evil cannot exist. For in such a conception of the world, complaints against nature are meaningless, since nature assumes no rationality and can not account for irrationality. Indeed, the existence of evil grows into a world problem only in a theistic system of thought. According to Cohon, only when we conceive of the world as ordered, created and governed by God, does evil appear in the world. "Judaism, too, while essentially a religion of law and moral discipline, directs much of its attention to the question of how to face evil."¹⁰

Our appreciation of existence as either good or bad depends in part upon our individual temperament, experience and personal preferences. But, no matter how much these elements might vary among individuals, Cohon believes that unless we are blind to the world around us, we cannot deny that evil does exist in the world. This reality of the world helps to emphasize an essential fact within Judaism: the world was not created exclusively to plague human beings, nor was it created exclusively for their pleasure. According to Cohon, a life of faith allows us to see through the evil: to see and discern signs of benevolence, of loveliness and of beauty in the world.

Cohon believed that "the Jewish philosophical ideas of evil require restatement in the light of evolutionary

¹⁰ Ibid.

doctrine."¹⁷ Cohon believed, as evolutionary science has shown, that the world is always in process, and that the world is constantly being remade. Perfection, thus is not something to be found, but rather something to be attained and acquired. Man's cooperation and participation therefore plays an important role in perfection's unfolding. Man becomes a shutapho l'hakkadosh baruch hu. Like all workers, man is exposed to dangers within the garden in which he works. Especially, because man is given free choice, Cohon assumes that man will occasionally make a bad choice or choose evil. But, "without these possibilities he could hardly achieve his triumphs in the sphere of science, morals and religion."¹⁸

One of the goals of religion, according to Cohon, is to help man, "to stimulate him to overcome his inner discords, the conflicts which arise within his consciousness between warring impulses."¹⁹ Cohon believed that in modern times many people have dismissed the idea of evil and its consequences. "Some thinkers," he said, "deny its very reality."²⁰ Cohon was not willing to join that group of thinkers. He believed that evil manifests itself in the life of the individual and in society, although perhaps it is known by different names.

¹⁷ Cohon, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁸ Cohon, op. cit., p. 64.

¹⁹ Cohon, op. cit., p. 268.

²⁰ Cohon, op. cit., p. 269.

Cohon defined sin as "a willful and direct affront to God."²¹ "Its [sin's] primary meaning is the negation of religious values and standards, the violation of the sanctity of life. The synonyms which are closest to it are: ungodliness, unholiness, profanity and impiety."²² For Cohon, sin is a central fact within religion. Sin and the assurance of grace are the chief motivating factors in the perpetuation of religion. Without them, religion would sink to the level of a cult in which there is no room for either devotion or submission to God's will.

The concept of sin has gone through many changes during the course of history. In the modern period 'bad' things are defined as crime, violence, misdemeanors and sin. The Bible and the rabbis knew of no such distinctions. For them, crimes against society or against another individual were, by definition, crimes against God. The religious significance of sin is the belief that God is offended by each act man does that runs counter to His will.

Judaism assumes that man's desire is to have a "proper" relationship with God. Sin interferes with this relationship. Through sin, man impairs his relationship with God and thus "endangers his well-being, both physically and spiritually."²³ Once that relationship has been damaged, the way to regain

²¹ Cohon, op. cit., p. 269.

²² Cohon, op. cit., p. 272.

²³ Cohon, op. cit., p. 286.

"at-one-ment" with God is through atonement which consists of tefila, teshuva, and tzedaka. Within Reform Judaism, the ceremonial cult -- and Yom Kippur in particular -- are not capable of automatically removing man's sin. According to Cohon, within Reform Judaism, each soul must recognize its own burden of guilt and seek reconciliation with God, with its self, and with its fellow human beings.

From the moral standpoint, atonement "is predicated upon the conviction that, despite the corruption and the degradation of men, and despite the moral leprosy which so often erupts in the social body, human nature possesses an element of incorruptibility."²⁴ Judaism is based upon the premises, that self-renewal is always possible, that there is always an element in each and every human being which remains "pure." Judaism assumes that even the lowliest mortal is endowed with a deathless soul.

Atonement can be achieved through three steps:²⁵

1) The individual must recognize the sin and the fact that it has estranged him from God.

2) The individual must feel a sense of remorse or abandonment about the sin, and he must have removed the causes that led to the sin.

3) The individual should strive to feel a restored sense of unity with God; that is, the individual should feel as if

²⁴ Cohon, op. Cit., p. 304.

²⁵ Ibid.

God has granted him forgiveness.

Repentance is only effective in purely moral and spiritual matters. We cannot undo sin, but we can change the state of mind that led us to sin.

Cohon believed that despite Sadducean opposition, the beliefs in immortality, resurrection, judgement, and heaven and hell have rooted themselves firmly into Judaism. He admitted that these concepts did not significantly impact the first 1000 years of Jewish history. The Pharisees combined as cardinal beliefs the beliefs in Divine unity and revelation, with that of retribution. For the Pharisees, retribution could occur on both the national and the individual level. According to Cohon, the Pharisees believed that retribution was a "stimulus to moral progress."²⁶ In Pharisaic thought, hope in the hereafter served to enrich the lives of men on earth. They believed that it would strengthen man's sense of fellowship with God. Furthermore, Cohon believed, the concept of immortality and divine "reward and punishment" in the world to come grew out of a desire to correct divine providence. If the final accounts of good and evil are not settled until "the world to come," then the wicked must stand in constant fear of death and the punishment that would be due to them. Similarly, it was believed that the righteous who had suffered in this world would receive their just reward in the world to come. The expectation of punishment and the anticipation of

²⁶ Cohon, What We Jews Believe, op. cit., p. 181.

reward were seen as the motivating forces in the world for doing good. This world was seen as a way-station to the world to come.

Cohon very clearly believed in the concept of "reward and punishment." He believed in the soul and sin, both of which according to him, underwent changes in Reform Judaism. So, too, "reward and punishment" remains a real but changed concept. "The doctrinal changes of early Reform did not effect the first principles of Judaism. Albo's three roots: Gods existence, revelation and retribution, remain basic for Reform."²⁷ Reform Judaism has rejected the idea of physical reward and punishment and of a clear vision of heaven and hell in which the 'accounts are settled'.

Where law rules, we expect to find actions, which fit into the cosmic scheme, more successfully than those which conflict with it. Compensation, indeed, seems to form part of the natural order of things. The soil and the elements combine to reward the earnest worker and to punish the shiftless one. Wickedness carries along its penalty, and virtue its reward. Though the detailed application of the law of retribution to all human conditions -- as the author of Job has shown -- leads to moral confusion, it works in a general way and may not be ignored by those who would not permit their lives to end in failure.²⁸

Although Cohon did not claim to understand the details of divine retribution, he did believe that, in some manner, the concept still operates in the world. Furthermore, like the

²⁷ Samuel S. Cohon, "The Religious Ideas of A Union Prayer Book", C.C.A.R. Yearbook XL, (Cincinnati, 1930), p. 287.

²⁸ Cohon, What We Jews Believe, op. cit., p. 159-60.

rabbis, he believed that it can serve as a motivating influence in an individual's life. Leading the "good life," according to Cohon, awakens new behaviors within the individual. These include senses of judgement and conscience, a sense of duty and responsibility and a sense of obligation; a respect for law governs his whole being. An individual who is leading a good life, and has awakened to the new forms within him, "no longer does so merely because it is profitable or because it is coerced by external pressure but because he has been transformed by it. The good has become the inner law of his being, and responds to the deep of his soul."²⁷ Such an individual begins to see the good not as a creation of human beings, but, rather, as being grounded in the very content of the universe. The good becomes part of the holy and the divine. For such a religious individual the good is charged with spiritual value, as a revelation of the will of God.

Cohon believed that man should be motivated by the motives of pure religion, and fear mingled with love. He believed that man should be guided out of a fear of not being whole-hearted with God, and that man should act so that his conduct will have the approval of both man and God. Cohon realized that there are those who believe in God as "an old man in the sky" with a long white beard who hurls his lightning bolts at sinners, but this, he believed, was a

²⁷ Cohon, Judaism: a Way of Life, op.cit., p. 120.

"primitive and backward view."³⁰ Rather, as the ultimate reward, Cohon believed that in unison with God, the soul attains its highest reward, although this reward may be beyond the consciousness of the physical individual. When the soul is sheltered under the wings of God, it truly attains its highest reward for doing good.

³⁰ Cohon, What We Jews Believe, op. cit., p. 139.

CHAPTER IV

JUDAISM IN TRANSITION:

The Views of Mordecai M. Kaplan

Mordecai Kaplan was born in a small Lithuanian town on the outskirts of Vilna in June of 1881. As a young boy he was totally submerged in a traditional Jewish home and education. It is reputed that he did not know his birthday by other than its Hebrew date until, as a young man, he went to the New York Public Library to look up the corresponding date.¹ In 1889 Kaplan came with his family to live in the United States. In the early years of his life his father was his most important teacher.² Approximately six months before his Bar Mitzvah he was enrolled as a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He received his B.A. from City College in 1900 and his M.A. from Columbia College. At Columbia he studied philosophy and sociology.³ In 1903, Kaplan was appointed minister of Kehilath Jeshurun, a large Orthodox congregation in New York. He was unhappy there, due to a conflict between his liberal views and the congregation's more traditional views. In 1909 he was appointed Principal of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he latter became Dean. He

¹ Mel Scult, "Mordecai M Kaplan: His Life" in Dynamic Judaism: The Essential Writings of Mordecai M. Kaplan, (New York, Schocken Books, 1985) p. 3.

² Ibid.

³ Scult, Op. cit. p. 4.

remained in this post until his retirement in the 1940's.

During his tenure at J.T.S. Kaplan began to travel widely, and gave lectures on his philosophy of Judaism. "He emphasized that religion must be linked to experience.... In his words, 'a condition indispensable to a religion being an active force in human life is that it speaks to men in terms of their own experience,....'"⁴

In 1922, with the formation of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, Kaplan was given a free reign to put his ideas into practice. In 1933 Kaplan published his first major work, Judaism as a Civilization. Kaplan continued to teach at the Seminary until 1963. Throughout this period, Kaplan's idea of Reconstructionism had been gaining adherents. Kaplan's desire, though, was not to form a new movement in Judaism, but rather, that Reconstructionism should be adopted as the left wing of the Conservative movement.⁵ Despite his efforts, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College was founded in 1968 with Ira Eisenstein, Kaplan's son-in-law, as its first president. Kaplan lectured frequently at the College. Mordecai Kaplan died in 1983, at the age of 102. His life truly encompassed the whole saga of the American Jew in our time.⁶

Mordecai Kaplan is perhaps the most important American

⁴ Scult, op. cit. p. 7.

⁵ Scult, op. cit. p. 11.

⁶ Scult, op. cit. p.12.

Jewish thinker of the twentieth century. As a result of his writing's, the face of American Judaism has been forever changed. His thinking led to changes in the ways in which Jews think about Judaism and God. His thinking also had a profound impact upon the ways in which American Jews practice Judaism. It was as a result of Kaplan's thinking that both the Jewish community center movement flourished and the Reconstructionist Movement was founded. Emanuel Goldsmith wrote:

Mordecai Kaplan remains the only nineteenth- or twentieth-century Jewish thinker to have painstakingly constructed a comprehensive analysis of Judaism in terms of community and peoplehood; organization and structure; philosophy and theology; and history, culture, ethics, and ritual; and to have charted a course for the Jewish future in all these areas."

Kaplan's view of religion is based upon six basic assumptions. He believed that many of these 'postulates' are the basis for all religions in all societies:

1) "Religion is a natural social process which arises from man's intrinsic need of salvation or self-fulfillment."¹ For Kaplan, religion arises in all societies due to the intrinsic needs of human beings.

2) According to Kaplan, man's need for self-fulfillment

¹ Emanuel S. Goldsmith, "Mordecai M. Kaplan: His Interpretation of Judaism", in Dynamic Judaism: The Essential writings of Mordecai M. Kaplan, (New York, Schocken Books, 1985) p. 15.

² Mordecai M. Kaplan, The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion (New York, Reconstructionist Press, 1962), p. IX.

is based upon an earlier assumption made by man: that the world is shaped in such a way that man can achieve self-fulfillment. This presupposition on man's part has often played a major role in the formation of God concepts. Man's almost instinctive belief that he can achieve self-fulfillment has lead him to "create" a God concept that will aid him in his achievement, and assure the attainability, at least in theory, of his goal.

3) Every civilization identifies the most important elements of its life as sancta, holy. Kaplan believed that those things or actions through which an individual in society achieves salvation or self-fulfillment are considered sacred by the society.

4) Over the centuries, the Jewish people have developed a specifically Jewish application of the God idea.

5) In the process of applying the Jewish God idea, and throughout the course of their history, the Jewish people have passed through three distinct phases. Furthermore, Kaplan believed that if Judaism survives the present crisis then it will enter into a forth phase:

We are still in the throes of the crisis created by the spirit of modernism, with its negation of supernaturalism. "Supernaturalism" is here used in the specific sense of the suspension of natural law to make possible the occurrences of events which God himself brings about, to reward or punish, to help or hinder human beings...."

"Mordechai Kaplan, Judaism without Supernaturalism: The only alternative to Orthodoxy and Secularism (New York, The Reconstructionist Press, 1967), p. 16.

6) In order for Judaism to survive the present crisis, it will have to change: Judaism will have to become a "this worldly religion," offering salvation in the here and now, and not in some distant future world to come.¹⁰

Kaplan believed that, in his own day Judaism had already, in some circles, begun to move beyond the crisis of modernism and supernaturalism. For him, Zionism was an example of the Jewish movement towards the next phase of Judaism. The traditional belief was that "because of our sins we were exiled from our land." This belief was based on the assumption that in order to punish the Jewish people, God supernaturally interfered in the normal laws of nature and humanity and exiled them from the land of Israel. The Zionists, on the other hand had bypassed this basic assumption which stemmed from a supernaturalistic conception of Jewish history. The Zionists believed that Jews must work for salvation (return to the land of Israel) in this world, and they can not wait or expect that God, in some supernaturalistic manner, will return them to the promised land. Zionists took the first step of separating Judaism from supernaturalism. Zionism, therefore, had started to move past the present crisis of modernism. Judaism, according to Kaplan, must now attach itself to naturalism.¹¹ Kaplan realized that this would require a new method of interpreting Judaism,

¹⁰ Kaplan, The Meaning of God. op. cit., pp. IX-X.

¹¹ Ibid.

Jewish traditions, history and symbols. He realized that it will also require the Jewish people, themselves, to understand, accept, believe and live their lives in accordance with this new outlook on Judaism.

According to Kaplan, traditional Jewish beliefs belong to a different universe from modern thinking.¹² In the past, there have been two different interpretations of Judaism: the rabbinic interpretation and the philosophic. The rabbinic mode of interpretation is based upon the seven principles of Hillel and the hermeneutic principles. Rabbinic Judaism arose as a "response to the need for authority to validate some existing practices..."¹³ The philosophic interpretation, on the other hand, is based upon metaphorical and allegorical interpretation of the text. Philosophic Judaism arose as a "response to the need of harmonizing tradition with the dictates of reason."¹⁴ These two systems of interpreting Judaism, although based on different principles, in a general sense came to similar conclusions which have continued to impact on traditional Judaism. Traditional Judaism believes in an all-mighty, all perfect God who controls and maintains the cosmos. Furthermore, it is believed that God's will controls the universe and may be observed operating in it. In

¹² Kaplan, The Meaning of God, op. cit., p. 1.

¹³ Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, op. cit., p. 19.

¹⁴ Ibid.

traditional Jewish belief, heaven was believed to be a particular place with a physical location within the universe.¹⁵ Heaven was the place that was reserved for the God-head and His angels. God was the one who controlled the universe, although man's actions also had an effect upon it. Man's conduct was considered to be so important that it influenced "the behavior of the physical elements of the universe."¹⁶

Traditional Judaism believes that man's goal and objective in life is to follow the will of God. According to traditional Judaism, God's will is easily discernable for it is found in the Torah, or the word of God. When man obeys the will of God, by observing the precepts found within the Torah he is rewarded. That reward, according to traditional Judaism, is eternal life. When man disobeys God's will he is punished. The punishment comes in the form of suffering, and eventually leads to the extinction of that individual human. The ultimate goal of man is to be "basking in God's presence,"¹⁷ which is achievable only in the life hereafter. Neither the philosophic nor the rabbinic interpretations of Judaism, according to Kaplan, can help us with the present condition: the challenge of modernism.

Kaplan believed that tradition can continue to have

¹⁵ Kaplan, Meaning, op. cit., p.1.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid

meaning for us. Yet, if tradition is to have meaning for us, then it must help to explain the basic and permanent aspirations of man. Within every context -- be it rabbinic or philosophic -- Judaism was related to man's search for salvation. Kaplan believed that one of the major changes of the modern period was our understanding of salvation. Therefore, if we are to understand the differences between the modern and the traditional approach we must understand the differences between the naturalist and the supernaturalist approaches to salvation.¹⁸

The supernaturalistic approach is based upon the following assumptions:

1) "Divinity completely transcends humanity of which it is the absolute antipode."¹⁹ God is not subject to any empirical law of nature. Furthermore, the supernaturalistic approach believes that the existence of the transcendent God can be proven by sensate experience, without relying upon abstract reasoning.

2) When God does intervene in the regular order of nature, this not only proves God's existence, but it also shows God's love of His people Israel. The complete sense of Israel's "chosenism" is fundamental to a supernaturalistic approach to salvation.

¹⁸ Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁹ Ibid.

3) The supernaturalistic approach believes that all of the great miracles and theophanies occurred in the beginning of Israel's career as a people. It believes that this was no accident. In some manner, the past, especially the biblical past, was sacrosanct. This past speaks with a degree of authority to the present.²⁰

According to Kaplan, all of these basic assumptions have been rejected by modern thought and modern man. "The only alternative to the traditional and supernaturalist conception of God's self-manifestation that can make a difference in people's lives is not the metaphysical approach but the social-behavioral one."²¹ Kaplan believed that religion's field of endeavor can not possibly be the nature of God. He believed that man can know almost nothing about God. The most that man can know of God, according to Kaplan, is what the nature of God is not. In recognition of this fact Kaplan believed that religion's field of endeavor should be the nature of man. Religion should concentrate on helping man to become fully humanized.²² "It is the business of religion not to give a metaphysical conception of God, but to make clear what we mean by a belief in God, from the standpoint of the difference that belief makes in human conduct and striving."²³

²⁰ Kaplan, op. cit. pg. 2-22

²¹ Kaplan, op. cit., p.26.

²² Ibid.

²³ Kaplan, op. cit. pg. 26-7.

If, in the process man discovers God, then for Kaplan, that would be of secondary benefit, although praiseworthy.

The point of contact between man and God is man's sense of freedom and responsibility. Religion's aim is to aid man in using these privileges intelligently, and to make him as fully human as possible. It is in this realm that the attributes of wisdom, justice and love in the conception of God need to be stressed. By stressing these attributes, man will more intelligently use his freedom and responsibility. In a certain sense, man should mimic God: by becoming as human as possible he also becomes more Godly. According to Kaplan, there is nothing in these attributes, which requires a supernaturalist conception of God.

As a result of the crisis of modernism, Kaplan believed that many individuals are, in a sense, living in two worlds: the secular world, and the religious world. Often these two realms have different values and different views of the world, which can come into conflict. Kaplan believed, however, that we can not compartmentalize our truths. As a result of the changing truths in the secular world, truths which had formerly been accepted are now rejected. As a result of the rejection of these secular truths, our religious truths are called into question. Therefore, Kaplan believed that religion (i.e. religious truths) must also remain dynamic, if religion is to remain a part of our dynamic whole.²⁴ Kaplan

²⁴ Kaplan, Meaning, op. cit., p.4.

believed that we must be involved in a process which he calls "revaluation." In contrast the ancients were involved in a process called "transvaluation:" the process of reading today into yesterday's text. Kaplan believed that the rabbis especially were involved in transvaluation, and that transvaluation can no longer be a viable approach to text and religion as a whole, for we no longer accept the basic premises of transvaluation. As an alternative, Kaplan proposed the system of revaluation. "Revaluation consists of disengaging from the traditional content those elements in it which answer permanent postulates of human nature, and in integrating them in our own ideology."²⁵ In this process one is asked to break down traditional values and re-evaluate those which are still relevant in the modern world. Kaplan believed that in this process one must strive to arrive at those elements which are really significant.

Kaplan provided his reader with a systematic approach to revaluation. He proposed a three step process:

- 1) Try to understand the basic concept as found in the text. Most important for this first step, is to try to understand what the concept or idea meant for its original authors.

- 2) Then ask: what changes have taken place since that idea or concept was originally proposed? That is, how has society changed, and how has our world view changed since the

²⁵ Kaplan, op. cit. p.6.

inception of that idea?

3) Finally ask: does the value or idea still have validity?

The approach of revaluation is based on the assumption that certain values will change over time; others will be discarded and yet others will be formed. Revaluation does not assume that simply because an idea is old it is no longer relevant, nor does it assume that just because an idea is old it must still have value for us.

One area of life in which revaluation can be most important is in assessing the God idea. The God idea must be consistent with other truths that are held.¹²⁶ In assessing the God idea, one must be able to state what ideas or permanence one is prepared to associate with God.

For Kaplan, God was not to be associated with magical powers. He believed that it was natural for early man to associate God with magical powers, but Judaism rejected this idea relatively early in its history. Judaism has instead considered God "... as the source of goodness, and [decided] to invoke His aid to acquire control not over the external forces but over those of human nature in the individual and in the mass."¹²⁷ Kaplan added to this definition by saying that God is the source of everything significant or worthwhile in

¹²⁶ Kaplan, op. cit. p. 20.

¹²⁷ Kaplan, Meaning, op. cit., p.26.

the world.²⁸ "Godhood can have no meaning for us apart from human ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty, interwoven in a pattern of holiness."²⁹ For Kaplan, God was not just an idea, but rather, God became much more.

God, not merely as a metaphysical being, but as the object of worship and prayer, is the Power that makes for salvation of man through the community which organizes its entire social order around the purpose of man's salvation. ...Related ... to God as the power that makes for man's salvation, they constitute groping attempts of human nature to approximate those ways of human living which are certain to perpetuate the human race and to help it to fulfill its highest potentialities.³⁰

Thus, God is the power that impels man to become fully human. "God does not stand apart from man and issue commands to him. His presence is evidenced in those qualities of the human personality and of society by which the evils of life are overcome and the latent good brought to realization."³¹

In Kaplan's writings, God seems at times to be more of a power, and at other times to be more of an idea or ideal. Never in the writing of Mordecai Kaplan does God appear as a power that works in nature.³² Rather, God "works" through

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, op. cit., p. 52.

³¹ Kaplan, Meaning, op. cit., p. 111.

³² In his philosophic writings this statement holds true, but Kaplan also was the editor of a prayer book. Kaplan, as a liturgist, seemed to express a different concept. He maintained prayers such as the Maariv Aravim, a special reading called "Prayer for Sustenance" (p. 252-5 of his

human beings. God is an ideal to be achieved; Godliness becomes the goal of human striving and human life.

If God no longer is an active being in nature and in the lives of men, then the God concept must be subject to the process of revaluation, so too, many Jewish holidays which are based on the idea that God is an active being in nature who responds to human actions must be reevaluated.

One major area in which Kaplan tried to show how traditional ideas can be subjected to the process of revaluation is that of "reward and punishment." He began with the example of Rosh Hashana. Kaplan asserted that he did not believe that most modern Jews accepted the theology of Rosh Hashana on a literal level. The traditional theology of Rosh Hashana teaches that those who have observed God's will during the past year will be rewarded by being granted life; they will be written into the "Book of Life" On the other hand, Rosh Hashana also teaches that those who failed to follow God's commands will be punished. They will be written into the "Book of Death" and will not be permitted to live to see the next day of judgement. Kaplan believed that most Jews accepted this only on a symbolic level. "Rosh Hashana should

Shabbat Prayer Book), the Yotzer Or, and perhaps most striking of all, an entire section of prayers entitled "God in Nature," in his prayer book. Each one of these prayers contains explicit references to the 'God of nature'. It should furthermore be noted, however, that Kaplan as a liturgist was not only concerned with expressing his own conceptions of God, but he believed that it was important to maintain the traditions of our 'fathers' for cultural reason, i.e. Judaism as a civilization.

help us discern in the very suffering that proceeds from our shortcomings the evidence of a divine law which shows us the way to overcome them."³³

For Kaplan, evil was a negative demonstration of the laws of God, "which if reckoned with can maintain the human world in security and happiness."³⁴ The reward for following the laws of God is a world which is a better place in which to live. For Kaplan, there is no "reward and punishment" in the traditional sense. Rather, the reward is the joy and satisfaction that the individual can feel in knowing that he has contributed to the ultimate victory of ideals. "In this sense it is unquestionably true, without any reference to a life after death, that 'the reward for the righteous is in the future that is to be.'"³⁵

Perhaps Kaplan most clearly outlined his beliefs concerning "reward and punishment" in his introduction to The Meaning of God.

Thus in an age when a righteous judge is conceived as one who "makes the punishment fit the crime," God will be conceived, in His attribute of justice, as punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous. If life on earth gives no evidence or such reward and punishment, faith in God's justice will create a heaven and a hell of the imagination. But in an age which has come to recognize that factors of heredity and environment so condition the behavior of the individual that no crime and no virtuous deed can be traced to his exclusive responsibility, the true

³³ Kaplan, Meaning, op. cit., p. 144.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kaplan, op. cit., p. 145.

judge ceases to be one who metes out measure for measure. He is conceived instead as one who, within the limits of the authority vested in him, so administers the law that all the conflicting claims of men that come before him are adjusted on the basis of the equal right of every one to self-realization. Such a view of the function of the judge makes faith in God as the true judge identical with faith in Him as the Power in the world that makes for self-realization. Reward and punishment become irrelevant, and heaven and hell drop out of the picture.³⁶

As a liturgist, Kaplan strove to maintain this principle, although he was not totally successful. The Sabbath Prayer Book³⁷ which Kaplan edited, maintains some of the traditional views of "reward and punishment" and rejects others. As a liturgist, Kaplan was, in a sense, a study in inconsistency.³⁸

In Kaplan's rendition of the Shema, he maintained the traditional first and third paragraphs. The second paragraph, traditionally Deuteronomy 11:13-21, he radically changed. He only maintained Deuteronomy 11:21, thus eliminating all of the curses and all but one of the blessings contained in these verses. Because the one verse that he did maintain is taken

³⁶ Kaplan, The Meaning of God, op. cit., p. 8.

³⁷ Sabbath Prayer Book, (New York, The Reconstructionist Foundation Inc. 1945)

³⁸ It should be noted that as a liturgist, Kaplan was trying to fill at least two roles. First and foremost he was trying to be true to his own personal philosophy. But secondly, he was writing a prayer book for general use a prayer book which he hoped would reach a wide audience. In acknowledgement to this wider audience he felt that he must maintain certain parts of the liturgy. This retention of certain parts of the liturgy -- even though contradictory to his rejection of supernaturalism -- it did fit in with his idea of Judaism being a civilization.

out of context, it has almost no meaning. Kaplan essentially created a new second paragraph of the Shema, composed of the one traditional verse above with Deuteronomy 28: 1-6. This section only speaks of the rewards the individual will receive for following God's commands. Kaplan thus rejected all of the punishments that are traditionally found in the Shema, while maintaining the rewards. It should not be assumed, though, that Kaplan eliminated all references to Divine punishment from his prayerbook. He maintained the traditional Yigdal in the Hebrew, but he modified the English "translation" to read: "The saint's reward He measures to his need; The sinner reaps the harvest of his way."³⁷ Through such a translation he maintained the concept of "reward and punishment," but in equivocal language. This is opposed to the original Hebrew text which does not allow for such indecisiveness.

To further add to the confusion concerning Kaplan as a liturgist, and his views of "reward and punishment," Psalm 145 is of value. Here, in the "shin" verse, Kaplan maintained both the traditional Hebrew and an accurate translation. Thus, he maintained a clear reference to "reward and punishment." Furthermore, amongst the supplemental readings found in the Shabbat Prayer Book, is found a reading entitled, "The Doom of Godless Nations"⁴⁰ which contains numerous references to

³⁷ The Sabbath Prayer Book, op. cit., p. 205.

⁴⁰ Shabbat Prayer Book, op. cit., p. 297.

"reward and punishment," including: "O Eternal, let the nations discern Thy retribution...."⁴¹ Within other readings are also found references to "reward and punishment."

In the introduction to the Shabbat Prayer Book, Kaplan tried to explain his approach to "reward and punishment."

To the extent that obedience to the moral law spells happiness and peace for mankind, and disobedience spells disaster and war, that intuition (of the rabbis) was correct. But that the very rainfall is influenced by human conduct, we know, is not true. The present text, therefore, is so modified as to emphasize the ever timely truth that the material prosperity and well-being of society depend on its conforming to the Divine law of justice and righteousness."⁴²

Although this is a clear statement of his belief, Kaplan was not always able to live up to his own ideal as a liturgist.

Kaplan, in essence, rejected the concept of "reward and punishment" in all physical ways. He believed that the only form of "reward and punishment" is a type of reward which comes in the far-off distant future. This "reward and punishment" does not come to the individual, rather, it comes to the world as a whole. For Kaplan, the motivation for doing a good deed was that the world would be a better place for it, and the punishment for a bad deed is that the world will be a worse place for it. The goal of doing good deeds remains, but the motivation is very different from that of traditional Judaism. Good deeds cease to be the command of God; instead

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Shabbat Prayer Book, op. cit., p. xxvii.

they are the way in which one achieves the Godly, the way in which one becomes as God-like as can be. Within Kaplan's system, motivation must come from within the individual himself. There is, in reality, no outside motivation for observing God's will. "...To conceive [of] God as holding out rewards and punishments as a means of enforcing obedience is unthinkable. Man is learning to discern divinity rather in the measure of justice and love that human beings exercise in their relations to one another."⁴³

⁴³ Kaplan, Judaism Without Supernaturalism, op. cit., p.55.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF THE HOLOCAUST:

The Views of Emil Fackenheim

Emil Ludwig Fackenheim was one of the first serious Jewish theologians to attempt to systematically confront the theological problems raised by the Holocaust. Fackenheim was born on June 22, 1916 in Halle, Germany. He was ordained at the Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin in 1939. After a short stay in England Fackenheim was able to make his way to Canada as an internee. He served as Rabbi at Temple Anshe Shalom in Hamilton, Ontario from 1943 till 1948. While serving there Fackenheim earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Toronto. In 1948 Fackenheim was appointed to the philosophy faculty of the University of Toronto and in 1960 he achieved the status of full professor. Fackenheim has served as Editor of the Theology section of the C.C.A.R. Journal, and also on the C.C.A.R.'s committee on theology.

Fackenheim has written numerous books and articles. He is one of the few theologians who has written for both the scholarly and the lay worlds. He has also published a number of books for use in religious schools. Much of his writing presents his views of the Holocaust and how he believes it has restructured modern theological discussions.

More than any other event in recent history, the Holocaust raises many theological questions. Where was God?

Why did God not stop the slaughter? Could God have stopped the slaughter? One of the main theological issues which the Holocaust raises is that of "reward and punishment." Was the Holocaust some type of punishment for its victims? Did the victims of the Holocaust receive some type of "ultimate" reward?.

Since theologians as a whole did not respond to the Holocaust until the mid 1960's, a full two decades after the implementation of the Final Solution, Fackenheim was certainly one of the earliest theologians to address the theological questions raised by the Holocaust. Fackenheim is aware of this fact and suggests four reasons why theologians had avoided the troubling questions raised by the Holocaust:

1) The denial syndrome. Many have tried to deny that anything unique has happened in recent history. Those who hold this position believe that man has lived for so many hundreds of generations that there can not be anything new under the sun, not even Auschwitz.

2) Philosophic categories already exist. The holders of this view believe that although Auschwitz, itself, might be somewhat unique in world history, philosophers, and thereby theologians, have already developed categories for explaining atrocities such as this. Those who are of this viewpoint do not believe that, philosophically, Auschwitz represents anything new. Again, in a sense, we have the view that there is nothing new under the sun.

3) Auschwitz is nothing special. The holders of this belief acknowledge that Auschwitz is something new in the history of mankind. They do not disagree with the fact that never before has man been so inhumane to man. But they argue that, philosophically, Auschwitz is no different from the larger question of theodicy. They would hold that Auschwitz is no different from Hiroshima or from the death of a single child from cancer.

4) Respect for the victims. There are those who hold that we make a mockery of the victims when, after Auschwitz, we talk about a God who loves and cares. These individuals believe that it is impossible for us to have a theological discussion without profaning the victims.¹

Fackenheim realizes that today we must go past these objections, and that today we must strive to struggle with Auschwitz. To begin, we must recognize that Auschwitz was a unique event in at least five ways.

1) One-third of all the Jews then alive were murdered.

2) The crime that was perpetrated was not just murder, rather, it was extermination. Not a single Jew was to have remained alive if the murderers had completed their task.

3) The only reason that certain people were chosen to die was due to an accident of birth; the victims were not murdered because of their beliefs or actions, but because of what their

¹ Emil Fackenheim, To Mend the World (New York, Schocken Books, 1982), p. 9-11.

parents and grandparents had been.

4) The Final Solution was an end in and of itself. In initiating the Final Solution, Hitler was not interested in gaining the victims' wealth, land or other material possessions. The goal of the Final Solution was genocide for its own sake.

5) Most of those who were involved with carrying out the Final Solution were common people -- normal job holders-- doing an extraordinary job. ^e

If we accept these five basic assumptions, then we must address the Holocaust and the theological questions that it raises. According to Fackenheim, philosophers and theologians can no longer hide behind their earlier objections to confronting the issues.

Fackenheim attempts to address the questions raised in reaction to the Holocaust by first studying traditional Jewish theology, especially as it is found within the midrashim. Traditionally, Judaism has taught that God is involved in history. God Himself acts in history, not through a messenger, nor through angels. The exodus from Egypt and the destruction of the Temple are just two of many examples that one could cite to show how the ancients understood that God does act in history. The authors of the Bible and the rabbis strove to see God's presence in history. Fackenheim suggests that they believed that everything that happened was a result

^e Fackenheim, op. cit., p. 12.

of God and God's actions.

Modern thinkers, on the other hand, have striven to remove God from active involvement in history. According to Fackenheim, modern scientists, philosophers and historians have removed the active role of the Divine from the world. The modern historian sees causation in the actions of men, nations and nature, rather than in the actions of God. Modern theologians will at most affirm God's providence in history: "a providence caused by a God who may somehow use nature and man in history, but who himself is absent from history."³ The modern view of God's role in history, therefore, seems to be in total opposition to the traditional Jewish view.

In the biblical view, God can punish Israel, at will either through God's direct involvement in the life of Israel, or through the use of surrogates. God punishes the people as a whole for their sins, and rewards the people as a whole for their good deeds.

If we were to accept the biblical view, we would have to accept that Auschwitz was part of the Divine plan of history. To accept the prophetic understanding of God's presence in history would be to accept the fact that Hitler served as God's agent, much as Nebuchadnezzar was understood to be God's agent by the Prophet Jeremiah. Most of us are not willing to make such a drastic analogy; most of us are not willing to see

³ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), p. 5.

Hitler as being a Divine agent. Therefore, according to Fackenheim, we must question the biblical view of history and reject it.

However, Fackenheim asks his reader to stop and pause before taking this drastic step and rejecting Judaism's traditional view of the world:

And yet, before taking this step unprecedented in four thousand years of Jewish faith, a Jewish believer must pause, and pause at length. Throughout all her existence Israel has stayed with the God of history; throughout all her existence this God of history - or at any rate, Jewish faith in Him - has kept Israel as well.... Is it obvious without further analysis that even the catastrophes of our age are by themselves sufficient to dispose of this God when Jewish faith has survived many prior tragedies? "

Jews have never before rejected the God of history. Throughout the centuries, they have stopped and reexamined their faith. At times they have even "redefined" that faith. The Jewish people have never given up their faith in a God who acts in history: not during the destruction of the First or Second Temple, nor during the trials of Job, nor after the Chmielnicki massacres, nor during any other persecution that the Jewish people have suffered. At times the Jews have questioned that faith, but they have never rejected it.

Fackenheim suggests that to continue our search for answers we should look at how the Jews have dealt with catastrophe in the past. We have already examined the Biblical framework, that framework which would suggest that

" Fackenheim, op. cit., p. 6.

Hitler was God's agent. We have seen that this solution is unacceptable; it seems almost obscene to the modern mind.

Another catastrophe that the Jewish people have confronted was the destruction of the Second Temple. Here, too, the Rabbis could not accept the idea that Titus was God's agent, or that God had destroyed the sanctuary as punishment.

Taken by itself and made absolute, then, this response was totally inadequate; it was bound to produce the view that God had destroyed His sanctuary without adequate cause, and that He was now distant and uncaring. 'The concept of sin was insufficient to explain the course of events.'²

Another solution that was proposed by the rabbis was that God was hiding. There are a few midrashim which seem to suggest that God has put up an iron wall between Himself and the world. But the rabbis also reject this view: this view would have meant that God did not care, and that God did not take an active role in history. Such a theology would have very quickly led to the demise of Judaism.

The rabbis were thus forced to propose a new and radical solution to the problem of evil in the world. They proposed the idea that God went into exile along with the Jews, and that when the people return to the land of Israel, then God will return with them. According to this conception, just as the Jews cry over the destruction of the Temple so, too, does God cry every night. Rabbi Akiva perhaps expressed it best:

² Fackenheim, op. cit., p.27.

Were it not expressly written in Scripture, it would be impossible to say it. Israel said to God, "Thou hast redeemed Thyself," as though one could conceive such a thing. Likewise, you find the whithersoever Israel was exiled, the Shekhinah, as it were, went into exile with them.⁶

In this extreme crisis, the rabbis struck out boldly in a new direction. Far from being unconcerned or concealed, God, so to speak, cried out every night in bitter lament, as with a lions voice.⁷

By thus reformulating the traditional idea, the rabbis were able to stay within the Jewish framework, yet develop a theology that was meaningful for them. They were able to keep God active in history without making God into a cruel or unjust God.

The post-Auschwitz age also faces a similar dilemma. How does one maintain both the God of the past and the God of the future, without denying the God of the present? How can one explain God's action in Auschwitz without denying the God of history, without denying God's relevance in the future and without denying Gods involvement in Auschwitz?

If one accepts the traditional faith, one must still confront at least three dialectics. They are: How do we explain divine transcendence versus divine involvement in history? How do we explain the dialectic of divine power versus human power? How do we explain divine involvement in history versus the presence of evil in history? Perhaps these

⁶ Mekilta, (trans. Lauterbach) as quoted by Emil Fackenheim in God's Presence, op. cit., p. 28.

⁷ Fackenheim, Gods Presence, op. cit., p.28.

are the three most pressing and most difficult questions raised by the Holocaust.

There are a number of ways that one could negate the problems raised by these dialectics. One could assume that God is present but finite, or infinite but absent. In other words, one could assume that God was in Auschwitz, but was powerless to do anything about the atrocities that were happening there. Also, one could assume that God was not in Auschwitz, but, if He had been there, He would have stopped it. Either of these solutions would deny that God takes an active role in history. Judaism has always rejected these two solutions. Fackenheim, who is committed to finding within the traditional Jewish realm of midrashic theology a solution to the theological problems raised by the Holocaust, must therefore reject both of these solutions.

All past theologies fail in the light of Auschwitz. Auschwitz was something new; Auschwitz represents something never before experienced in Jewish history. For the victims, there was no choice; there was no escape. They could not convert. Their great-grandparents, by choosing in the mid-nineteenth century to raise their children as Jews, sealed the gas chamber victims' fates. They could not possibly have known the consequences of this decision. The victims' great-grandparents were faced with the same situation that Abraham was faced with at the Akedat Yitzhak; the difference is that Abraham could see the altar in front of him, whereas those in

the nineteenth century could not possibly have seen the altar.

The idea that Hitler's victims were being punished for their sins is unfathomable. One cannot accept the fact that six million people had sinned to such a degree that they deserved to die, especially without ever knowing what their sins were. Was their only sin that each of their great-grandparents had followed God's covenant and raised their children as Jews? One is punished for following in the ancient brit? This could not have been their sin, although it was Hitler's only criterion for deciding who should live and who should die. The Jewish concept of sin and punishment, if it is to have any meaning, must have meaning on the individual level. God could not punish a mass of people in this manner. Furthermore, most of Hitler's victims were those who were more religious and who were living "Torah-true lives." In conclusion, therefore, one cannot accept the idea that they died for their sins.

Another answer might be that they died for the sake of martyrdom, for keddushat ha'shem. This explanation, too, cannot be a satisfactory response, for there was no escape from the hell of Auschwitz. In Auschwitz, there was no such thing as martyrdom. One did not have a choice whether to die or not. The only choice, and even this was limited, was when to die, and perhaps how to die. One could not convert and thus be saved; there was no escape from death in Auschwitz.

One also cannot accept Akiva's radically new theology,

the idea that God went into Auschwitz with the victims, because there was no return from Auschwitz. To accept the idea that God was in Auschwitz with its victims, according to Fackenheim, would also mean to accept the fact that God, too, went into the gas chamber and died there. To accept this would be to cut off all present access to God and would very quickly lead to the demise of Judaism.

Thus, Fackenheim is left with only one possible solution, and that is Akiva's solution: to provide a new and radical understanding of God's presence in history. Fackenheim succeeds in doing this. He suggests that God speaks from Auschwitz, and that God speaks through the commanding voice of Auschwitz:

Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or other worldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish. ... One possibility, however, is wholly unthinkable. A Jew may not respond to Hitler's attempt to destroy Judaism by himself cooperating in its destruction.²

The victims of Auschwitz had one goal: to escape and tell their story. Fackenheim believes that we who have survived have a responsibility, and, in fact, have been commanded to tell that story. Jewish survival in the post-Holocaust era-- even if it is only for survival's sake -- becomes a holy

² Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence, op. cit., p. 84.

task. Survival is the fulfillment of a mitzvah. Jewish survival is a way of denying the demon of Auschwitz. It is a way of denying Hitler a posthumous victory. Furthermore, survival means that in spite of Auschwitz, Jews will not deny humanity; we will not deny the importance of this world. After Auschwitz it is a holy task for a Jew to continue to work for the improvement of this world, and to work for yemot ha'mashiah. Last but not least, in the post-Holocaust era a Jew must continue to struggle with God. He cannot deny God. He, as a Jew, must continue to argue with and believe in God: the God of the past, present and future.⁹

Fackenheim admits that it took theologians almost twenty years after Auschwitz to come to this one command with all of its implications, whereas the Jewish people as a whole came to this realization the first day that the furnaces at Auschwitz ceased to burn. Jews since the war have continued to marry. They have continued to have children and raise them as Jews. They have continued to be involved in the world. In essence, the Jews of the world, for the most part, have heard the commanding voice of Auschwitz and obeyed God's command. (Some might argue that Jews have done this not out of a theological response to Auschwitz, but rather as a continuation of life.)

Thus, in conclusion, we can see that Fackenheim very clearly rejects the concept of "reward and punishment." He believes that this rejection is not a modern reaction to mass

⁹ Fackenheim, *God's Presence*, op. cit., pp. 85-92.

catastrophe. Rather, he believes that the rabbis after the destruction of the Second Temple laid the groundwork for this rejection of "reward and punishment." For Fackenheim to even admit the possibility of "reward and punishment" would mean for him that the victims of the Holocaust had received a form of Divine punishment. Fackenheim finds such a belief unacceptable. Within Fackenheim's writing there are some references to personal "reward and punishment," but he does not elaborate on his conception of this. He does believe that if "reward and punishment" is to have any meaning, it must have meaning on a personal basis and not on mass basis such as the Holocaust. Fackenheim is aware that he is not presenting a complete theology, and, therefore, one should not expect him to elaborate on all of the points that he does raise. Nevertheless, Fackenheim must be credited with being one of the first Jewish theologians to seriously grapple with the problems raised by the Holocaust.

CHAPTER VI

SAN FRANCISCO RE-EVALUATIONS:

The Views of Eugene Borowitz

Eugene Borowitz was born in New York City in 1924 and was ordained at the Hebrew Union College in 1948. He served various congregations during the 1950's, and during that period he also earned doctorates both from the Hebrew Union College and from Teachers College of Columbia University. From 1957 to 1962 he served as the national Director of Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In 1962 he was appointed Professor of Education and Jewish Religious Thought at H.U.C.-J.I.R. in New York, a position he continues to hold. Borowitz is the author of numerous articles and books for children, adults, academic and lay audiences. In 1970 Borowitz organized "Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Responsibility" and he continues to serve as its founding editor.

Eugene Borowitz has been one of the preeminent theologians of the Reform Movement during the past two decades. He was one of the major authors of the "San Francisco Platform" of the C.C.A.R. in 1976. Borowitz believes that he speaks for a significant faction within the Reform Movement. In particular, he understands that faction to be composed of those who have come from a traditional Jewish background but have since rejected it. At first, the members of this faction turned to contemporary philosophy; in

the process many of them rejected religion altogether. Borowitz believes that many of these people have also found secular philosophy shallow and empty and are now seeking a way to combine philosophy and religion:

I must take my stand from where I find myself and where I find a not insignificant fraction of my people gathering. We are that group who, having stampeded from Jewish tradition into general culture, now find a higher wisdom to reclaim our stake in our traditional faith. Having gone as far into contemporary intellectuality as we have, we now realize we cannot base our Jewish theology on science, philosophy or on the mood of the times even as we still cannot found it on verbal revelation.¹

Borowitz believes that in this, the post-Holocaust era, Jews must once again ask themselves: "what does it mean to be Jewish?" Jewish survival after the Holocaust makes no logical sense. Arguing in a manner very similar to Fackenheim, Borowitz claims that the Jews should have stopped believing in Judaism long ago. The Holocaust should have caused Jews to forsake Judaism and assimilate into the rest of society. The Jews should have drawn the logical conclusion: if Jews are not safe in Germany, then they will never really be safe anywhere in the world. But the Jews did not give up. Jews continued to be Jewish, and continued to believe in God. Borowitz believes that this was more than just an instinctive response; rather, it was a conscious choice which individual Jews made.

This was more than an animal instinct for survival. It stemmed from that deep-felt belief, fostered and ingrained by Jewish observances, that life comes

¹ Eugene B. Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak of Faith Today, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1969), p. 8.

from God and is good, that living is the indispensable means to holiness, and that holiness is reached in life, not beyond it.²

Although Jews have remained Jewish in the post-Holocaust era, Judaism has radically changed. Part of that change, Borowitz believes, has been the development of new Jewish theologies. According to Borowitz, theology is not just for philosophers; theology serves a very real purpose. Jewish theology is an effort to self-consciously develop a hopeful faith in an intellectual form. A Jewish theology will maintain for the believer a hope of a better life and world. The believer will be able to respond to it on both an emotional level, and more importantly, on an intellectual level. Furthermore, a well thought-out and founded Jewish theology will help the believer, and make it possible for the marginal Jew to enter into the community of believers.³ Therefore, each individual should struggle to develop his own theology.

Formerly in Judaism, Borowitz claims, one did not need to have a well-founded theology in order to continue to be Jewish: one was Jewish by virtue of the community in which one lived and by virtue of the practices which one followed. In a traditional Jewish community the halacha and one's observance of it were all important. Within the last century

² Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology in the Making, (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1968) p. 17.

³ Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 43.

however, secular Judaism became possible, whereas formerly it was impossible. Jewishness in the past had always been intertwined with religiosity. To be a Jew was to be a ben brit, a member of the covenant. In today's world in which secular Judaism is a viable option, Borowitz believes that theology has become a necessity.

But since neither the spirit nor the practice of "catholic Israel" suffices any longer to assure meaningful Jewish continuity, Jews are all the more in need of an adequate statement of Jewish faith relevant to this day, for only such faith can restore the Jewish community to its goals and the duties they entail.⁴

Borowitz does acknowledge that Judaism cannot survive with a strict dogmatic theology. Judaism has never been dogmatic about theology. It has only been dogmatic about the halakhah. The halakhah, almost by definition, must be strict and bound. The halakhah had been the center of Judaism and Jewish life, but during the last one-hundred years the authority of the halakhah has been rejected by most Jews, thus, it is no longer the center of Judaism.

The aggada, the world of ideas within Judaism, according to Borowitz, allows individuals a great deal of freedom. In this realm almost any belief may be held, and contradictions are not only possible, but even likely. In Judaism, the idea of God is placed within the realm of aggada. It is thought that the halakhah is within man's power to understand, but the idea of God is not within man's ability to understand.

⁴ Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 50.

Man may know the will of God, but man "may not see His face and live." Within Judaism, therefore, there has never been a real attempt to formulate an authoritative creed. Thus, one cannot speak of the Jewish idea of God, but only of Jewish ideas of God. Perhaps the only thing that all Jewish God ideas have in common is the belief in only one God. (Even this perhaps has fallen into doubt with the rise of Humanistic Judaism.) Therefore, Borowitz argues that any viable Jewish theology for the modern period must be a systematic theology which contains within it the possibility of a variety of views and opinions.

Borowitz argues that because Judaism allows for a variety of God ideas, the individual must form a God idea for himself. Yet the God idea must include a number of different elements in order to be considered a Jewish God idea. First, for the individual a God idea "must be such as to make possible for him the life of Torah."⁵ Torah is the center of Judaism, and one's God idea must make the Torah possible; one's God idea must make it possible to do Torah continually. "A fully adequate Jewish idea of God would move the Jew to fulfill the Torah by showing the cosmic authority from which it stems and the deep significance of the acts it requires."⁶ Conversely, Borowitz would argue, a God idea which prevents one from doing Torah is not a Jewish God idea.

⁵ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 21.

⁶ Ibid.

Second, according to Borowitz a Jewish God idea must include the value of the continued existence of the Jewish people as a people. Traditionally it has been felt that there is a brit, a covenant which exists between God and the Jewish people. Borowitz is committed to maintaining the idea of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. For him, Israel exists qua Israel because of its special relationship with God. Therefore, a Jewish God idea must include within it the idea of a brit.

Third, a Jewish God idea must make life with God possible. According to Borowitz, a Jewish God idea must make a life with God possible for both the individual and for the community of Israel as a whole. Such a life would include faith, piety, prayer and an ongoing relationship with God.

Fourth, a Jewish God idea must facilitate an ethical relationship between God and man. A Jewish God must maintain ethical standards. His nature must be holiness. Furthermore, God must have an active relationship with His people. He must call them to service. God must be the author of history; he must be present but distant, forgiving but just.

Fifth, and perhaps most important of all for Borowitz, a Jewish God idea must be able to stand the test of both reason and history.⁷ A Jewish God idea cannot arise de novo; rather, it must have some connection with previously held Jewish conceptions of God. Furthermore, argues Borowitz, a

⁷ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 25.

Jewish God idea must be able to stand the test of time. The final arbitrator of a God idea is the future. If the idea is still held by Jews a century from now, then it may be considered, a true Jewish God idea. We will only have all of the answers, and possession of the true Jewish God idea, when the messiah comes. Until that time, Borowitz believes, we are free to develop God ideas that are meaningful for ourselves and that meet the requirements of a Jewish God idea.

Borowitz holds that the covenant between God and Israel is the most important aspect of Judaism. He holds that there is a special relationship which exists between God and the Jewish people. Furthermore, he argues, law -- as interpreted and developed by the prophets and sages throughout the centuries -- is the Jewish people's response to God. This position holds that God, Torah and Israel all exist together in a dynamic relationship.

The covenant, according to Borowitz, was established centuries ago and has continued to exist between the people Israel and God up until and including the modern period.

The people of this covenant is Israel. It is always truly Israel whenever it lives up to its obligations under that covenant. Israel is simply the people of the covenant. ... For its part, the Hebrew folk pledged itself to remember God and serve him through all of history making His law the basis of its life ... Its purpose was to remind all mankind of Him until they came to know Him, to acknowledge Him as their God and to live by His law. In return, they knew God would protect and watch over them ... This was not an all-encompassing guarantee. Individual Jews, families, or even communities might suffer and

die, but the people would survive.⁸

For Borowitz, God has established a special relationship with the Jewish people. That relationship, or covenant, is much like a contract between two partners. Each partner has responsibilities within the contract which he must fulfill. Borowitz seems to imply in the above statement that the contract also contains penalties for breaking the brit. For the Jewish people, their contractual agreement is to serve God and to teach all of mankind about God. God, for His part, will protect and nourish the Jewish people as a whole. Borowitz implies that if the Jewish people do not keep up their end of the brit, then God will cease to watch over the Jewish people and trouble will beset them.

Borowitz does not believe that God has made a covenant solely with the Jewish people. Rather, he believes, God has established a covenant with all of humanity. That covenant which God has entered into with all of humanity is known as the Noahide Laws.⁹ In response to mankind's following of those commandments, God promises never to destroy the world and humanity by flood again.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the brit which God entered into with humanity as a whole has been broken, ignored and forgotten by mankind. Fortunately, God has not kept up His part of the brit, either, for if He had,

⁸ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 83.

⁹ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁰ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 109.

then He would have been required to destroy the world again. "No matter, the Noahide covenant remains and the Jew believes, that it provides a continuing possibility that non-Jews such as Jethro, or Balaam may truly know God, that there may be righteous men among the nations who will share in the world to come"¹¹

Believing that the brit which God entered into with Abraham is still in effect today is not just a concept or perspective on viewing the world for Borowitz; rather, he believes that there is clear and present proof that the brit between God and the Jewish people still exists. For him, that proof may be found in the Six Day War of 1967. For Borowitz, the fact that the Israeli Army could rout the Arab armies, who were vastly superior in numbers and arms, is proof that God continues to watch over the Jewish people and to protect them. God continues to fulfill His part of the brit. For Borowitz, neither atheism nor a belief that God is dead is a viable option. God has proven that He is 'alive and well' in the Six Day War.

Borowitz asserts that the affirmation of the existence of the covenant today should affect more than just a way of thinking about God. He argues that the existence of the brit should also have a profound impact upon the way in which one lives one's life. Borowitz believes that the concept of the brit must be turned into action; it may not remain a passive

¹¹ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 109-10.

concept.

Covenant Theology, then understands Judaism in frankly existential terms. Judaism involves not only a set of ideas, a concept of God, or even a set of practices; it is also a way of living one's life based on a relationship with God, a relationship in which the whole self is involved.¹²

Borowitz believes that just as God has certain obligations under the brit which He must fulfill, so too, does man have certain obligations that he must strive to fulfill. Borowitz believes those obligations may be found in the mitzvot. On the common level, Borowitz would argue that the Jew is obligated to perform acts in which the Divine can also participate; in other words, the ben brit should strive to make the Divine a co-worker in all of his actions. Yet, the Jew's obligations under the brit do not end there:

Under the Covenant the Jews have acknowledged Adonai, 'the Lord', alone as God and have pledged themselves to live by his law. Here the new theologian emphasizes the mitzvah for it is through this service individually and communally, that Israel testifies to God's reality, nature and existence through all of history.¹³

Israel's obligation is to fulfill the mitzvot and thus to spread the word and knowledge of God throughout the world. Israel believes that God will protect the Jews as a whole until this mission is accomplished, in other words, until the covenant is fulfilled. Furthermore, Borowitz argues that by fulfilling the mitzvot one is able to fulfill one's

¹² Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³ Borowitz, A Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 64.

responsibility not only to oneself, but also to God and to mankind as a whole.¹⁴ Borowitz believes that even on a personal level there is meaning to be found in the performance of the mitzvot. "Men are morally obligated to know what they can and thus increase the responsibility of their decisions. Such knowledge may shape, even if it does not determine a man's deed as he seeks to live his faith."¹⁵ By performing the mitzvot, one makes life more holy, makes the world more holy and brings the world closer to the Kingdom of God.¹⁶ Borowitz believes that in the process of performing the mitzvot one is able to know God better and more intimately, and thus one is better equipped to speak of God to the world.

Borowitz realizes that, even given the generalities that have been presented, perhaps the most perplexing question facing a Liberal Jew today is: "What does God still require Jews to do?"¹⁷ Even for the traditional, religiously-identified Jew today, this is a major problem. Borowitz believes that the vast majority of those who call themselves Orthodox are Orthodox in name only. To begin, he asserts that the majority of the American Jewish community has abandoned traditional observances. Even those who call themselves Orthodox do not necessarily observe the laws of kashrut or the

¹⁴ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 65.

¹⁵ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 64.

laws of Sabbath, and certainly the vast majority of so-called Orthodox Jews do not observe the minutiae of the law. Borowitz believes that this behavior stems from a belief that God does not really care if one observes the law or not. The individual assumes that God is not concerned with his personal practice, and that if he fails to observe the laws nothing will happen to him. At the same time the traditionally minded Jew is not totally willing to dismiss God from the world, and he is not sure enough to say that God is unconcerned about the world or the actions of individuals. The so-called Orthodox Jew is caught within his own opposing views. "But on the whole, he remains skeptically American. He cannot imagine that God is not pleased with him when he actively seeks to be a decent human being while retaining as much Jewish practice as he can."¹⁸

Borowitz poses the question: if this ambivalent attitude towards God's role in the world and towards the individual Jew exists amongst the Orthodox community, how much the more so must it exist within the Liberal Jewish community? Thus, when faced with the question 'what is it that God demands of him?' Borowitz proposes a different answer: our religious actions should arise from the "living discipline which flows from the consciousness of standing in direct personal relationship with God, not merely as a private self, but as one of the community

¹⁸ Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 35.

with whom he has covenanted Himself."¹⁹ Thus, for Borowitz, a holiday such as Shavuot becomes a celebration not only of z'man matan Torah, but also of kiyum brit, the establishment of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Borowitz believes that the "covenant relationship authorizes and requires communal and individual action."²⁰ Furthermore, Borowitz believes that part of the reason why one should perform certain acts is "out of a knowledge of what has happened to me [my people] there before."²¹ In this manner the individual confirms the fact that the God of Israel is still bound by the covenant.

Borowitz is aware of the fact that man will not always maintain his end of the covenant with God. Man has broken the covenant; and in the future, he will still break the Covenant. Within Borowitz's covenant theology, when an individual acts without regard for the covenant, it is sin and requires punishment.

For man simply to act on his own, that is to say without regard for his Covenant partner, is always wrong. It may seem to lead to success but it is nonetheless sin and will be met with punishment. Man's action is truly significant only when it takes place in accordance with God's will. Since he is sovereign in history such acts can endure and bring blessing. More, when a man does them, he knows he does them with God's help, for that is the direction in which God himself is moving history. The act is now quite precisely a Covenant act in which man and

¹⁹ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 67.

²⁰ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 68.

²¹ Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 74.

God join together to do a deed, yet each remains himself in his own integrity.²²

For Borowitz, quite obviously there is "reward and punishment," although exactly what the rewards and the punishments are remains rather undefined. Certainly, one reward is the knowledge that one has performed an act which is good in God's eyes and which furthers God's plan of history. The reward, for Borowitz, is an inner satisfaction that the individual feels. In his theology there does not seem to be any place for a physical type of reward. This is consistent with what we have already seen: Borowitz asserts that holiness is achieved in this world and not elsewhere.

Borowitz, although believing that one is punished for the performance of a sin, strives to down-play this idea. Judaism knows sin, he argues, but understands it within the context of mitzvah. Thus, when a Jew sins he is not overwhelmed by the event nor does the Jew imagine that God is overwhelmed by the event. Borowitz claims that the Jew assumes that God will understand the individual's lapse. Furthermore, because God is more desirous of righteous acts than of punishing the individual, God will allow the individual to return, through teshuva. Even in his own sinfulness the Jew does not wait for God to act, rather he performs the mitzvah of teshuva.²³ Due to this attitude within Judaism, and specifically within

²² Borowitz, How Can a Jew Speak, op. cit., p. 43-4.

²³ Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology, op. cit., p. 62.

Covenant theology, Borowitz suggests that there is not much theology based on sin within Judaism.

Nevertheless, Borowitz does allow for the concept of Divine punishment to exist within Covenant theology. Although that punishment is not defined, it may be assumed that it would take the form of a feeling of discomfort or uneasiness in knowing that one has broken the covenant with God and subverted His plan for history.²⁴ There is no basis in Borowitz's covenant theology to posit the idea of "reward and punishment" occurring in an afterlife. In fact, Borowitz emphasizes that the covenant with God is "experienced" in this world. Borowitz would reject the idea that the destruction of individuals or communities is a form of Divine punishment. As noted, Borowitz believes that God watches over the Jewish people in a general way, but not necessarily over every single Jew or Jewish community.

The covenant between God and the Jewish people remains eternal, despite man's sinfulness. Within Covenant theology "reward and punishment" remain viable but yet undefined.

²⁴ This presumption is based on the authors understanding of Borowitz's view of reward and the assumption that punishment is the opposite of reward.

CHAPTER VII

PREDICATE THEOLOGY:

The Views of Harold Schulweis

Harold Schulweis is a Conservative Rabbi who openly embraces a multi-denominational approach to Judaism.¹ Born in New York City, Schulweis received his B.A. in 1945 from Yeshiva University. He earned his M.A. in Philosophy from New York University in 1949, and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1950. Since 1970, Schulweis has been the Rabbi of Congregation Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. In 1970 in addition to his congregational responsibilities, he began teaching at the University of Judaism (the Los Angeles branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary) and in 1971 he joined the faculty of the Hebrew Union College as a lecturer in theology. In addition to his rabbinic and teaching duties, Schulweis serves on the editorial board of Reconstructionist, Moment, and Shema magazines. He is the author of two books, Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion (1952), and Evil and the Morality of God (1984). His thinking was largely influenced by the thoughts of Mordecai Kaplan and Abraham Joshua Heschel.²

Schulweis's theology starts from the basic assumption that evil does exist in the world. When individuals see evil

¹ "Schulweis, Harold," American Jewish Biographies (1982 ed.), p. 391.

² Op cit., p. 391-2.

in the world, it often causes them to question God. If God is all good and all powerful, how can we reconcile the fact that there is evil in a world over which God 'rules'?

Theology is often studied by examining our responses to three key phrases:

- 1) God is omnipotent.
- 2) God is omnibenevolent.
- 3) Evil exists in the world.

According to Schulweis, traditional views of God would lead us to accept the first two statements. If we accept them, then we cannot accept the third. Yet, we know from our experience of the world that evil does exist. But, to accept that evil does exist in the world, we must reject either of the first two statements about God. A rejection of either of these attributes of God would imply a rejection of most forms of traditional theology.

Traditional theology is subject theology. Theological statements are normally made in the form of subject-predicate. In such sentences the subject is the underlying entity, and the predicate is a description of that entity.³ God is portrayed as power, or as a person, or as all good. In each of these descriptions God is the subject of the sentence, and the subject alone is accepted as being unqualifiedly real. In contrast to the subject, "God," the predicates are

³ Harold Schulweis, Evil and the Morality of God, (Cincinnati Oh., Hebrew Union College Press, 1984) p.116.

considered relatively unimportant. Many theologians in the past have tried to explain them away. Often they said: "We do not really mean that God is "x," but we can only speak in human terms." Often the anthropomorphisms that are attributed to God are explained away by the claim that we have no other way of talking about God.

Thus a personalist theist such as Judah Halevi describes "creative," "negative," and "relative" attributes as accommodations to our finite understanding. "All these attributes neither touch on the divine essence, nor do they assume a multiplicity."⁴

Even a thinker such as Maimonides comes to a similar conclusion. By using the via negativa, Maimonides is still not able to really tell us very much about God or His attributes.⁵ In fact, if we examine classical theology as a whole, it is almost exclusively subject theology. Subject theology has always tried to address itself to the question of "God is He who is ...?" He who is good, powerful, and merciful, and who has many other attributes.

Subject theology can not disregard the fact that evil does exist in the world. When subject theology is faced with the problem of evil, it must explain evil by saying that God is ultimately responsible for it. Evil exists because it is God's will that it should exist. As Maimonides explains, "We must in continuing the inquiry as to the purpose of creation

⁴ Op. cit., p.117.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 117

at last arrive at the answer. It was the will of God or His wisdom that decreed it; and this is the correct answer."⁶ Such an explanation leaves us very unsatisfied. It can only lead us to question our faith in God, especially when we are confronted with evil on the scale of the Holocaust. Such an explanation is unsatisfactory because it conflicts with our belief in a God who is good and merciful. And, a God who is neither merciful nor just is a God whom very few people would want to accept."

After coming to this conclusion, Schulweis eventually rejected subject theology. For him, subject theology did not lead to satisfying answers. Schulweis has moved towards a predicate theology instead of the more traditional subject theology.

Schulweis asks us to reverse the normal order of the sentence. Let us try to make the predicate the subject. Let us, by understanding the predicate of the sentence, learn something about the character of God. Our aim thus becomes to "demonstrate the reality of the predicates."⁷

The critical question for predicate theology is not "Do you believe that God is merciful, caring, peace making?" but "Do you believe that doing mercy, caring, making peace are godly?"⁸

⁶ Maimonides as quoted by Schulweis in Evil, op. cit., p. 120.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 120.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 122.

⁹ Op. cit., p. 122.

According to Schulweis, by switching the orientation of our statements we have made some major changes, and these changes not merely grammatical in nature. Through predicate theology we gain an explanation of God in terms that are easily understood by humans. We admit that we are speaking in human terms, and believe that these terms are truly applicable to God and His actions.¹⁰ In addition, we have facilitated human action. As human beings we can now strive to do the Godly thing, for now we know what it means to do the Godly thing. The qualities that are attributed to God are experienced by humans and are valued by each individual:

What is important to note here is that the qualities do not derive their meaning and their worth from another realm of being. They are experienced and valued for themselves. They are not valued as appendages attached to a supersensible subject but are discovered in the course of man's transactions with his environment, human and nonhuman. They are not cast down from above or projected from below but revealed in the areas between persons and between persons and things.¹¹

Schulweis is not just a theoretical theologian; he follows the implications of his theology. He himself asks the question: How would we form a predicate blessing?

A predicate formulation of the blessing over bread would strive to direct the prayer's attention to the whole chain of events involved in bringing forth bread from the earth; the farmer, the baker etc. "A predicate formulation, "that which brings forth bread from the earth...."¹²

¹⁰ Op. cit., p. 123.

¹¹ Op. cit., p. 123.

¹² Op. cit., p. 123.

In this manner stress is laid upon the active role of the person who is doing the Godly thing. Godliness is thus discovered by individuals in humanity, in nature and in history.

Schulweis attempts to address the major objections to predicate theology.

1) Are the predicates real?

Schulweis starts from the basic assumption that the world is really as it appears to us, and that our senses perceive the real world and not just a figment of it. Based on this assumption, Schulweis theorizes that the predicates are real for they are tested against the reality of experience. "They are potentials to be actualized, aims to be achieved, ideals that are to be made real."¹³ Just as sheaves of grain must be ground into flour and then molded and formed before we have bread, so too the predicates must be acted upon.¹⁴

2) How does predicate theology address the question of theodicy?, or as Schulweis states it: "Predicate theology and the question "Why did it happen?"¹⁵

According to Schulweis, it is only as a result of being trained for centuries to think in terms of subject theology that this question even arises. It leads one to assume that the world is all good and to expect that bad things will not

¹³ Op. cit., p. 129.

¹⁴ Op. cit., p.129.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p.133.

happen if we are good people. When that expectation is not met, one begins to question why? The scientific answer is not the answer that is sought when one asks the question, "Why did he have to suffer?" The person who asks such a question is not really looking for an explanation for what happened to their loved one and how, rather, that person is crying out for help. The questioner is really asking the listener to put his arm around him and comfort him.¹⁴

Sometimes the question "why?" means "for what purpose or reason was this done to me?" Traditional subject theology ultimately has only one answer to this question: "It was part of the divine plan, and we can not always understand the way in which God works." Subject theology is forced to find a "who" behind all tragic events, and to assume that there is a meaning to all events.

Predicate theology does not make any of these assumptions. It does not deny the cry of distress, and rather than try to answer it directly, it provides comfort to the individual. In fact, Schulweis believes that the question "why?" really becomes meaningless, and would not be asked in a true predicate theology.

If asked where evil comes from, Schulweis would respond:

The predicates of evil are experienced as real, as are the predicates of good. Neither set of predicates requires a subject, divine or demonic, to explain their origin and power. Evils are not the work of a malevolent suprapersonal will, but acts and events which threaten

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 134.

human growth, equilibrium, and fulfillment....However awful their consequences, they originate from the natural soil in which we live and must be coped with accordingly.¹⁷

In effect, Schulweis has removed God from history, or at least from the traditional understanding of God's involvement in history. For Schulweis, God is no more in history than God is in nature.¹⁸ God must be discovered in history. God can be found in history when one sees individuals doing heroic deeds and merciful acts. Wherever one sees men doing the Godly thing that is where God is involved in history.

When there is greed, jealousy, war, or a holocaust one can not blame God for these occurrences. Rather, one must blame the human spirit. One must not look at God as the cause of these atrocities, but rather one must blame mankind for these atrocities.

One of the greatest criticisms that predicate theology faces is, "If God is as Schulweis has thus far described Him, then why should we bother to pray?" Prayer within a predicate theology framework is not magic; it is not a surrogate for work. Prayer -- in and of itself -- will neither prevent nor cause anything. Prayer is a petition for something to be done by those who are reciting the prayer. Prayer is a medium through which one verbalizes hopes,

¹⁷ Op. cit., p.137.

¹⁸ Op. cit., p.138.

desires, and a resolve to work.¹⁹

From a predicate view, to praise God for making peace or feeding the poor or clothing the naked does not refer to a supernal Other. It refers to the capacities of persons in society to transcend their provincial interests of self and find their realization in the larger Self. No blessings prevail except through the work of human hands. ... But as far as its petitionary role is concerned, it is, for predicate theology, something said in order that something be done by those who say it. Godliness is to be behaved.²⁰

There can be no doubt that Schulweis's reformulation of the God concept is a significant attempt to deal with the question of theodicy. He has developed a system that works. However, one is left with a very large question: "Is it satisfying?" As Schulweis himself recognizes, this is a question for each individual to answer. Whether predicate theology is satisfying is a psychological or emotional question. Schulweis finds that it is the only theology which he can honestly accept. One's theology must correspond with one's view of the world, and of monotheism. Furthermore, it must be a theology that can be acted upon.²¹ Predicate theology achieves these goals for Schulweis.

There is no doubt that predicate theology is a theology which stresses action, and easily leads the faithful into action. One major criticism that remains is: "Why do I need a God in such a system? Why would just having high morals and

¹⁹ Op. cit., p.139.

²⁰ Op. cit., p. 140.

²¹ Op. cit., p.141.

ideals not be enough, provided that I acted upon them?"

Schulweis does not address these question. His response is that he is not willing to give up the use of the word "God". Schulweis needs to continue to use "God" terminology in order to feel a sense of tradition, and a bond to his past. Even though his theology has almost nothing in common with the theology of the past, he feels a need to stay connected to it. The only connection is "God".

Schulweis has proposed a radical change in how Jews think about God and the way in which Jews address God. He denies God an active role in history. For Schulweis, God almost becomes an ideal to be achieved. In a sense God becomes the combination of many of the Platonic forms. Like Plato's forms, Schulweis' God also does not act in history. Like the forms, God becomes an ideal for us for us to strive to achieve. One is encouraged by Schulweis to become as Godly as possible.

For Schulweis, "reward and punishment" ceases to be an issue. Rather, he would form the issue in terms of what motivates an individual to do good. Schulweis, although he does not explicitly state this, would probably respond that individuals are motivated to do good so that they can be as Godly as possible. One should do a good deed in order to make the world a better place to live in. For Schulweis, punishment is apparent when the world is a worse place to be, due to human failure to strive to do the Godly thing. "No

blessings prevail except through the work of human hands."²²

By removing God from an active role in history and in nature Schulweis has eliminated the possibility of Divine "reward and punishment."

²² Op. cit., p.140.

CHAPTER VIII

LITURGICAL THEOLOGY:

Hints in Liberal Jewish Prayerbooks

It has often been said that the rabbis of old, and Jews as a whole, have not been interested in writing systematic theologies. In general, this is true. To discover true Jewish theology, it has been said, one must read the midrash and the old siddur, the traditional prayerbook¹.

Studying liturgy to better understand Liberal Jewish theology better has both some advantages and some disadvantages that must be recognized. First, the prayerbooks to be studied (with the exception of Minhag America) have all been endorsed by one of the major liberal Jewish movements in the United States, either the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR, Reform) or by the Rabbinical Assembly (RA, Conservative). Although lacking official endorsement, even Minhag America, edited by Isaac M. Wise, was widely used throughout the American West and South until the mid-1890's when the first Union Prayer Book was published. A prayerbook's receipt of a movement's endorsement proves that the prayerbook in question speaks for a wide spectrum of people, and that its theology is generally accepted, at least by the leadership of the movement, and most likely by the laity which it represents. The movement prayerbooks do not

¹ The reader may wish to consult the Shilo Prayer Book.

speak for a single individual, but rather, for a collective.²

Also, the movement prayerbooks allow one to study changes in theological thinking as reflected in liturgy over time. If Wise's prayerbook is included within the Reform movement, one may examine how the Reform movement has understood the concept of "reward and punishment" throughout the past 100 years.³ By comparing and contrasting the various Reform prayerbooks one will be able to better understand how this concept has changed during the past century. One can do the same for the Conservative Movement, but unfortunately that change is only visible for a much more limited time frame of approximately 30 years.

Although the study of prayerbooks does have the above mentioned advantages, there remains the question of whether one can really learn about a movement's theology from its prayerbook. There is an ongoing debate over the question of how seriously should one take the theology found within a prayerbook. Samuel S. Cohon once said, "The Prayer Books of the synaogue are the truest guides to what our people cherished at different ages and in different lands. Like other movements, Reform Judaism is reflected best in its book

² It should be noted that there are those who would argue that because the movement prayer book must speak for so many divergent opinions they often speak for no one.

³ It should be noted that Minhag America did not become the basis for The Union Prayer Book, but rather Einhorn's Olat Tamid served in that capacity.

of devotion."⁴ In another article, Cohon remarked: "Thus the Prayer book became not only the truest reflection of Jewish piety but also the finest embodiment of Judaism. ... Its [The Union Prayer Book's] omissions as well as its additions .. grew out of definite theological viewpoints."⁵ Others have remarked that we cannot take the theology of a prayerbook too seriously, for much of the prayerbook is sung, and the reader can sing away any theology. This author asserts that the prayerbook is the theology that the laity knows, because, if the laity studies theology at all, it does so through the prayerbook. The prayerbook is also the theological work with which the laity and the clergy have the most contact and the best knowledge. For this reason, among others, the study of prayerbooks is valuable and will be instructive regarding the liberal movements' views of "reward and punishment."

The prayerbooks' treatment of nine particular passages found in the traditional prayerbook will be examined. The passages which most directly address a belief in "reward and punishment," are:

- 1) the second paragraph of the Shema, the v'haya im shamo.
- 2) the "shin" verse of Psalm 145.
- 3) the "shomer" verse of the Yiqdal.

⁴ Samuel S. Cohon, "The Religious Ideas of a Union Prayer Book", C.C.A.R. Yearbook, XL, (1930), p. 276.

⁵ Samuel S. Cohon, "The Theology of the Union Prayer Book", C.C.A.R. Yearbook, XXXVIII(1928), p. 248.

4) the birkat haminim of the weekday amidah*.

5) Av Haraahamim

6) U'n'thane Tokef

7) U'mip'ne Hataenu

8) Enosh mah Yizkeh

9) The various versions of the Kaddish, with particular attention upon the introductions offered by the various prayerbooks.

The prayerbooks to be examined are:

1) Minhaq America, both Daily/Shabbat and High Holiday,
I. M. Wise (1866, 1868)

2) The Union Prayer Book I and II, CCAR (1895, 1894)

3) The Union Prayer Book, Revised I and II, CCAR
(1924, 1926) (UPB, revised)

4) The Union Prayer Book Newly Revised I and II CCAR
(1940, 1945) (UPB, newly revised)

5) Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book, (1946) and High
Holiday Prayer Book, (1951) (RA) ed. Morris Silverman

* Historically both this prayer and the av haraahamim prayer do not refer to reward and punishment. Both of them arose during particular periods in Jewish history and reflect the history of that period. The birkat haminim was originally written to separate Judeo-Christians from Jews. The av haraahamim was written during the period of the Crusades and reflects the people's anguish and cry to God for help. It is this author's contention that most congregants are not aware of the origins of these prayers. Furthermore, he believes that when the congregant reads these prayers he understands them to be a direct call for God to reward the martyrs and punish "evildoers."

6) Mahzor for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, ed. J. Harlow. (The RA) (1972).⁷

In the traditional prayerbook, the second paragraph of the Shema is taken from Deuteronomy 11:13-21. This paragraph is known as v'haya im shamoa or Kabbalat ol Hamitzvot. The text speaks of the rewards and punishments which shall befall the people. If the people obey God's commands, then God will provide the rains and the people will be provided with a plentiful harvest. But, on the other hand, if the people disobey God's commands, then God will withhold the rains, and there will be a poor harvest and "you shall perish from off the good land which God has given to you."⁸ The concept of "reward and punishment" is perhaps nowhere more explicitly stated in the traditional prayerbook. Both what is expected of the individual and the specific rewards and punishments are stated. Due to its specificity, this paragraph is difficult to reinterpret. Wise left the second paragraph of the Shema in his prayerbook, thus accepting its theological implications. Each and every one of the Union Prayer Books removes this paragraph from its rendition of the Shema, thus rejecting its specific statements regarding "reward and punishment." Silverman, in his prayerbooks, maintains this paragraph. His holiday prayerbook includes the following

⁷ For an examination of Reconstructionist liturgy, please see the chapter on Mordecai Kaplan.

⁸ Deut. 11:17.

note: "The second paragraph emphasizes the conviction that the moral law is the counterpart of the natural law, since evil-doing inevitably brings disaster in its wake. This is reflected in the history of man."² By the inclusion of this note Silverman commits himself not only to maintaining the concept of "reward and punishment" within the prayerbook, but also to reinforcing it. Harlow, in his prayerbook, maintains the second paragraph, but with no introductory note.

Psalm 145, commonly known as Ashre, is recited three times a day by the traditional Jew. In the "shin" verse the Psalm reads: "Shomer Adonai et kol ahavav, v'et kol harishaim yashmid." "The Lord protects all who love Him, and all the wicked he will destroy." The various prayerbooks dealt with this overt reference to Divine "reward and punishment" in a number of different ways. Wise, in Minhaq America, maintained both the original Hebrew and an accurate translation. The Union Prayer Book I maintains the verse only in the English. Although it maintains most of Psalm 145 in the Hebrew, the "shin" verse is omitted from the Hebrew text. In the succeeding editions of the Union Prayer Book both the original Hebrew and an accurate English translation are presented.

In examining the corresponding High Holiday prayerbooks, there are a number of interesting inconsistencies to be found. In UPB II Psalm 145 is not to be found at all. In the revised

² Morris Silverman, High Holiday Prayer Book, (Hartford, Prayer Book Press; 1951) p. 7.

edition both the traditional Hebrew and an accurate English translation are to be found in at least one location. In the newly revised edition of UPB II, the "shin" verse is dropped from both the Hebrew text and from the English translation. From the variety of manners in which the Reform liturgy has treated this verse, one might infer that the Movement is uncomfortable with the verse's theology and has therefore tried to eliminate it from its prayerbook. For various other reasons, though, the Movement has not been willing to entirely eliminate Psalm 145 from its prayerbook. Thus the Reform Movement cannot fully accept or reject the theology of the "shin" verse of Psalm 145. In fact, the editors of the newly revised edition maintain both view points.

Silverman is also inconsistent in his treatment of this verse. In the High Holiday mahzor he always maintains the traditional Hebrew. When he does provide a translation for the Hebrew, it is not always an accurate translation. In his¹⁰ Shabbat prayerbook, he again provides the traditional Hebrew text but translates it as: "But all the wicked He brings low."¹¹ Although this translation is not accurate, it does

¹⁰ It must be noted that Silverman was not the author of this prayer book, but only its editor. The Shabbat and Festival Prayer Book, although based on Silverman's manuscript, is the work of the Rabbinical Assembly's liturgy committee. Therefore, Silverman can not be held totally responsible for the inconsistencies between "his" two prayer books.

¹¹ Morris Silverman, Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book, (The Rabbinical Assembly of America and The United Synagogue of America, 1946), p. 78.

maintain the spirit of Psalm 145. Silverman is committed to maintaining the form of Psalm 145, but he, too, is not fully committed to its theology. Harlow maintains both the traditional Hebrew and an accurate translation of the Ashre. His translation reflects either his acceptance of "reward and punishment," or his desire to provide accurate translations of Biblical texts.

The Yiqdal is a traditional song sung at the conclusion of many services. It is based upon Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith. The eleventh verse of that song reads: "Gomel l'ish hesed ke'mif'alo, notein l'rasha ra ke'rish'ato" "He deals with the righteous man according to his deeds, and he gives to the wicked, evil according to his wickedness." Again, the various prayerbooks present different approaches to this difficult verse. Both Minhaq America and UPB maintain the traditional Hebrew text along with an accurate English translation. The UPB (revised) maintains the traditional Hebrew text, but changes the English text to read: "Both the just and the unjust their portion receive."¹² Such a translation, although not accurate, does maintain the general spirit of the verse. The UPB, newly revised eliminates the Yiqdal entirely. Again, when we examine the High Holiday editions of the prayerbooks, we are struck with inconsistencies. In the original UPB II, the Yiqdal does not

¹² The Union Prayer Book, revised edition, (Central Conference of American Rabbis, Cincinnati, 1927), p. 200.

appear at all. In both the revised and the newly revised editions, the traditional Hebrew is maintained but the English translation is inaccurate: "Both the just and the unjust their portion receive."¹³ Although this translation is not accurate, it is an attempt at maintaining the spirit of the verse. It is interesting to note that in the Union Hymnal the Reform Movement maintains the Yiqdal in an English translation written by Newton Mann: "With perfect poise, He binds, according to the deed, to wrong the doom, to right the joy, in measured meed..."¹⁴ This translation bears almost no relation to the original Hebrew text.¹⁵ As is seen, the Reform Movement has experienced increasing difficulty with the Yiqdal and its theology. In some respect, it is surprising that we would find the Yiqdal in any Reform prayerbook, since so much of Maimonides' creed has been rejected by liberal Judaism.

In the Conservative Movement, the Yiqdal does not seem to pose such problems, for Silverman maintains both the traditional Hebrew and an accurate translation in both of his prayerbooks. However, the Conservative Movement has also rejected much of Maimonides' creed. Silverman's inclusion of the Yiqdal may say more about the importance of continuity

¹³ The Union Prayer Book II (revised), (The Central Conference of American Rabbis, Cincinnati, 1926) p. 131.

¹⁴ Newton Mann, Yiqdal, in The Union Hymnal, (Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Cincinnati, 1914), p. 77.

¹⁵ It should be noted, as inaccurate as the translation of this verse might be, the "translation" of many of the other verses is even more inaccurate.

then about theological beliefs. Harlow, too, maintains the traditional Hebrew text of the Yiqdal. Instead of a translation, Harlow provides a "summary"¹⁶ of Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith. Harlow, by providing the translation in this fashion, does not necessarily affirm his acceptance of Maimonides' thirteen principles. It is more likely that he has included the Yiqdal because of its "melody," rather than because of its theology.

The twelfth blessing in the traditional weekday amidah is known as birkat haminim¹⁷. This blessing asks God to destroy both evil and evil doers in the world.

And to the slanderers let them have no hope. And to all evil, let it perish as in a moment. And all the enemies of your people let them be cast off speedily, and root them out, and smash them and throw them out and subdue the arrogant ones speedily in our days. Blessed art thou, Lord who destroys His enemies and subdues the slanderers.¹⁸

Wise, and all of the Union Prayer Books, eliminate this paragraph from the weekday amidah. (This elimination is not only related to the theological question of "reward and punishment," but also to Reform Judaism's understanding of relations between Jews and non-Jews and of the birkat haminim's historical origins.)

Silverman maintains this paragraph in a changed form. In

¹⁶ Jules Harlow, Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, (The Rabbinical Assembly, New York, 1972), p. 55.

¹⁷ See note #5.

¹⁸ Translation is the authors.

both the Hebrew and the English translation he depersonalizes the prayer. Instead of speaking of "the destruction of evildoers" he speaks of "the destruction of evil:" "Do thou uproot the dominion of arrogance...."¹⁹ Even with this note of temperance, Silverman does not totally dismiss the idea of God seeking retribution against "evil doers": "May all thine enemies be destroyed."²⁰ Thus, Silverman tries to both temper the concept of "reward and punishment" in this blessing, and at the same time maintain the traditional conception. Harlow, in his prayerbook, is perhaps the most confusing of all with respect to this issue. In the Hebrew, he maintains Silverman's malkhut zadon, dominion of arrogance,²¹ but in the English translation he drops this idea and returns to the destruction of individuals. "May you quickly uproot and crush the arrogant..."²²

The Av Haraḥamim²³, recited before the returning of the Torah to the ark on Shabbat and holidays, asks God to remember the martyrs of Israel and seek retribution for their deaths.

May our God remember them for good with the other righteous of the world, and render retribution for the blood of his servants which hath been shed; ... Let there be made known among the nations in our

¹⁹ Morris Silverman, Sabbath and Festival, op. cit. p. 249.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Harlow, op. cit. pp. 770, 771.

²² Ibid.

²³ See note #5.

sight the rendering of retribution for the blood of thy servants which hath been shed.²⁴

Wise, the Union Prayer Books, and Harlow all eliminate Av Haraḥamim from their prayerbooks. Silverman retains this prayer in both of his prayerbooks. In his High Holiday prayerbook, Silverman includes an introductory note to the Av Haraḥamim.²⁵ In this note he explains the history of the prayer. He adds that the prayer speaks of all martyrs and all righteous people who have been slain, and not just the martyrs of Israel. In a sense, Silverman is trying to tone down the severity of this prayer, yet his very inclusion of it indicates his movement's continued belief in direct Divine "reward and punishment."

The five sections examined thus far are all part of the weekly liturgy. As we have seen, within the weekly liturgy the Reform prayerbooks have striven to eliminate those sections of the liturgy which most directly speak of Divine "reward and punishment." Furthermore, we can generally say that the Conservative movement is also in some limited ways striving to remove the most flagrant references to direct Divine "reward and punishment" through its elimination of the Av Haraḥamim, in Harlow's prayerbook. However, even as we may conclude that both of the American liberal movements have striven to modify or eliminate overt references to Divine

²⁴ J. H. Hertz, The Authorized Daily Prayer Book, (New York, Soncino Press, 1976). pp. 513, 515.

²⁵ Silverman, High Holiday, op. cit. p. 331.

"reward and punishment" from their weekly liturgies, we must concede that they are not always consistent in these efforts.

Three specific prayers found in the High Holiday liturgy are also instructive. These are the U'n'thane Tokef, the U'mip'ne Hataenu and the Enosh Mah Yizkeh.

The U'n'thane Tokef is considered by many to be one of the most powerful prayers found within the High Holiday liturgy. Traditionally, it is recited just three times a year, during the musaf service on both days of Rosh Hashana and on Yom Kippur. It affirms God as the judge of all: the one who determines life and death, wealth and poverty, famine and plenty. The prayer asserts that each year on Rosh Hashana, God determines the fate of each individual, and on Yom Kippur, that fate is sealed for the year to come. "As a shepherd causes his flock to pass beneath his staff, so do you pass and record and count and visit the souls of all flesh, appointing the measure of every creature's life and recording the decree of its destiny."²⁶ The prayer concludes by affirming the belief that the determination of life and death is not totally in God's control; man's actions can effect God's decree: "...repentance, prayer and righteousness avert the severity of the decree."²⁷ Thus, this prayer is a clear statement of "reward and punishment." God determines who shall live and who shall die, but His determination is based

²⁶ Translation is the author's own.

²⁷ ibid.

upon human actions. Wise, as well as the U.P.B., eliminates this prayer entirely. This reflects their desires to lessen overt references to "reward and punishment" and God's control over the fate of humanity.

By the time of the revised edition of the U.P.B., the U'n'thane Tokef had been readmitted into the prayerbook in the Yom Kippur afternoon service.²⁸ The prayer is shortened, but its essence is maintained. It is edited in a manner which places a greater emphasis upon God's willingness to accept the repentant sinner back than one finds in the traditional version of the prayer. The punishments are greatly reduced from those found in the traditional version. Furthermore, immediately following the climax of the prayer "But repentance, prayer..." the Union Prayer Book skips a few lines of the traditional prayer and continues: "Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his evil way."²⁹ This line does appear in the traditional U'n'thane Tokef, but it does not immediately follow the climax. In the U.P.B., newly revised, the U'n'thane Tokef was also maintained, but again, in an edited version.³⁰ More of the traditional Hebrew is retained, especially that section which enumerates the various punishments which God decrees. Yet, in

²⁸ Union Prayer Book, Revised, (Cincinnati, C.C.A.R., 1926), p. 238-39.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Union Prayer Book: Newly Revised, (New York, C.C.A.R., 1945), p. 256-7.

opposition to the Hebrew text, the English text completely tones down this idea:

On these days of awe, our hearts awaken to the truth that in Thy providence Thou givest life and ordainest death. Thou omniscient judgment decides the fortunes and disasters of nations and of men, their joys and their griefs, and their length of days.³¹

Although this is still a relatively strong statement, it is much weaker than the Hebrew of the U.P.B. Furthermore, like the earlier version, this version, immediately after striking the climax, continues with the emphasis placed upon God desiring to forgive rather than to punish. Thus, in the U.P.B.s, when included at all, the U'n'thane Tokef is toned down, and as a result stresses not the punishing aspect of God, but the forgiving aspect of God.

Both Silverman and Harlow maintain the traditional U'n'thane Tokef in its entirety. Thus, in their prayerbooks the full strength of the prayer is carried through. Both God's ability to punish and to forgive are given equal weight. Therefore the final destiny of man is left in God's hands, but it is dependent upon human actions.

Silverman includes a long introduction to this prayer.³² In it he stresses the concept that man's fate is in his own hands, that through "repentance, prayer and righteousness" man can bring meaning and hope into his life. By linking our

³¹ Ibid.

³² Silverman, High Holiday, op. cit., p.q. 355-6.

lives with God, Silverman asserts that we are granted life and made to feel at home in the universe.³³

In the keddushat hayom blessing of the holiday musaf, a special section is included, known as u'mip'ne hataenu. This confession speaks directly of Divine punishment and the forms which it has taken: "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land...." This prayer has been removed from all of the prayerbooks associated with the Reform Movement; conversely, it remains in all of the prayerbooks associated with the Conservative Movement.³⁴ Silverman's prayerbook includes an introductory note to this prayer which emphasizes the concept of divine punishment.

Yet, when the Temple was destroyed, our people chanted no hymn of hate against the enemy that hurled them into the long, dark night of exile and oppression. Instead of succumbing to despair, our people, firm in their faith in God, held themselves responsible for the destruction...³⁵

Silverman's note furthermore suggests that today this prayer should "stimulate us to work wholeheartedly for the rebuilding

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ It can be argued that the Reform movement's removal of this prayer was influenced by its general anti-Zionism attitude and abiding devotion to its host country. Furthermore, it can be argued that some of the reformers saw the exile not as a punishment but as a blessing. Furthermore, it should be noted that Harlow has made some minor changes in the Hebrew Text of this prayer. These changes reflect the Conservative movements attitude towards the reestablishment of the sacrificial cult. These changes do not effect the view of "reward and punishment" asserted in this prayer.

³⁵ Silverman, High Holiday, op. cit., p. 364.

of Israel's homeland..."³⁶

The Enosh Mah Yizkeh prayer is part of the traditional Yom Kippur morning service. It contains clear statements affirming the belief in Divine "reward and punishment." Wise eliminated this prayer from his prayerbook, as does Harlow. The UPB has attempted to modify this prayer in two ways: in the first edition of the UPB, the English text of the prayer was modified so as to state that God does reward and punish individual humans and nations, and that we cannot question God's judgement. Although this is not an accurate translation, and the Hebrew text is not provided, it does maintain the spirit of the original Hebrew text. In both the revised and the newly revised edition of the UPB, there is an implied sub-theme of reward, but not of punishment. "What is actually being said is that "heavenly" immortality is the reward for righteous conduct and/or repentance. This is an extraordinary idea, because it is practically the only place in the UPB where it may be found."³⁷ Here, too, the Reform Movement is indecisive in its treatment of the theme of "reward and punishment" in its liturgy.

Silverman maintains the general spirit of the traditional prayer. He includes a detailed description of the earthly rewards and punishments which one can expect to receive.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Stephen Arnold, Ideas of Immortality in American Reform Ritual, (unpublished Rabbinic thesis, 1961) p. 54.

Silverman maintains a consistency with the High Holiday theology by emphasizing the belief that honest teshuva can avert an expected punishment.

Within liberal Judaism, the mourner's Kaddish has achieved a higher status than it had in traditional Judaism. Many introductions to the Kaddish have been written. The introductions are generally attempts to provide some comfort to the bereaved. We might expect that these introductions would contain numerous references to the heavenly rewards that the deceased are receiving. However, this is not the case. With the exception of Minhag America and the first edition of the UPB, there are no overt references to "reward and punishment" in this position in any of the prayerbooks. Although there are references to life after death, there are no clear references to Divine "reward and punishment" for deeds which have been performed on earth. As Stephen Arnold pointed out in his thesis, "Ideas of Immortality in American Reform Ritual," there are constant references to different "types" of immortality, but this immortality is not dependent upon actions performed here on earth. It seems that since the turn of the century, liberal Judaism determined that the time of the recitation of the Kaddish is not the time to speak of reward and punishment.

Thus we have seen that when faced with specific prayers dealing with "reward and punishment", the Reform Movement either eliminates the prayers entirely or tries to limit both

their use and their theological implications. In general, through its prayerbooks the Reform Movement has tried to limit the concept of Divine "reward and punishment." As we have also seen, through successive editions of The Union Prayer Book, the use of "reward and punishment" has increased.³⁸ But also, liturgical decisions with respect to "reward and punishment" have become increasingly inconsistent and occasionally even contradictory.

The Conservative Movement has, over the course of time, also tried to limit "reward and punishment", although the changes instituted by Harlow do not fit into a neat pattern. By leaving out the Av harahamim he has greatly decreased the emphasis on "reward and punishment." Through his translation of the birkat haminin, he has returned some of the emphasis to "reward and punishment." Silverman consistently tries to tone down "reward and punishment" through explanatory notes. In general, the Conservative Movement's attempts to limit the concept of "reward and punishment" entail maintaining the Hebrew while adjusting the corresponding English texts to meet its theological needs. Like those attempts of the Reform Movement, the Conservative Movement's actions have been inconsistent.

³⁸ Perhaps part of the reason for this can be attributed to the Reform movement's general turn to "more traditional" liturgy during the last fifty years.

CHAPTER IX

A STUDY OF CYCLES:

The Doctrine in Educational Materials

The teaching of children has always been considered one of the most important mitzvot in Judaism. It has been considered so important that every day, twice a day the traditional Jew recites the Shema, in which he says: "And you shall teach them to your children...."¹ In order to best understand what the average lay person knows and possibly believes about "reward and punishment" it is necessary to examine his "diet" -- that which has been taught to him. It is worthwhile to examine this "diet": the educational materials that have been used in liberal religious schools during this century.

Because this topic covers a wide time span, and because so many different resources have been used in the thousands of liberal religious schools, such an examination can at best consist of only a very general survey. This particular survey is limited to two types of materials: syllabi that have been published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and by The United Synagogue², and text books and confirmation manuals that have been written for use in the high school

¹ Deut. 6:7.

² It should be noted that the examination of a curriculum does not necessarily reflect what is actually being taught in the classroom.

years. The materials examined represent only a small sample of the materials that have been used, but it is hoped that they are a representative sample.

Several of the theologians whose views were discussed in earlier chapters have also written text books to be used in religious schools during the high school years. Each one of these authors maintained a consistent position throughout his writings. These authors include Kohler, Fackenheim and Borowitz as well as a volume written by Beryl Cohon, the brother of Samuel Cohon.³ After examination of Beryl Cohon's work, it was clear that his brother, Samuel, had a major influence in the work.

From 1945 through 1958 the U.A.H.C. annually published a Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School, prepared by Dr. Emanuel Gamoran, who served as the Director of Education of the Union during the period. From 1945 through 1950 the Union published two curricula. Both were designed for use in a weekly religious school that meets for approximately two and one half hours of classroom instruction each week. Throughout the entire thirteen grades there is only one course to be taught on "Jewish Religion," and this is to be taught in the 10th grade or the confirmation class.⁴ Previous to that,

³ Beryl Cohon, Introduction to Judaism, (New York, Bloch Publishing, 1929), p. v.

⁴ From 1949-56 it was recommended in at least one of the syllabi that S.S. Cohon's Judaism as a Way of Life (1948) be offered as an optional course to students in the twelfth grade.

there are classes to be taught in Bible, history, holiday celebrations and the Jewish community, but none which would seem to directly mandate teaching Jewish theology.²³ In the above mentioned confirmation class, the recommended books are Enelow's, The Faith of Israel, Feuer and Glazer's, The Jewish Religion, or Cohon's, Introduction to Judaism. Beginning with the 1952 edition of the curriculum, Roland Gittelsohn's, Little Lower than the Angels was also recommended.

Beginning in 1950, and continuing throughout the rest of the period, the Union began publishing "Course of Study III." This curriculum was designed to be used in a school which meets a minimum of two days each week and possibly as often as three days each week. One might expect that with a two to three-fold increase in the amount of classroom time, that there would be an increase in the number of classes devoted to Jewish theology. The Union instead decided to make Hebrew the "backbone of a two-or three-day-a-week school and which must necessarily form the backbone of the training of the Jewish leadership..."²⁴ One continues to find only one course, the confirmation course, which is solely devoted to the study of Jewish beliefs.

In the 1956 edition of the curriculum is found, for the

²³ It should be noted that often the teaching of Bible or of history might include the teaching of some theology or ethics.

²⁴ Emanuel Gamoran, A Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School (For the two-and three-day-a-week School), (Cincinnati, U.A.H.C., 1950), p. 1.

first time, a published statement of "Guiding Principles" and "General Aims" which were adopted by the Commission on Jewish Education in June of 1956.⁷ Included in the statement of "Aims" is a section on theology. The "theology" aims include:

an understanding of the basic religious problems which have universally concerned mankind,...Some knowledge and appreciation of traditional Jewish ways of dealing with these problems. A knowledge and appreciation of the distinctive contribution of Reform Judaism in this area....⁸

Also beginning in that year was added at the end of the Curriculum a special section of "Units of Activity and Instruction,"⁹ to be used in all three courses of study. A unit on the book of Job was one of the units recommended for use in the ninth grade. It would seem, from this evidence, that beginning in the late 1950's the Union was trying to encourage its schools to devote more time to the study of theology, especially in the upper grades.

The increased emphasis upon the teaching of theology and belief is strikingly apparent in the Union's new curriculum, To See the World Through Jewish Eyes.¹⁰ In the volume for

⁷ Emanuel Gamoran, Curriculum for the Jewish Religious School, (New York, U.A.H.C., 1956) pp. 1-5.

⁸ Gamoran, Curriculum, (1956) op. cit., p. 5.

⁹ Gamoran, op. cit., pp. 47-8.

¹⁰ To See the World Through Jewish Eyes: (Experimental Edition): Guidelines for the Primary Years (1982)
Guidelines for the Intermediate Years (1983)
Guidelines for the Junior High School Years (1984)
(U.A.H.C.)

the Primary Years, an entire section on theology is included.¹¹ This is the only specific subject on which a separate section is included. The need to teach theology at a young age is emphasized:

...the new curriculum strives to nurture a unique, comprehensive and meaningful confrontation between the child and God -- one that reflects awareness of the learning readiness of the child, the freedom for the individual inquiry and discovery so important to Reform Judaism and the cumulative definition of God in Judaism as reported in Torah and discussed in various classics of Jewish thought.¹²

Although this document does not deal directly with the question of "reward and punishment," the very inclusion of this section shows that theology is a serious educational concern of the Union. Furthermore, within the general discussion of theology the specific question of "reward and punishment" is discussed in the classroom.

In the succeeding volumes of the new curriculum, the subject of theology has been faced even more directly. In the document for the intermediate years the "principle objectives" include, "associate God with one's response to obligation," and "associate God with one's response to the Brit as a partnership."¹³ Also, the essential learning activities include reading of the Bible for the study of theology. Some of the specific readings are Genesis 12:1-3, 17:1-14 and

¹¹ To See the World Through Jewish Eyes: The Primary Years, op.cit., pp. 105-108.

¹² To See the World: Primary, op. cit., p. 105.

¹³ To See: Intermediate Years, op. cit., p. 18.

26:1-5¹⁴. Each one of these biblical selections speaks of the establishment of the brit between God and one of the patriarchs, and includes a reference to specific rewards and punishments for keeping and breaking the covenant.

The curriculum for the Junior high years continues along the same pattern of increased emphasis on God and His relationship with the individual, the Jewish people, and the world as a whole. Included in the "principle objectives" for the Junior High years are:

Investigate Jewish beliefs and practices related to death...;Research the concepts of aveirah and teshuvah, ...review the liturgy of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, in order to identify those passages which focus on our relationship within two categories: self to God and self to other people.¹⁵

Also included in this volume is a "Resource Reader on Jewish Theology"¹⁶ This reader provides an overview of the major "theological schools" and presents their views on various issues, including the question of evil.

Thus the Reform curriculum materials which were examined clearly show increasing emphasis being placed upon the study of theology within the religious school. And, although one can not be certain exactly what topics are taught in any given classroom, one can assume that the question of "reward and punishment" is being discussed in many classrooms with

¹⁴ To See: Intermediate Years, op. cit., p. 57.

¹⁵ To See: Junior High School Years, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁶ Rifat Sonsino, "Resource reading on Jewish Theology", in To See: Junior High School, op. cit., pp. 145-160.

increasing frequency.

In 1945, the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education was reorganized. Beginning in 1948, that commission published its curriculum for kindergarten through 12th grade.¹⁷ Although this author only had one edition of the curriculum available, nowhere in it could he find a course in theology or Jewish beliefs. There are courses on worship, prayer, history, Hebrew and observances, but not beliefs. Again, it is possible that a discussion of beliefs could arise in one of these subjects.¹⁸

Having examined some of the curricula that have been published for use in the liberal Jewish religious school, we now turn our attention to some of the specific materials that have been used in the classroom, especially the "confirmation class." Historically, it was in this class that a formal discussion of Jewish beliefs and theology took place.

Roland Gittelsohn, in his Hebrew Union College Rabbinic thesis,¹⁹ examined the concepts of religion presented in various confirmation manuals. He examined both those that had

¹⁷ Curriculum Outline for the Congregational School: Primary and Elementary Level (New York, United Synagogue, 1948) and Junior High School Division (New York, United Synagogue, 1951)

¹⁸ It should be noted that this is consistent with the Reform curriculum of the day which included only one course in Jewish beliefs and only a small part of that was devoted to the study of theology.

¹⁹ Roland Gittelsohn, Ideas of Religion as Reflected in the Confirmation Manuals and Catechisms used by American Jews, unpublished Rabbinic Thesis (Cincinnati, 1936)

been published before the turn of the century, and those that had been published since. In his examination of these manuals he found that the doctrine of "reward and punishment," if discussed at all, was discussed under the heading of creed. Furthermore, he found that most of the authors believed that some type of motivation is needed to encourage children to lead the ethical life.²⁰ Gittelsohn found that in many of the manuals that he examined the motivation for doing good was often given as "fear of the Lord", or "fear of future punishment." In particular, Gittelsohn cited the manuals of both Isaac M. Wise and Kaufmann Kohler, who were two of the early leaders of the Reform movement.

Although Kohler is not alone in his belief in "reward and punishment," it is to his Guide for Instruction of Judaism²¹ that we now turn our attention.²² Perhaps the most striking example of Kohler emphasizing the concept of "reward and punishment" is found in his words: "Sin leads to misery, ruin and death of body and soul. Righteous conduct leads to peace, happiness and life immortal."²³ There are many other overt statements by Kohler on acceptance of "reward and punishment"

²⁰ Gittelsohn, op. cit., p. 44.

²¹ Kaufman Kohler, Guide for Instruction of Judaism, (New York, Philip Cowen, 1907).

²² In our examination of educational resource materials we have limited ourselves to only some of material published since 1900. Although we have mentioned Wise's manual we will not study it in any depth.

²³ Kohler, op. cit., p. 34.

to be found in his guide, including:

God is all just. He treats individuals and nations according to their doings; He punishes evil and rewards the good.²⁴

and:

"Conscience or moral sense, the voice of duty, which tells us what we ought to do and ought not to do, reveals to us the presence of a God who commands us to do the right and condemns us for doing wrong, of a Judge who rewards the good and punishes evil."²⁵

In his guide Kohler rejects the concept of heaven and hell.

He posits that these are man-made creations

for an age when men like children, needed some threat to lure them away from sin, and some promise to bribe them to do right. Today even our children know that the highest morality is to do the good for the sake of the good, and to shun evil, because it is evil.²⁶

Though Kohler rejects heaven and hell, he does provide us with a description of the type of punishment which God inflicts upon the evil doer. "He [God] cannot tolerate evil, but punishes it in the shape of physical, moral and spiritual ruin working upon the evil-doer and upon his children and his children's children if these follow his example in 'hating God'."²⁷ Kohler does state that Divine punishment can be averted through honest teshuvah. God, he believes, desires "not the death of the sinner, but that he should repent." God

²⁴ Kohler, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁵ Kohler, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁶ Kohler, op. cit., pp. 37-8.

²⁷ Kohler, op. cit., p. 58.

provides man with time to mend his ways before he receives the Divine punishment. Kohler, perhaps more than any of the authors studied, holds on to the concept of "reward and punishment."

In his Confirmation Manual published in the second decade of the twentieth century Mendes De Solla, directly confronts the question of "reward and punishment." As was the catechistic style, his manual consists of a series of question and answers. One of those questions inquires about the Jewish view of "reward and punishment:"

A: That our soul, which is the essence of our being will enjoy great happiness, or suffer much grief after we are dead, and that the recompense will be of a purely spiritual nature.

Q: Why do we believe in future recompense?

A: Because we sometimes see good persons suffer great misery in the world, while the wicked often enjoy prosperity; we therefore believe that God, who is just, will fully reward every man hereafter.²⁸

De Solla considered the belief in "reward and punishment" so important that he included it within the "profession of faith" to be recited by the confirmands.²⁹

Although published in 1917, H.G. Enelow's, The Faith of Israel: a Guide for Confirmation, proved to be one of the most popular and well received volumes of its genre. The Union was still encouraging its use at least as late as 1958, over 40 years after its original publication. It is safe to assume,

²⁸ J. Mendes de Solla, Confirmation Manual, (New York, Bloch Publishing Co., 1917), p. 20.

²⁹ De Solla, op. cit., p. 58.

therefore, that this one text somewhat influenced the thinking of two generations of students. Enelow's guide contains a chapter entitled "The Reward of a Good life."³⁰ Enelow strove to discourage young people from doing good deeds in order to gain a reward. "The right kind of people will try to live a good life for its own sake."³¹ Even though he began his chapter with this lofty ideal, Enelow did provide other motivations for living the good life. "None the less, it is true that the good life does bring its reward, just as the evil life brings its penalties."³² Enelow went on to enumerate those rewards. He included the "fact" that the good life is richer than the ungodly, it provides more inner beauty, and worth, wisdom, knowledge of goodness, health and happiness.³³

Unlike Kohler, Enelow was not content to speak only of earthly rewards. He also spoke of the rewards to come after death: "And, lastly, those that have lived a godly life on earth are sure of their reward when they have passed away. ... But this we do know, that the Spirit lives on and none need be afraid of death who has live in a godly way."³⁴ Enelow

³⁰ H.G. Enelow, The Faith of Israel: A Guide for Confirmation, (Cincinnati, U.A.H.C., 1917) pp.77-81.

³¹ Enelow, op. cit., p. 77.

³² Ibid.

³³ Enelow, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

³⁴ Enelow, op. cit., p. 80.

presented this view as fact, without presenting any opposing views.

Beryl Cohon's, Introduction to Judaism, was almost as influential as Enelow's guide. Originally published in 1929, it was still recommended by the Union in 1951, thus serving as the text book of a generation of young Jews. Cohon's book was, in many respects, a transitional volume. The volumes which proceeded it all had very clear and strong statements concerning "reward and punishment" all of them affirm their belief in some form of the doctrine. Cohon, perhaps foreshadowing the current trend, did not place a great deal of stress on the doctrine of "reward and punishment." Instead his whole discussion of "reward and punishment" is found in a chapter entitled "Judaism and the Mysteries."³⁵ Cohon clearly rejects the belief in heaven and hell with this statement, "...so as Jews we need not believe in heaven or hell or in a physical life in the hereafter."³⁶ For Cohon, "heaven and hell" are concepts which our "unsophisticated" forebears had, but we moderns, who have the benefit of science and modern thinking, need not hold on to such "primitive" ideas.

Cohon did not really tackle the question of "reward and punishment." In an abbreviated manner he tried to present the problem of theodicy. He rejected the idea of suffering as

³⁵ Beryl Cohon, Introduction to Judaism, (New York, Bloch Publishing Co., 1929), p. 149.

³⁶ Cohon, op. cit., p. 150.

punishment from God. He affirmed the idea that suffering is largely caused by human beings and their "ignorance and stupidity".³⁷ Furthermore he claimed that suffering can lead to good ends. As a result of suffering, he claimed, one becomes stronger, more sympathetic and more understanding of others. In the end, though, Cohon did not provide a clear answer to the question of "reward and punishment".

Over the course of approximately 20 years, Roland Gittelsohn has written three books designed for use in the upper grades of liberal religious high school.³⁸ Because each of these books takes essentially the same viewpoint, they can be evaluated as a unit. It should be noted, however, that with each successive book Gittelsohn becomes less specific concerning his ideas of "reward and punishment." Furthermore, with each succeeding book, less space is dedicated to the question of "reward and punishment." Gittelsohn asserts that there is a moral power operating in the universe. "The moral power of this universe apparently operates in such a manner that in the long run any individual or group which does not abide by ethical rules and laws is doomed to disaster."³⁹ He

³⁷ Cohon, op. cit., p. 151.

³⁸ Roland Gittelsohn, Little Lower Than the Angels, (New York, U.A.H.C., 1951) (experimental edition).

Wings of the Morning, (New York, U.A.H.C., 1969).

The Meaning of Judaism, (Cleveland, Excalibur Books, 1970).

³⁹ Gittelsohn, Little Lower, op. cit., p. 77.

asserts that punishment or reward will only come in the long run, and that we can not necessarily draw a direct connection between a given action and its reward or punishment; "...The fact remains that in most cases disobedience of the ethical rules and laws sooner or later brings unhappiness or disaster upon the guilty person or group."⁴⁰ Sometimes, Gittelsohn admits, the punishment might just be a "guilty conscience," but none the less, the punishment is real.

Gittelsohn includes the idea that the good are rewarded for their actions:

The ethical man or woman is rewarded in a far more important sense than material success. He achieves an inner satisfaction and happiness, a sense of fulfilling the purpose of being born a human being, a feeling that he has helped advance evolution to the next stage ethically and spiritually.⁴¹

Gittelsohn does not accept a belief in heaven and hell. Although he does not clearly state it, it seems evident that for Gittelsohn the rewards and punishments due to each individual will come in this world. Furthermore the greatest reward one can receive is the knowledge or feeling of having made the world a better place to live in. "Reward and punishment" does remain an active principle for Gittelsohn, but it is much less important for him than it was for either Kohler or Enelow.

The remaining texts to be examined were all written since

⁴⁰ Gittelsohn, Little Lower, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴¹ Gittelsohn, Wings, op. cit., p. 99.

the late 1950's.⁴² In each successive volume, the question of "reward and punishment" is awarded less and less space. Often, the question of theodicy in general is discussed, but "reward and punishment" seems to have fallen from the pages. All of the authors affirm the belief that man has freedom of action. They reject the concept of determinism, believing that free will is a God-given right to man. Furthermore, they all affirm that since man is free he is also responsible for his actions:

Like those who wrote the Bible, we believe that God governs or rules the universe and that he establishes His moral law throughout it. At the same time, we hold that He has also given man complete freedom of action, because He cares about what we do, he has made known His ways and the consequences of disobedience, but He does not predetermine what to do. Each of us remains responsible for his own deeds.⁴³

Each one of these authors affirms the fact that there are consequences to be paid for disobeying God's will, yet they are vague about what those consequences are. All agree that there is no heaven and hell. Generally, they imply that "reward and punishment" consist of feelings within ourselves.

⁴² William Silverman, The Still Small Voice Today, (New York, Behrman House, 1957).

Emil Fackenheim, Paths to Jewish Belief, (New York, Behrman House, 1960).

A.J. Wolf, Challenge to Confirmands, (New York, Scribe Productions, 1963).

Sylvan D. Schwartzman and Jack Spiro, The Living Bible, (New York, U.A.H.C., 1962).

Eugene Borowitz, Understanding Judaism, (New York, U.A.H.C., 1979).

⁴³ Schwartzman and Spiro, op.cit., p. 79.

or the result of having made the world a better or worse place to live in.

When dealing with the general question of theodicy each tries to assert to varying degrees that,

The answer to suffering is living through it. We prove not only the power but also the goodness of God when we withstand pain and do not quit. Some evil is caused by man in his freedom; some leads to greater good; some is part of the very mystery of God. Not all of it is "within our reach." But in living through it we reach out to God."

It is interesting to note that, in distinction from the earlier writings, these writings tend to present more than one viewpoint, asking the student to decide which view he personally accepts. Borowitz is the most conscientious in this regard. Often, he presents the "Orthodox", "Conservative" and "Reform" views side by side.

In summary, therefore, one can safely say that the direct question of "reward and punishment," as motivation for performing ethical deeds, seems to be diminishing in Jewish text books. In the future, it appears, especially from an examination of the new Union curriculum, theology as a whole will play a greater and greater role in religious schools.

"Wolf, op. cit., p. 67.

CONCLUSIONS

In its final edition for 1986, *Insight* featured a series of articles entitled "The Issues of 1987." One of those articles was a presentation of modern Catholic views of hell. That Article, "Hell Hath Little Fury These Days,"¹ asserts that although many laymen and theologians still believe in hell, the belief in hell as a place of mighty fires and eternal damnation has receded in the recent past. "Since the 18th-century New England Calvinist [Jonathan Edwards], preached the idea of such divine punishment has declined to the point where 'hell today is enveloped in silence,'" says Alan Bernstein, a professor of Medieval history at the University of Arizona.² Bernstein is not the only authority quoted in the article who holds this view. "The doctrine of hell has passed out of conversation and preaching, even in conservative evangelical churches...."³ The article asserts that in Christendom, which has always placed a greater emphasis on heaven and hell than Judaism; that heaven and hell is believed in, but with much less emphasis than even 100 years ago.

It is not surprising that at the end of this thesis, one

¹ Derk Kinnane Roelofsma, "Hell Hath Little Fury These Days," *Insight: The Washington Times*, Vol. 2, No. 52, (Dec. 29, 1986), pp. 48-9.

² Roelofsma, op. cit., p. 48.

³ Ibid.

comes to a very similar conclusion. In brief, it is accurate to say that during the past one hundred years, the emphasis on "reward and punishment" has decreased in the writings of liberal Jewish theologians, in liberal Jewish liturgy, and liberal Jewish educational materials. Furthermore, just as in biblical times and throughout the history of Judaism, the problem of "reward and punishment" has continued to be a philosophical dilemma with which thinkers have had to struggle. Also, each thinker has arrived at a different "solution" to the problem. Authors of educational materials and liturgy have each handled the question differently. In fact, no two authors arrived at the same solution, although there are similarities among some of the solutions.

The materials that have been studied can be divided into two groups, though they are not delineated by differing schools of thought or movemental affiliation. To this writer the most significant distinctions can be attributed to the time in which the author did the majority of his writing. The two groups can be divided according to pre-Holocaust and post-Holocaust writings.

Those who did the majority of their writing before the Holocaust, and those liturgies and educational materials that were written before the Holocaust, all directly confront the question of "reward and punishment." Included in this group are the writings of Kaufmann Kohler, Leo Baeck, and Samuel S. Cohon, as well as Minhag America, all of the various editions

of the Union Prayer Book, and all of the various catechisms that were studied (those by Kohler, Enelow, Cohon, and De Solla). It should be noted that the various authors do not necessarily come to the same conclusion concerning "reward and punishment," but it can be stated that each accepts the reality of "reward and punishment." Without exception, all of the pre-Holocaust materials studied assert that ultimately those who do good receive a Divine reward for their efforts, and that the wicked do receive some form of Divine punishment for their deeds.

Among the thinkers examined in this thesis, Mordecai Kaplan serves as a transitional figure between the pre- and post-Holocaust groups. His works and his life span both periods. Kaplan's works reflect a desire to accept "reward and punishment," but at the same time he seems also to want to reject "reward and punishment." Kaplan clearly fits within the earlier category of thinkers for his willingness to openly and honestly confront the problems; he fits into the post-Holocaust group for his inability to clearly state his belief. Kaplan seems finally to have decided that, yes, he did believe in "reward and punishment" but that reward or punishment will only come in the distant future. Furthermore, he did not necessarily believe that there will be individual "reward and punishment," but that "reward and punishment" will work itself out on a societal level. It is possible that Kaplan is seen as this transitional figure because he is the

only author, among those whose works were examined, who was both a theologian and the editor of a prayerbook. Within his "theological" writings, Kaplan was much more willing to dismiss the concept of "reward and punishment," although he was not willing to totally eliminate it. In his prayerbook, perhaps out of a desire to serve a wider audience, Kaplan maintained more of the concept of "reward and punishment." In contrast to the aforementioned authors, Emil Fackenheim and Harold Schulweis, both of whom are post-Holocaust writers, totally dismiss the idea of Divine "reward and punishment." Schulweis, who was a student of Kaplan takes Kaplan's thought to its logical conclusion. He dismisses "reward and punishment" totally from his writings. Within "Predicate Theology" as described by Schulweis, there can be no room for Divine "reward and punishment," because Schulweis rejects the idea that God even has the power to reward and punish either individuals or societies.

Fackenheim is forced by his own logic to reject "reward and punishment." For Fackenheim to admit the possibility of "reward and punishment," would mean that the victims of the Holocaust in some way were being punished by God, a possibility Fackenheim is unwilling to accept.

Eugene Borowitz is the one thinker who does not fit clearly into either the pre- or post-Holocaust categories. Although he is clearly a post-Holocaust thinker, he is willing to admit the possibility of the existence of Divine "reward

and punishment," as opposed to the other post-Holocaust thinkers who are not even willing to admit that possibility. Perhaps, the way in which he does fit into our division is that, like the other post-Holocaust thinkers, he does not confront the issue directly; whereas all of the pre-Holocaust authors approach "reward and punishment" directly and forthrightly. The post-Holocaust thinkers seem to avoid addressing the issue, especially when dealing with personal "reward and punishment;" the pre-Holocaust authors all devote a great deal of their writings to the problem.

The distinction that were observed within the thinkers is also true of the educational materials that were examined. The pre-Holocaust materials directly and forthrightly handle the topic of "reward and punishment." Many of them, in fact, have separate chapters in which "reward and punishment" is discussed. Each one of the pre-Holocaust educational books admits the reality of "reward and punishment."

In opposition to this, all of post-Holocaust educational materials either deny the possibility of "reward and punishment" or in vague terms state that "reward is the good feeling we have when we have done something good and punishment is the bad feeling we have after we have done something bad." Furthermore, most of the post-Holocaust materials avoid the question of "reward and punishment" whenever possible. It is interesting to note that the new curriculum now being prepared by the U.A.H.C deals with the

question of "reward and punishment" in an open and "up-front" manner. This may be a positive sign. Regardless of the conclusion concerning "reward and punishment" which the curriculum might try to assert, it is this writer's belief that the question is an important one and one which should be discussed in every religious school.

There are some general conclusions that can be drawn about all of the thinkers and educational materials which admit the possibility of "reward and punishment", be they pre- or post-Holocaust, and no matter how vaguely they are willing to admit it. All of the authors examined soundly reject the idea of physical reward and punishment, either in this world or in the world to come. Not one of the sources examined was willing to even contemplate the possibility of the existence of a physical "heaven or hell." For the most part, the position with which all of the authors were most comfortable was that of Maimonides and Antiquus of Sokho: the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah and the punishment for a sin is a sin. Furthermore, each source urged the individual not to do deeds out of the expectation of a reward, but rather to do a good deed for the sake of doing a good deed. All of the authors were willing to admit that the concept of "reward and punishment" could serve as a very strong motivating force in the world.

It is difficult to do an analysis of liberal liturgy in the same manner. Unfortunately, all of the Reform and

Reconstructionist liturgies that were examined are pre-Holocaust, and there is not enough Conservative liturgy to draw any firm conclusions. Furthermore, one cannot draw simple conclusions concerning liturgy because there are so many other factors that go into the compilation of any prayer book, including attitudes towards "tradition", Zionism, non-Jews, and the length of services, to mention a few. Perhaps one can draw some very tentative conclusions. Over the period which we examined, the Reform Movement slowly returned to the prayerbook more of the traditional belief in "reward and punishment." The Conservative Movement, on the other hand, has slowly removed from its prayerbooks more of the traditional views of "reward and punishment." All of the prayer books seem to be moving towards the rejection of physical "reward and punishment." For the most part, the prayer books are moving towards a rejection of the most blatant references to "reward and punishment." At the same time, they do maintain the second paragraph of the Shema, the traditional Yiqdal, and the U'n'taneh Tokef. It maybe safest to say that, at best, the prayer books are inconsistent in their attitude towards "reward and punishment." However, as noted in the chapter on Kaplan, because a prayerbook strives to serve many different constituencies, it is difficult to find consistent theological trends in the study of liturgy when only a few pieces are being examined.

A personal concluding note:

After having studied the question of "reward and punishment" for over a year, I believe that I can come to some tentative conclusions. On a first impression, I was drawn to the writings of Harold Schulweis. I found his Predicate Theology to be very solid and very convincing. However, as time went on, I realized that although intellectually I liked Predicate Theology and found it to be a theology which I could accept, I found it emotionally to be very empty. Predicate Theology's almost complete rejection of a 'traditional' God concept, and its verging on making man into God, or at least making human ideals into God, I found cold. Furthermore, I found it to be verging on a form of idolatry. Schulweis, from my perspective, associates the human ideal with the Divine, and verges on calling the human ideal "the Divine, God." I believe that for an individual to really accept any theology, he must be able to respond to it both intellectually and emotionally; religion and theology are a combination of both our emotional responses and our intellectual/rational responses. Because I found Schulweis's views emotionally empty, I was forced to reject it as a personal philosophy.

After further thinking, therefore I have found the theology of Leo Baeck to be closest to my own thinking. Baeck admits the emotional need for a belief in Divine "reward and punishment." Furthermore, I am convinced by his belief that "reward and punishment" is something to be hoped for but not demanded. I agree with Baeck that one's hopes for a reward

bear witness to our belief in the future, and perhaps even in the Messianic future. Like Baeck, I believe that sin does have its consequences, even if I am not sure what those consequences are, and that good deeds do hold out the possibility of some type of reward, even if I do not know what that reward is. Like Baeck, I too, believe in the efficacy of honest and true teshuva.

In the end I must conclude that over two thousand years ago Antigonus of Sokho perhaps made the definitive comment concerning question of "reward and punishment": "Be not like slaves who serve their master upon the condition of receiving a reward, but be like servants who minister to their master without the condition of receiving a reward."

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