Art as a Jewish Spiritual Practice

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My grandfather, Simon Strauss z"l, always told me, "Be your best self!"

Grandpa, this is me, being my best me.

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ABSTRACT:

Through compilation of secondary sources, background of the Jewish relationship with iconography and visual art, and through heavily project-based research, this thesis asserts that visual art is a Jewish spiritual practice. Visual art may serve as part of a communal worship experience, a component of personal prayer, parallel traditional liturgy or, with proper intention, be a form of prayer itself. This capstone project is divided into two sections. The first chapter is a summary of history and secondary sources. The second chapter is a collection of project-based research. This thesis provides readers with tools for using visual art in professional, communal and individual religious worship settings. Processing implications of *hidur mitzvah* offers an opportunity to consider Judaism's relationship with visual art and the individual's connection with creative, meaningful prayer.

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This chapter offers a framework for the project component of the thesis. The information herein serves to guide the project's content. Additionally, processing the relationship and history between Judaism, Jewish people and visual art is essential before bringing art into Jewish prayer settings. This component of the thesis explores the background for the projects and conceptualizes the unique possibilities for bringing together Jewish people and visual art in prayerful union.

PART I : INTRODUCTION

An introduction to the thesis topic and what has been learned through it's completion.

PART II : PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

A brief exploration of why many Jews do not feel that Judaism has a relationship with the visual world, complemented with a modern perspective on the relationship between Jewish identity and visual art.

PART III : *HIDUR MITZVAH* IN THE SYNAGOGUE

This is an exploration of prayer and space and imagining how the commandment of *hidur mitzvah* can change the way one prays in synagogue.

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Imagining art as part of a personal and communal prayer experience.

PART I : INTRODUCTION

I always wanted to be one of those students

That innovative teachers talk about.

The student who listens

Better when she

Doodles and sketches

But me

I do just the opposite.

The world becomes

Silent

And my inner world

Becomes the only song.[1]

Through the commandment of *hidur mitzvah* I challenge the HUC-JIR rabbinical school community, the Los Angeles Jewish professional artist community and myself, to explore visual art as a mode of worship. This capstone project attempts to access the voice of each individual's inner world in creative acts of prayer. I have learned that both prayer and art are not natural for most people. However, most people want to reach into their creative and spiritual selves but do not know where to begin. This thesis explores some of those possibilities and points of access for different individuals, groups, as well as the historical relationship with Jewish identity and visual art.

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[1] Written by Miriam Terlinchamp as part of a drawing/ sketch during a prayer session at HUC-JIR 10/6/ 09 See Page 49 for the sketch it emerged from.

PART II: PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

> **Such a command as that of the Decalogue would have been impossible to a nation possessed of such artistic gifts as the Greeks, and was carried to its ultimate consequences...only because the people lacked artistic inclination, with its creative power and formative imagination.**
>
> "Art Among the Ancient Hebrews," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*

There is no way around it. Jews are a people of the book. We label ourselves as a people who laud text above all else. It is a concept ingrained in our liturgy. We pray "*Eilu Devarim*" every morning for the ability to do important acts with the culminating phrase being, "Studying Torah is above them all because it leads to them all." It is an identity that was shaped by the concept of ongoing revelation. Rabbis of the third century studied text in order to elaborate on the words of our religion through Mishnah, Gemara and Talmud. Even history had a hand in enforcing the text-oriented nature of the Jewish people. Through burning synagogues and destroyed villages, the only thing that could be carried with the Jews was the word of their tradition on their hearts. Through the wilderness of Egypt and on into the wilderness of Ellis Island text was portable. Jews are <u>the</u> people of the book for both interior and exterior reasons. However, it is not conclusive whether or not being text-centric is the exclusive core of Jewish identity.

Surely we know that text is not the only thing that defines the Jewish people. Jews are known for their contributions of music, poetry, storytelling, social action, political involvement, garment making and visual art to the greater world. However,

it is not as evident if these other Jewish passions are as vital or meaningful to the Jewish story as text. The various gifts in our history in the arts compete with text when it comes to validating different avenues of accessing tradition and personal truth. When the yeshivas were destroyed and whole Jewish communities ruined, one might have thought that another medium other than text might rise from the ashes. With our sages gone and the great rabbis surrendered to the camps, the Jews remained "people of the book." I wonder then, not if text continued being a central value, but rather, if being the "people of the book" changed its meaning.

If we deconstructed the term "people of the book" to something more fluid like, "people of Torah," there might be more range in how Jews conceptualize their identity. Torah does not only mean text. Torah is revelation, tradition, ritual, history, the story and plight of both community and the individual. Torah is what we received at Sinai, what was written down by sages through the generations, what was and is the experience of God in the human life span. With this definition, Torah is certainly not just text. Text is not the only thing that is portable and can survive persecution. Torah is the lifeblood of a people.

In everything in life, not just this subject matter, it can be easy to look at life issues as dualities. They are black or white, right or wrong and either/or. Is it possible, in light of seeing Torah as a multifaceted entity, to see the complexity of our identity as multi-valued rather than dichotomous? Contradictions only occur when we present them as oppositional. We set ourselves a trap when we phrase our identity as either/or, better/worse, Jewish/not Jewish. We force ourselves to defend

a non-existent duality like being "people of the book", as if it precludes us from being anything else as well. I am no historian, or theologian, or great master of text, but I am a Jew. I believe that there must be an encircling truth that can hold both visual art and text in a manner that is not contradictory. If we are people of Torah, then we are a people not of text and either/or's, but rather, a people that acknowledge the many layers of partnership between humans and the Divine.

One of these complex layers is visual art. The rich relationship of illustrated haggadot, sacred manuscripts, and mosaics are part of classic Jewish visual history. The complexity arises when scholars attempt to define or discuss "Jewish art" rather than illustrated art.

> "...The term "Jewish art" remains something of an oxymoron. Jews may have made images, but that does not make the images, themselves, Jewish for every onlooker, for the images may not reflect the Jewish experience and might better be described as American, for example, or Socialist. Almost by definition, or rather by commandment, Jewish art does not exist."[2]

The second commandment prohibits any rendering of a likeness in the Heavens or on earth. Scholars continue to argue over what that actually means for artists. However, what makes something Jewish that a Jew creates is a more contemporary discussion regarding Jewish art. Regardless of whether one is allowed to represent images on earth or not, Jews have done so for centuries.

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[2] Olin, Margaret. The Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art. University of Nebraska Press. 2001. Page 5

The inartistic Jew is a stereotype that many argue is anti-Semitic, reinforcing the idea that Jews are uncultured rather than struggling with definitions of tradition. Art has been used as a marker for racist distinction for centuries, reaching its height in the 19th century where the exotic "Oriental" and "Jew" were peoples thought of interchangeably.[3] Nationalism and art-historian scholarship were deeply intertwined, art of the East "could neither reach a high degree of development nor any positive progress."[4] Biblical manuscripts and ancient art were appreciated for their historical value and relationship to sacred text. However, the nations who had created these works were also artificially limited to these works, ever reduced to labor without artistic sensitivity, never to progress.

Jewish artists have reacted to the notion of emerging from a people of primitive artistic competence by valuing their own contributions in a multitude of ways. "Critics debate whether Jewish American art need only be art made by a Jewish American, independent of content, or if both the artist and the artwork's identity must be Jewish."[5] This debate is ongoing, though in order to acknowledge some of the greatest and most popular artists in history as Jewish artists, one must relinquish the requirement for Jewish subject matter. American artists in this category would be: Elizabeth de Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein, Mark Rothko and Judy Chicago. Some scholars claimed that though the artworks were not outwardly

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[3] Olin, page 7.

[4] Olin, page 12.

[5] Baskind, Samantha. Encyclopedia of Jewish American Artists. Greenwood Press. Cleveland. 2006. Page xviii

religious, they could be seen as Jewish when discerned through a Jewish lens. Meaning, that when reviewing art with the artist's biography, cultural history and religious affiliation in mind, the art might feel Jewish even if the subject matter does not seem outwardly Jewish.

With American Jewish artists leading the world in abstract expressionism during the late 1940's and well into the 1960's, what it meant to create something as a Jew had to be thought of differently. With a war raging in Europe that was killing Jews who did and did not identify themselves outwardly as such, in America the artistic world reacted. Stateside the Jewish artist could be free to rail against the popular expressionist art form of the time. Nazi propaganda had usurped socialist avant-garde as their own art form, and so a new art form was born. Abstract expressionism was a new language to discuss the atrocities abroad for which there were no words. It was also an artistic modality that allowed the Jewish artist to re-imagine what it meant to be a Jew and an American.

> "[The Jew] did not want his Jewish heritage to be his mark of self-definition. Instead, he wanted to develop a Jewish consciousness that encouraged self-realization and that liberated him from outworn parameters of belief and behavior. He said that he wanted to feel free to be whatever he needed to be as a Jew or even as an American."[6]

Abstract expressionism was the Jewish American answer to anti-Semitism and to the nation who was said to be without art.

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[6] Baigell, Matthew. Jewish Art in America: An Introduction. Rowman and Littlefield publishers. Lanham, Maryland, 2006. Page 99

At the time, abstract expressionism was not widely accepted as a Jewish art form. Only with a half-century of hindsight, are we able to look back and see abstract expressionism as a form of Jewish responsa to war-torn Europe. In 1965 The Jewish Museum in New York showcased an exhibit of abstract expressionism. By then abstract expressionism was part of American cultural mainstream. Jackson Pollock brought the new wave of art through a featured article in Life magazine in 1949. In the 1960's and early 1970's pop art was already catching on, and a new wave of art was on the frontier. However, despite abstract expressionisms popularity, with its bright colors and lack of symbols, many Jews did not believe that the Jewish Museum should host the exhibit, as the work was not "Jewish enough".

I imagine that some of the rebuke over insufficient Jewish content in supposedly Jewish art is around what makes something or someone authentically Jewish. The fear is that once we agree that art without images or distinctive Jewish characteristics is Jewish, how can we ever recognize Jewish art when we see it? Deciphering what makes an artwork or an artist Jewish, and for that matter, what makes a Jew a Jew, changes depending on who you ask. Nevertheless, there is common ground where everyone may come together to appreciate the artistic contributions of Jews regardless of content.

Currently, there are two distinct centers on the east and west coast of North America, which testifies that Jewish art is alive and well. The Jewish Museum, in New York, was originally founded in 1904. Reconstructed in 1989, and expanded to

include gallery space in 1993[7]. On the west coast, The Jewish Art Museum, in San Francisco, which was originally founded in 1990, completed its construction of Daniel Libeskind's design of a full gallery in 1998.[8] Each focuses on very different aspects and definitions of Jewish identity and art.

To commemorate the new gallery in 1993, The Jewish Museum of New York opened with an exhibition titled "Too Jewish?"[9] The show included humorous depictions of bar mitzvah parties in eighties regalia and a large collection of prosthetic noses. Ruth Weisberg, Dean of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts comments,

> "...varying degrees of irony and humor were the permissible modes, but not affirmation and celebration. Perhaps the fear remains that if Jews engage [in] sentiment we will become sentimental, but every direction has its dangers. Tapping deep feelings does not automatically condemn one to nostalgia."[10]

In many instances Jewish artists have become apologists when they want to reference their Jewish identity. They often poke fun at themselves, using imagery from our history and culture as kitsch, rather than a source of expression.

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[7] www.thejewishmuseum.org

[8] www.thecjm.org

[9] Kleeblatt, Norman, ed. Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities. Jewish Museum, New York. 1996.

[10] Weisberg, Ruth. "Between Exile and Irony" in, 'Vincent, Brook, *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture.* Rutgers University Press. 2006. Page 170

Unfortunately, many Jewish artists who orient their subject matter around their identity can become categorized by other Jews as "too Jewish". There have been times in our history where acculturation has benefitted the Jewish people, times where whole art forms became possible in our struggle to hide and untangle our Jewish identity from our national identity. Yet, is it still that time? Have we reached a point where Jewish artists no longer need to dwell in the arena of craft and ritual items? Now is the time once more to expand back out into the greater art world without irony, with proudly identifiable Jewish subject matter. Clearly, America is ready, having already bought out the Jewish Museum in New York's current show on Man Ray (born Emmanuel Radnitzky, 1934).

Perhaps there is hope on the west coast too with The Jewish Art Museum's current exhibition, "Being Jewish: A Bay Area Portrait". The show is an ongoing series of photographs of what Jewish looks like in Northern California. Playful possibilities are evident in the show, as are celebration, affirmation and continuity. The show challenges exhibitions of the past decade across the country to rethink what it means to discuss Jewish identity openly and unapologetically. Acknowledging who we are as a people maintains our connection to being a people of Torah.

PART III : HIDUR MITZVAH IN SYNAGOGUE

Judaism, in the most classical sense, imagines itself to be transmitted from Sinai by two distinct methods: written media and memory.[11] The written revelation of Judaism is scripture, while the more nebulous, and ongoing, revelation is oral. Both text and verbal narrative are considered Torah. The Jews are "people of Torah," and therefore shaped by multiple sources of authentic revelation.

The oral Torah is referred to as midrash. Midrash can be difficult to define as it is an interpretative tool that utilizes parable and allegory to fill in information in biblical text. This does not mean that rabbis "made up" the answers to questions left in scripture. Rather, midrash complements written Torah. It serves as an ongoing source that "uncovers" possible *halacha* (legal mandates) and *aggada* (parables), which were not mentioned when the written Torah was originally revealed. Midrash is a process of unveiling meaning and reimagining relevance of an ancient text for each generation.

Midrash in academic circles is always considered a body of literature. However, its imprecise existence as a process rather than a distinct body of work, allows room for doubt that midrash should be defined as solely a body of literature. Midrash interacts with the Bible in very specific ways and times.

> "Primarily we can see the central issue behind the emergence of Midrash as the need to deal with the presence of cultural or religious tension and discontinuity. Where there are questions that demand

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[11] Neusner, Jacob. What is Midrash? Fortress Press. Philadelphia. 1987. Page 3

> answers, and where there are new cultural and intellectual pressures that must be addressed, Midrash comes into play as a way of resolving crisis and reaffirming continuity with the traditions of the past.[12]

Midrash offers what is missing from the written text. It offers the chance to see something new in Scripture or to practice Judaism in ways that have new meaning for the community.

Midrash as a tool of interpretation can be a useful lens when trying to understand a specific text or habit of the Jewish community. The relationship between Jewish identity and visual art is one such situation. The second commandment tells us,

> "You shall have no other Gods beside Me. You shall not make for yourselves a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the Heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Lord your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments."[13]

When reciting the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:3, regarding other gods, is always paired with Exodus 20:4 regarding images. The Hebrew word for image used in Exodus 20:4, *temunah*, is seen four other times in the entire biblical canon. Twice, it is connected with the word *pesel* (sculpture), as in the Ten Commandments. Two

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[12] Holtz, Barry. Back to the Sources: Reading classical Jewish Texts. Summit Books. NY. Page 179

[13] Exodus 20:3-6, translation: Jewish Publication Society of America, The TaNaKh: Student Edition. 2000.

other times it is connected, with the words *lo reitem* (you shall not see them), which are also references to idolatry. When searching for the English word, image[14], it occurs forty-nine times in the entire canon. In every case, image is connected with words such as: molten, sculpture, carved, engraved, cut down, idols, altars and broken. The words of sun gods, Asherim, Baalim, and names of foreign priests and gods surround the word for image. Clearly, the bible sees images as directly correlated with idolatry, which is considered the gravest offense.

Rabbinic commentaries in the Talmud, with midrash woven throughout, have plenty to say about the role of imagery and idolatry. *Rambam* claimed that the second commandment was so extensive, that it not only precluded individuals from creating images but also forbade idolatrous thoughts.[15] He believed this, and other rabbinic commentators agreed, that other gods could only exist in one's mind.[16] *Mechilta* claims that the prohibition is about holding idols made by others in one's possession and not forging any more new ones. Some rabbinic sources spend time differentiating the levels of punishment one might occur by physical acts of idolatry. For instance, possession of an idol is a sin but carving an idol is a sin that merits the death penalty. The largest problem for the rabbis seems to be a fear of accepting the idols and gods in one's possession as one's God.

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[14] JPS student edition translation

[15] Hilchut Yesodei HaTorah, ch 1.

[16] Nachshoni, Yehuda. Studies in the Weekly Parashah: the classical interpretations of major topics and themes in the Torah. Mesorah Publications. Jerusalem. 1988. Page 477

Somehow, with all this commentary regarding idolatry and fear of taking on new gods, the Jewish people eschewed common forms of visual art. Or at least, that is the story most of us learned for many years! Jews do not believe in making images of heaven, earth and water because it is akin to idolatry, so we do not do it. However, as more art history has revealed itself, this has been more myth than truth. We have long known of illustrated haggadot, ketubot, and scriptures as well as ritual ornaments, mosaics and Torah mantles. In 1932 in Syria at the Dura Europos Synagogue a wall was uncovered with Jewish depictions of God's hands and human faces dating to the year 244. Proving that Jews may not have been as reticent to depict the heavens and earth as we imagined. Regardless, art and Judaism have long been entrenched in a complicated relationship, but it has never been absolutist.

In 1992 Jo Milgrom published, "Handmade Midrash", revolutionizing the way art and Jewish biblical exegesis interacted. By weaving together Jungian theory, art therapy technique and biblical text, Milgrom created a new way for Jews to imagine midrash.

> "Handmade midrash" is a visual theology. It is an approach to biblical narrative that draws on the traditional study of Bible, midrash (rabbinic commentaries), the cognate disciplines of literature, history, archeology and linguistics. However, it moves beyond these to form a new synthesis with comparative symbolism, art history, and psychology- to create a new discipline. This study was provoked by the limitations of academic study of Scripture in addressing present day spiritual needs."[17]

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[17] Milgrom, Jo. Handmade Midrash. JPS. NY. 1992 Page ix.

Milgrom reimagines midrash to be something beyond narrative. Midrash for Milgrom is an art form not to be left to a singular medium.

Her work, like my own, is workshop based. She challenges her students to "play" rather than to "create art for art's sake".[18] She emphasizes sensuality in all her exercises.[19] She asks her students to rend cloth, tear paper and search for expressions on the page that cannot be expressed in recognizable shape or symbol. I think the rabbis of the Mishnah played in their narrative too. Not in the way a child plays, but as the adage goes, "Turn it and turn it again, for everything is contained therein."[20] Milgrom is not looking for fine art. Milgrom is looking for soul art.[21] By staying close to the biblical text, the projects have the feel of midrash in that the artists create the missing narrative in scripture.

Visual art, if permitted, may be the one element that can bridge the multilayered worlds of "the people of Torah". Art as a valid form of midrash might be the transcending channel from our dualistic text oriented tendencies. Art frees us from being "people of the book" and helps us become "people of Torah", allowing truth to come from a variety of sources rather than from text alone. Midrash situates a given story in a specific time and place and allows for readers to bring in their own

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[18] Milgrom, Jo. Page 7

[19] Ibid, Page 80

[20] Nezikin, Avot 5, 133

[21] This is my own term and analysis of what I believe Milgrom is searching for in her students work.

situation and experience[22]. Midrash is something that reverberates for people beyond their immediate condition, connecting the past with the present and vice versa. What better medium for transcending space and time than art? When we look into midrash as a tool for accessing knowledge, the same strengths as visual art seem to appear: connecting people to tradition, accessing wisdom in different ways, exploring identity and enacting *hidur mitzvah* in a text format (beautifying the gaps that traditional texts may not encompass). Midrash is no second rate Torah. It is not a novelty nor is it any less substantial than *halacha*. Midrash is a meaning maker in the places where no meaning can be found. Art, in its best moments, is a midrashic tool, in that it brings forth meaning.

Art, like prayer, should be the soul's food. Art as a decorative/illustrative force is part of the Jewish tradition. The commandment of *hidur mitzvah* is the act of beautifying another commandment. We tend to extend the definition of *hidur mitzvah* to mean making anything more beautiful (which, for example, is how modern Jews justify ear piercing). However it has to do more with "doubling" a mitzvah, if such a concept were possible. Doubling rather than intensifying a commandment, because *hidur* cannot be separated from the mitzvah it is serving. Yet, it serves its own specific purpose outside of the mitzvah in practice. When you take extra time to beautify a commandment that you are already in the act of doing, like making Shabbat or visiting the sick or studying Torah, by making an amazing

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[22] Adler, Rachel on Fackenheim's use of midrash as a tool for explaining the Holocaust.

Shabbat meal or bringing flowers to the sick or creating a decorative Torah ark, one heightens the mitzvah at hand. *Hidur mitzvah* does not stand on its own. The beautification piece, the art, is not its own mitzvah unless it is partnered with the mitzvah of glorifying God. Generally speaking, all mitzvot are supposed to be equal in the eyes of God. The concept that one can raise a given mitzvah beyond its scope is an exception rather than a rule. There are only two places where we see this notion of expanding a commandment: *hidur mitzvah* and making love to your partner on Shabbat. This latter act is seen as a way of communing with the Divine on a holy day, thereby aligning Divine time and space with a Divine act. I would also argue that it could fall under the scope of *hidur mitzvah* since it may be seen as a way of making the Shabbat more beautiful.

Hidur mitzvah as a codependent commandment makes the argument for art as a necessity a bit more complicated. Traditionally Jews have seen art as something that must partner with something else in order to have meaning; it cannot stand on its own. Art must serve a function beyond just existing.

Many artists have very definite opinions on this as well. Some believe that art exists for art's sake, and nothing more should be read into it. Others believe that all art is experience, and no art can be seen separate from the identity and experience of the artist. John Dewey, in his work, "Art as experience," formulated an artistic philosophy that shapes my personal foundations of the purpose of art.

> "The significance of purpose as a controlling factor in both production and appreciation is often missed because purpose is identified with pious wish and what

> is sometimes called a motive...It is in the purposes he entertains and acts upon that an individual most completely exhibits and realizes his intimate selfhood. Control of a material by a "self" is control more than just "mind"...the object finally created is the purpose both as a conscious objective and as an accomplished actuality."[23]

Dewey explains that both the process and the result are the purpose of art making. The self is an active participant in the creation and in the result. Dewey writes that subject matter comes from the mind rather than outside of one's self. Therefore, the subject and the object are both the artist and the artist's creation. For Jews this can feel esoteric in that creating art may not on the surface seem to fulfill a functional capacity. However, there is place for meaningful art in Jewish life that exists for the sole reason that it is created by a Jew for a "Jewish reason," which would be through *hidur mitzvah*. *Hidur mitzvah* elevates human acts and creation, human offerings, to Divine standards.

Art as a mitzvah can be a rarity. However, if given the chance, *hidur mitzvah* may partner with other mitzvot in a multitude of ways. If one looks carefully there is a place for prayerful art in the lives and spaces of our community. *Hidur mitzvah* in its simplest of senses can be decorative and functional. It is the art on synagogue walls, the architecture of its sanctuaries and the creation of ritual objects. In this capacity, art may push the functional limits by serving as a tool for education and the creation of community. If the whole community is involved in the creation or commission of art for their environment and collective use, then art is the agent that

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[23] Dewey, John. Art as Experience. Penguin New York. 1934. Page 288-289

brings them together. It is a way of nurturing new relationships and bringing together people who might not naturally gravitate towards one another. It is very rare in weekly communal synagogue activities (like religious school, Torah study, parent education, worship services, ect.) to have a physical reminder of that community presence. The power of the physical result cannot to be denied.

Art in the synagogue can look like: an illustration of a story, a Torah ark, architecture, a communal art show, a religious school bulletin board, sanctuary lighting, photos from a trip to Israel, paintings of the old country, modern tapestries, mosaic tiling or a meditative art service. Art might be part of prayer or a place where prayer happens. In the congregational world art is everywhere, *if you are willing to look for it.* The problem is not how to bring art into the synagogue walls but how to make congregants active participants in Jewish art.

Funding and involvement in musical art projects have a long-standing history in the synagogue world. Music is not seen as a luxury. Music is the gateway for the Jewish community to access worship. Choirs, specialty classes and unique musical services abound, because music is the chosen artistic craft of the chosen people. Is it possible to elevate visual art as a midrashic tool and format for prayer the way music has been lauded?

Executive Director Ken Schlegel, of Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle, Washington claims that in the same way music has been changed, art is all about

marketing[24]. When he was first applying for grants for his "Raq Shabbat" programs no one wanted to support a Shabbat rock and roll band. The reason was not because of traditional understandings about how a synagogue service should sound, but because no one believed it would be successful. Six years later, twice a month, Raq Shabbat has the largest attendance in town. It costs the synagogue approximately $2500 a service but, as Schlegel laughingly says, "for standing room only, what price wouldn't you pay?" Schlegel knew Raq Shabbat would be successful, but it would take work to get it to where it is now. People fund and attend successful programs but one has to find a way to brand them as such so that they may become successful. He claims that visual art will have no harder a time being worked into a synagogue community culture than Raq Shabbat; what it will take is some creative market branding. "You start with the rabbi," claims Schlegel.

Branding oneself a musical rabbi seems pretty obvious to me. You pick up a guitar or sing something in a creative way and people will see the rabbi as musical pretty quickly. Seeing one's rabbi as an artist, I believe, is a little less clear cut. The issue within the synagogue context is more about the rabbinate than about the art world. However, without delving too much into the subject, it is important to note the struggle in branding a rabbi as a rabbi-artist.

Having a rabbi who is an artist (rather than a rabbi who is simply artistic) shapes her rabbinate. Everything becomes filtered through an additional lens with which most congregants are not used to grappling: personal history, collective

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[24] Interview. 11/15/08.

history, community, text, tradition and art. Art for a rabbi-artist is a channel to the Divine as unique and meaningful as ritual and prayer. What is unique for the rabbi-artist is that art does not take the place of traditional worship nor does it serve an accessory role; rather, art occupies a place of equal footing in the rabbinic tool kit.

Schlegel claims that if a rabbi interviews for a synagogue job, his identity as an artist must play a role in his application process as well. The congregational sphere is accustomed to a stagnant understanding of visual art in the synagogue world. The rabbi-artist turns that supposition on its head. Art becomes active. When one begins a new physical workout cycle, our muscles need time to awaken to the new movements; so too when we bring new lenses into a worship community. They have to exercise and stretch their praying muscles in order to incorporate a new understanding of the role art may play in the synagogue framework.

All that being said, once a rabbi-artist, always a rabbi-artist. Once there is a call to art in the community and outreach has begun, the whole community becomes encouraged to participate and pay attention to their visual environment. Art will be on people's minds, and hopefully, it will never stop. Therefore much care and forethought must be given to how the rabbi-artist wants to brand herself and her programs. When we talk about art, do we really mean that we want everyone to participate? Do we truly believe that everyone is an artist at heart? I do not ask these questions cynically, but with great awareness. As soon as you open up to a community, one must surrender to whatever outcome may arise. Therefore thinking about what communal involvement actually entails is an important first step.

There are a few distinct venues where I can imagine an entire community participating: In the field of prayer, in a congregational art class, and in an art collective format. Everyone in these categories would be encouraged to participate, regardless of skill level or comfort with visual art. These are venues where process, not product, would be emphasized as well as community building.

Prayer in community is always a compilation of what each person brings with them. Visual art in the worship service, if done right, would be a highly spiritually inclusive incorporation of art in the congregational world. Art as prayer would not necessarily be about end results but about the process. Like the liturgy in our prayer books, art as prayer would be a vehicle to connect to God and the greater community.

Art as prayer in a studio setting or in one's own personal space may be easier to imagine than visual art playing a role in sanctuary worship. In order to introduce a community to art as prayer we might begin by changing the shape of the sanctuary by moving services to an environment compatible with visual art. Another way would be to incorporate the known components of synagogue worship and meld them with visual art. Drawing prayers together and making our own siddur as we go through a service could do this. It could be done by having simultaneous forms of worship happening with visual art materials in one part of the room and traditional praying happening in another part of the room where each can hear and see one another. Regardless of what actually happens, a facilitator versed in both Jewish liturgy and teaching art to a range of artistic abilities would be essential.

Another venue for congregational involvement would be an art class or an open studio time. Creating space where art can happen regardless of how professional the outcome would be an important step in introducing visual art as a living element in congregational discourse. Designating a time once a week where congregants can come to the synagogue, study a Jewish text or learn about a Jewish artist, and then make art as individuals based around that teaching would offer individuals an opportunity to view art as part of the ways one may explore his/her Jewish identity. When we teach art as an acceptable means of reflection, learning and praying, we teach that there are many paths towards Jewish truths.

The power of community involvement is immeasurable, though not all forms of visual art can be accessible to every individual. It is important to have places where we mean it when we say, "everyone is an artist" and allow for the whole community to participate, regardless of ability, if they so choose. Just as important is our need to have places where professionalism and artistic talent are valued. There must be a balance between experiential art and art appreciation. By creating a place for both professional art and community art we create more access points for congregants to engage in visual art. This way people may connect with the experiential elements of art as prayer, the communal aspects of creating together and the joy in appreciating a piece of art that is separate from yourself.

The congregational venues for specific artists rather than all-inclusive communal projects are also three-fold: commissioning works of art, curating and leading creative/experiential services. When a community is commissioning a work

of art or curating a show for a building it is essential to have someone who knows what s/he is doing. This seems very basic, but it still remains a necessary point. Someone who knows art and the art world can only be an asset to a congregation in search of incorporating professional art into their landscape. The same is true with facilitating a creative service. It is too easy to fall into the trappings of kitsch art or miss the prayer elements altogether when engineering a creative service. The only way to have a successful service or show is to have someone with experience be part of the process.

In the best of worlds visual art in the synagogue would incorporate all of the above elements. There would be a place for visual art as prayer, a space for a Jewish art collective to be formed, and a safe place for studio work and text study to go hand in hand. There would be a place for professional art shows, commissioned pieces that change the shape of the synagogue walls, congregants who would be partners in the creation of sacred space and experiential art services in addition to musical and traditional services. People would take to heart the Jewish notion that we are co-creators with God. They would mimic our idea that God creates everyday and use this concept to fuel their passion for art.

Of course this is not yet the best of all worlds. In the most realistic of worlds, the synagogue might try for a few elements of visual art. The synagogue would open itself up to a communal art space or collective as well as commission a work of art or have an occasional experiential service. Art in the synagogue for many Jews may remain stagnant. They may forever hold pictures of orthodox rabbis praying at the

western wall as their concept of what "real" Jewish art looks like. However, it is my deep hope that slowly this may change. "Artwork can be a way of exploring Jewish identity and a way of expressing Jewishness in concrete terms"[25] Perhaps Jewish art in the synagogue could become more multifaceted and widen congregants' scope of what it means to be creators of a Jewish worship space.

In both the most ideal and the most realistic of senses, the goal of introducing visual art to the congregational world is to embody the sense of being a "people of Torah" and not just people of the book. Art should not replace text and text should not have a hierarchical position above art. Nor should art be text's lesser, illustrative, and decorative cousin. We do this by building art into the psyche of a community where art does not have to exist as an "alternative" or "special event" but simply function as part of the picture of what it means to be people of Torah. Art needs to be one, among many ways, to enter the synagogue, prayer, and personal Jewish identity.

The physicality of space must be considered as part of the worship experience. The art on the walls, the way a room is ordered, the colors that stream through the windows and the very structure of a building and light design can affect the way a worshipper experiences prayer. Space needs to be part of the holistic experience of prayer. Right now, examples of this exist in how chairs are set up and microphones situated in consideration of how congregants experience the clergy or

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[25] Diamant, Anita. Living a Jewish Life: Jewish traditions, customs and values for Today's families. HarperCollins. New York. 1991. Page 19

one another. However, the aesthetic of what a room might look like open and warm, or alternatively, confined and shadowed; over-exposed or the florescent lighting, might be secondary or not considered at all. I believe that space aesthetics are part of prayer as much as one's physical comfort, accessibility of liturgy in a prayer book, and the appeal of musicality.

I present the following case study of Temple Israel of Hollywood in Los Angeles, California as an example of how space is part of a worship experience. I chose Temple Israel of Hollywood because of the synagogue's history with the arts. The synagogue's website lauds the worship space:

> In 1947, during Rabbi Nussbaum's 32-year tenure, the Temple found its current site in a peaceful, residential neighborhood at the base of the Hollywood Hills. Fashioned of grey stone with a red-tile roof, the Sanctuary and its adjoining buildings are striking examples of modern Spanish Revival architecture. The Sanctuary boasts massive oak doors, and an eye-catching Star of David inscribed into the building's facade above the threshold evokes both cultural pride and rich tradition. The setting and the Synagogue are both beautiful and inspirational, conveying a sense of awe and humility while at the same time artistically illustrating the continuity and commitment of the Jewish people.[26]

I chose Temple Israel of Hollywood because the Reform synagogue values the Jewish relationship to artistic expression.

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[26] www.tioh.org

CASE STUDY : TEMPLE ISRAEL OF HOLLYWOOD, LOS ANGELES, CA.

I decided to walk the little less than three-mile distance from my home to the synagogue. Normally when I go to services I drive through the big steel gates, into a covered car garage, consult a guard at the gate and another at the door before entering. I wanted to get a sense of what it felt like to approach Temple Israel of Hollywood (TIOH) from a different perspective.

From Los Feliz to the heart of Hollywood, I walked the whole span of stars on the pavement, gawking tourists and costumed entertainers, and just as all the garish sites and sounds petered out, TIOH appeared on my left. In many ways the exterior is very different from the rest of the feel of Hollywood. TIOH purchased the main sanctuary and outer lot from a church in 1930, making it one of the older buildings in the neighborhood.

Ivy covers the whole length of the Hollywood side of the building. In front of the ivy walls, there is another wall covered in ivy, encased on either side by large palm trees and bamboo. Stripped of its greenery, it would probably look like a fort, but now it looks like a structure amidst a lush garden forest. The trees and ivy are groomed to frame the large façade complete with the traditional[27] three wooden

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[27] Pre-Modern churches were often built with three doors to represent the trinity. Most synagogues were constructed by non-Jewish architects in the same model (Rabbi Abraham Millgram, MyJewishLearning.com) but new meanings were attached to the doors for Jews. The only stipulations for synagogue structure involve the height of a synagogue (Talmud, Shabbat 11a), though this was dependent on the wealth and safety of a community in the Diaspora, where most Jews preferred their synagogue to not draw attention.

doors, none of which are used. Above the doors stands a triumphant Star of David filled with stained glass, and a carved Ten Commandments (1930), a favored visual theme at TIOH, lies directly beneath it. The synagogue façade is as grand as the other churches and buildings on Hollywood Boulevard. However, it does speak to the culture of Hollywood and Los Angeles to have a synagogue as visually stunning and large as any other place of worship on the Hollywood strip. Aside from the greenery that surrounds it, this front shouts its name, not unlike the theatres and personae of the neighborhood. Still, I had to enter the synagogue the same way as I usually do, through the garage and past two guards.

As a Seattle native, and someone who was working in a synagogue in downtown Seattle during the Federation shootings, I understand the importance of security. However, the security at TIOH was oppressively slow, and kept me waiting in the sun for nearly a half hour before someone could come greet me. I entered the synagogue with an escort, up the cement and metal staircase, past the day school (built in 1970, but a home for the Temple Shammes before that, in the 1950's) and into the main foyer.

The foyer is tall and wide, an incredibly open space for such an old building. One feels the 1980's remodeling with the large room, a clear indicator that the synagogue population grew and there was a need for everyone to be welcomed. On the eastern wall, right before the entrance to the chapel, there is a case of antique

judaica complete with labels indicating what the item is and who donated it. All donated works of art had donors' names listed, but most did not contain the artist's name. Above the wooden case of judaica is a piece by Laurie Gross, made of wool and fabric, echoing the feel of a tallis without being a tallis itself. On the opposing wall above the secretary's desk, there are two more pieces, also by Laurie Gross, both fabric works that feel like tallesim. Unfortunately, no one had any literature or could remember the artist's name. I called three times before someone could tell me that the fabric works were created by Laurie Gross and purchased for the space in the early 1990's.

The northern wall of the foyer is designated as the "Susan and David Gersh Family Art Wall" (part of the 1994 renovation). Below the wall's title one reads, "The human being is made to create, the poet to the potter. – Benjamin Disraeli." The wall has five featured mixed media works, all framed and proportional. They are graphic representations of traditional Jewish imagery in photography and paint (a rabbi praying at the wall, biblical narratives, and other recognizable "Jewish" images). The art wall faces the small door that leads to the chapel, which is all but dwarfed by a huge bronze tree for donors, that spans the entire length and height of the wall.

The chapel (built in the early 1950's), though certainly less majestic than the grander sanctuary (1930), is where most of the services are held. Generally, the space holds about seventy people, though if need be, the back wall may be moved to open up the adjoining social hall for more space. The chairs are not unlike dining room chairs, with plush green cushions. They are arranged in a soft semi-circle

around the bima, and are easily moveable. The southern wall is all glass, revealing the ivy covered outer wall of the building's façade. The window looks out not just on ivy but also on a small garden, rich in green foliage and large palm trees. The space is enclosed by an ivy covered brick wall, which has small rectangular spaces in it. The gaps in the wall allow sunlight to enter the garden space as well as shine lightly on the chapel seats. This space is by far the most powerful in all of the chapel, though, oddly enough, in the times I have come to pray in this space, always in the evening, I have barely noticed it.

The eastern wall of the chapel commands the most attention because of its size and its location behind the bima. Different light hues of purple glass tiles are glazed with black Hebrew script of the Ten Commandments, which are a powerful vision against the outside light, but feel out of place as well (part of the $2 million renovation in 1985). The coloring of the green garden, purple stained glass, green chairs, and light wood accents make the room feel out of date. It is the colors, more than anything else, that remind me that I am in a chapel and not in the grand sanctuary. There is certainly an element of out-datedness that indicates a slapped-together feel, as if they had all these different beautiful items in their possession (stained glass, garden and ark) and instead of choosing what works best together they just put them all in the same space.

In front of the chairs are both a grand piano and an organ, which frame a low podium and two microphones. Clearly, this is a space that has been modified from its traditional Reform architecture, bringing the clergy down to the same floor level

as the congregants (a change instigated by Rabbi Rosove in 2000, twelve years after he joined TIOH as their senior rabbi). Ritually, this tends to be the popular way to go these days, and one that I prefer. It is more casual, warmer and pushes the notion that rabbis are spiritually on equal footing with the rest of the congregation. Visually however, it does not work. It is out of sync with the design of the space, and it makes it hard to see the clergy. The bima is not a high one, another nod to the change of synagogue architecture. Three stairs raise the bima and there are no chairs on it. This indicates a ritual change as well. If there are no chairs, that means no one, not even the rabbi, sits on the bima. Traditionally, a guest of honor, a board member, or family celebrating a life cycle event, would sit on the bima. This is not the case in the TIOH chapel.

The only item on the bima is a large wooden ark, intricately carved with a landscape on one door and Moses holding a set of the Ten Commandments on the other door. Inside the ark are four Torahs. Two are adorned as one might see in any synagogue, with cloth and crowns. The other two are encased all in silver, donated relics dating from the late 17th century. This means when the clergy walk onto the bima during a service, which probably only happens once on a Friday night and twice on a Saturday morning, there is a great amount of drama added to the service. For the first time in the service, the rabbi is elevated above the people, and in full view. The lighting has not been changed from its original design and so it is shining on the bima, and on the rabbi. Finally, as the congregation rises, the large wooden doors of the ark open to a visual encapsulation of continuity, tradition and history. They see these old Torah cases, which normally might only be seen in a museum,

side by side with the more modern cloth coverings and yet both hold the same traditions and stories. In their attempt to modernize the space, the clergy have in fact transformed the entire service. By minimizing their own placement they have intensified the role of Torah in both our history and modern lives.

This powerful play between liturgy, history and physical place is a stark contrast to the larger sanctuary. In order to enter the great sanctuary one must walk through three foyers. The first foyer opens to the chapel (as described above) and onto an outdoor courtyard. I named the courtyard a foyer, because it is the only way congregants may enter the sanctuary. They must pass through the concrete walls that open to lush greenery, and a large statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments jutting out from the far wall. The third foyer is what one would enter through the three large doors on Hollywood Boulevard if there were no security concerns.

The foyer is dimly lit with mosaic paintings on the ceiling that remind me of the Vista movie theatre in Los Feliz. The colors are golds and browns and reds with octagonal, white frosted lights that must be from the 1950's. The walls are a dark wood and have traditional wooden yarhzeit plaque holders spanning the entire length of each wall. On one wall are names of deceased congregant families, with occasionally lit light bulbs. The other wall displays plaques for victims of the Holocaust, with permanently lit lights. In order to pass into the main sanctuary, one must walk through this final foyer, which has been lit with the light of memory.

The sanctuary seating is like a big theatre, with plushy adorned seats one might see in an old movie house. Elevated flooring and balcony seating also echo the shape of any other place where one might go to see and hear beautiful things. The elevated ceiling is framed by stained glass images. On the north side of the wall, there is an annex where the Star of David stained glass window may be seen (visible from other places in the building as well). Surrounding it are smaller, rectangular stained glass windows with images of the twelve tribes. The south wall contains mirrored rectangular windows with images of the holidays on them.

Though the windows are beautiful and bright, the eye cannot rest for long on them because the bima is so large and dramatically adorned that one cannot help but be drawn to it. It was designed to make jaws drop. The choir lofts hugging the bima are light wood walls that cling to either side of the bima with the same glass artwork of the holidays and the tribes on them. Behind these walls, the choir used to sing, but now the choir members stand in front of the bima. The bima, raised by six steps, has eight chairs that could easily be small thrones for clergy, guests and board members. However, it is the grand elongation of the ark and its back that makes it feel so larger-than-life.

The ark is pewter and silver with engravings of the twelve tribes. It must stand about twelve feet off the ground, certainly dwarfing even the tallest member of the congregation. To add to the effect a dark curtain hangs from the edge of the ceiling and falls to the bima floor, framing the ark and making it seem even bigger

than it is. The eternal light hangs high as well, contributing to the majesty of the room.

The final touch of sanctuary lavishness is the presence of huge alabaster lions. One might think that in a synagogue, animal imagery might be softened or avoided. Yet, just the opposite is true here. At TIOH, the lions are roaring, savage beasts: nothing is abstracted in their physicality. It gives the sanctuary a palatial feel, as if roaming beasts are guarding God's Temple.

Comparing the chapel and the main sanctuary as two spaces of worship in the same synagogue building was an interesting task. I visited twice as a student (rather than a congregant) before I wrote this case study. The first time my docent was a congregant, and the second time the docent was a custodian. Both felt it very important for me to see the sanctuary, presenting the height of the bima as their coup de grace, as well as the hallway near the bathroom where there is a photomontage of famous congregants of yore. I found it interesting that these seemed to be the most important places for me to see by those who worked there. I found it frustrating that no one who might have known more of the intricacies of the building space had time for a phone conversation or brief in person meeting. The lack of informed guides and written material about the physical space, undermined the synagogue's alleged dedication to the art on its walls and the appreciation of their place of worship as a sacred space. This is not a unique TIOH issue. I know that the synagogue I attended as a child, as well as the one I work in now, would probably react in much the same way. Pray in the chapel but show off the sanctuary,

point out the works on the walls and ignore that the space that we pray in sends its own message of what worship means.

No doubt the TIOH sanctuary is majestic. People know where they are when they are there. That is, there is no mistaking that you are in a large Reform synagogue. There is pomp, circumstance and places for your eyes to wander just in case you need it. The sanctuary is a major statement. However, it is the chapel that I found most captivating as a sacred space for prayer.

In its garish coloring the chapel feels homey. The small chairs, set in a semi circle, make it seem as if you are attending a small synagogue service, as do the low podium and instruments. The wall that peeks out into the garden roots the space on earth, not somewhere far above. The sanctuary ark screams its message of self-importance during the entire time one is in the room. Whereas the ark in the chapel announces its grandeur only when opened and the two relic Torah casings are revealed.

During both of my visits I asked each docent if I could sit, draw and reflect in each space; neither felt comfortable with me doing this. So when I left the way I came, through the foyers, down the steel staircases, past two guards and out through the garage gate, I found myself back at the ivy walls on Hollywood Boulevard. In the end, sanctuary or chapel, concrete fort or garden covered building TIOH is certainly a place where multiple worlds collide.

CASE STUDY B:TEMPLE DE HIRSCH SINAI, SEATTLE,WA.

Temple De Hirsch Sinai has held many different visions of space. I will address the current state of their worship space, rather than a history of the evolution of the unique architecture of TDHS. Currently, TDHS has two campuses: one in Bellevue, Washington and one in Seattle, Washington. I will briefly describe both, as they consider themselves one Temple with two spaces and the buildings definitely respond to one another.

The Seattle campus is part of the oldest synagogue foundation in the entire Northwest, dating back to the 1890's. Much of the ornaments of the early history of TDHS continue to be part of the Seattle Temple, ever reminding congregants of its longstanding history in the community. The foundation of the original synagogue, with the two beams that used to support the Temple entrance, stand exposed as a modified courtyard for the remodeled building. The courtyard and the lower parking lot are separated by a thin line of low bushes that lead to the large white walls of the religious school (built in 1960 when the congregation reached 800 families). One may enter through this lower lot, turn left and cross between two large auditoriums, complete with a formal stage, to face a library and the school classrooms. Or, one may enter the synagogue just as easily from the front entrance.

The main entrance of TDHS has been the pride of the community for years. It is not unusual to see an architecture student from the University of Washington drawing its large slope, which some say looks like a modern dome and others say looks like an overturned cupcake. The building fund for the entrance and dome began in 1945 with

Rabbi Raphael Levine, who raised $270, 000 in his first fundraising attempt. This was enough to begin renovations on the religious school. At High Holy Days that year, Rabbi Raphael Levine called to the congregation,

> "We cannot rest content with a job half done. The next step is the Temple itself. God grant us the vision to behold it and the courage and the will to undertake it so that our children and their children after them will glory in us who gave them an institution worthy of the Jewish heritage we shall transmit to them.[28]"

The building fund continued throughout the next ten years. In 1960 the sanctuary, for which he had been raising money for more than a decade, was finally completed. The ark, he claims, was his own design, insisting that it must be 25 feet tall. The architects were hired based on their past experiences of designing large scale theatres and movie sets, worked with Levine and his vision. The sanctuary was written up in many magazines as a remarkable architectural feat for its time. Its broad dome stands out against the city's skyline and its large marble ark exaggerates the proportions of how high the Torah is compared to the lowly human being. An enormous bronze chandelier shaped in a six-pointed star is able to light the entire room.

The Sanctuary is lined with tiny, rectangular stained glass windows that emphasize the circular feel of the room. Colors dazzle the sides of the room, emphasizing the stark white of the ark and

[28] Levine, Raphael. Wild Branch on the Olive Tree. Binford and Mort. 1974. Page 157

pulpit. The red floor and red cushioned stadium seats, make it clear that the room was built for drama. The room seats 1,500 people, perfect for the 1,700 family congregation large events. However, the largest crowd TDHS seats on Shabbat are generally 250.

Between the sanctuary and a 300-seat chapel, is a maroon carpeted foyer. Here is where one may see Judaica, art from years past, hung on the wall periodically when someone feels like digging something new up from the closets. There is also a poster sized display binder of thousands of pictures from all the years of TDHS history. This is a favorite for congregants. As they wait for services, someone is always leafing through history.

The chapel is the place where all services and events but the High Holy Days are held. As one walks in, a 15 ft stained glass window rises to your right, Moses in sandals, carrying the Ten Commandments. In the Sanctuary there are no images aside from the Ten Commandments. However, in the chapel the beaming face of a man shines above the whole congregation. This image of Moses is even more unusual than the 1960's dome for which the synagogue is so famous.

The seating is movable. There are soft purple benches whose location and positioning get changed around depending on the service leader's preference. The bima is raised by one step, leading to the hand carved wooden ark from the Temple's original building. Smooth wooden columns and a carved wooden Torah reading table, as well as the wooden speakers podium from the furnishings of the pre-remodeled Temple rest on the bima.

It is interesting that no matter where you pray at TDHS, someone complains. People love the dramatic feel of the sanctuary, appreciate its grandeur and feel as though something important is happening when they are in it. On the other hand, both the lighting and the acoustics are lacking and even when it is full, it can feel lonely and mostly empty. The chapel is intimate. It has history. It is adaptable to modern prayer styles of multiple vocalists and circular prayer formats. However, it is the chapel, and it always feels like choosing its buff walls and towering Moses, though somehow coordinated with the rest of the decor, is not the choice we want to make. It feels like a second choice, strange to pass up the regal sanctuary for the minimal chapel.

The Seattle TDHS campus wavers between choices of the sanctuary and the chapel on top of Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. When the land was purchased about a hundred years ago, the founders could not imagine that the area which then was the home to Jewish butchers would hold the first interfaith meeting in the Northwest and Jimmy Hendrix would play on the synagogue roof, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. would be invited to speak and it would become the hippest part of town for young people to live. Most young families and the Jewish community are no longer centered on Capitol Hill. TDHS answered the needs of its swelling congregant base, its dueling worship spaces, and desire to be part of other neighborhoods by designing and building a synagogue in Bellevue, Washington, some fifteen minutes away.

The Bellevue campus is everything that the Seattle campus is not. It is hidden in trees, modern, open and there is never enough space to fit everyone who wants to be there. It feels like the place is all windows, though none of them open. It feels like there are trees growing next to every window and wall, as if the shul was planted as part of a garden.

The foyer is just a narrow hallway, where light Jerusalem stones with high white walls welcome you. The walls are stark, unadorned so as to reflect the light from the stone floor. The architect was interested in an unpretentious, modern energy for the entrance of the synagogue. It does have this sense, though it also feels a bit austere. A guest can walk straight into the social hall with wood floors that are the same browns as the stone hallway. He can turn left towards the offices and school. Walking down a long white hallway with a wide window that looks out onto trees. Or, she can turn right, pass by a table of educational resources and enter the sanctuary.

The sanctuary doors are a lightwood, echoing the stone foyer flooring. The sanctuary itself is a large, two story rectangle. Light wood chairs that connect but can also move, rest on unobtrusive carpeting. The bima is the same color wood, one step up to a cast iron ark. Different hues of blue glass shape the whole ark, allowing the worshipper to see the silhouette of the Torah scrolls within.

Behind the ark is a wall comprised completely of a bank of windows that allow congregants to gaze out at a forest. The light from outside illuminates the ark and the room. What happens outside (sunsets, a snowstorm, a raining day) are all part of the worship experience in this space.

The chandelier is really just a stadium light, giving the feel (if one were to look up) of being under a stage. This is the only part of the room that is inconsonant with the rest of the space. I love the sanctuary. I appreciate its inclusion of nature. Its openness to how close one can be to one's neighbor depending on how close you pull your chair up, how bright the room can feel with the lighting and the wood. I wonder whether I would feel the same way about it if it were not sistered with the chapel and sanctuary in Seattle, since the Bellevue sanctuary in its modern elegance and beauty contains nothing from what the synagogue was before this moment. Nothing is out of place. There is no awkward coloring, no children's pictures glued unevenly to the wall: in many ways, the Bellevue TDHS campus feels sterile in all its beauty.

SUMMATION OF CASE STUDIES

TIOH and TDHS have much in common with one another. Both are large Reform synagogues in the heart of major west coast cities. Each has reached out to the Jewish community in distinctly creative ways. Both feel the need for worship opportunities that are small, intimate and more inclusive than their elaborate sanctuaries.

Each synagogue approached the issues of their grand sanctuaries differently. TDHS incorporates items from an earlier remodel that gives an odd shaped room a feel of history, albeit a slight "church like feel" with the purple pews and looming Moses. TIOH does not seem to have made as strong as an effort as TDHS to coordinate their chapel elements. Yet, the room does feel "homey" and comfortable. Both, use their chapels as their primary place for worship.

TIOH and TDHS main sanctuaries reflect a similar sense of awe. The large arks, the stained glass and the stadium seating echo one another's sense of grandeur. TIOH has made strong efforts to incorporate visual art into its community life by displaying the work of both modern and traditional artists. However, they fall short in educating the community about the art. TDHS does an excellent job in providing an aesthetically pleasing worship space, but the walls do not reflect a connection to the visual art world. In both cases, the synagogues try to adapt to the creative world, both fall short in the same place, which is the inclusion of the greater congregational community.

Bringing in the larger community is much easier said than done. This could be through community inclusion on visual art choices, consultation on how to renew the worship space continuously and provide educational materials on the visual art on the walls. Providing education might be the key, in that it would encourage the congregation to be conscientious about what goes up on the wall. Clearly, both TIOH and TDHS care very much about the way their congregants feel in the worship space. The primary use of the chapel, lowering of bima so that congregants and

leaders can pray on the same level and the purple hues throughout their worship spaces, indicate the desire for warm and intimate environments. This same intention can be placed throughout the congregation space as an act of *hidur mitzvah* in the purest sense of the term.

Hidur mitzvah of prayer space and the greater environment that holds a community allows participants to be involved in the creation of a resting place for God's people. Everything about a worship space is part of prayer.

> "...Worship leaders are always wise to consider how their spaces are shaping their assemblies, and conversely, how their understandings of being a church shapes their space... worship space, our sacred spaces...proclaim the gospel in their very composition, arrangement and materials."[29]

To be included in the process can have deep spiritual and cosmic significance. *Hidur mitzvah* may not stand on its own, yet it may function as a profound part of the process of building worship space. Perhaps what is missing in many spaces is the inclusion of the greater community in the integrative visual process of being part of the creation of the space that holds them during prayer.

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[29] Christopherson, Foy. A place of Encounter: Renewing Worship Spaces. Augsburg Fortress. Minneapolis. 2004. Page 56-57

PART IV : ART AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

> **The Jewish art of Loving in its fundamental realm is the property of the spirit; for the Jew cannot love his Creator only through the prayer or blessing, or even in the ritual of circumcision; he must also realize his love of God through Kavannah or Dvekut.**[30]

When reaching towards God one must use as many gifts as possible that make one unique in this world. Prayer offers framework, tradition, history and a connection to the greater community. *Kavannah* is personal, a purposeful intent beginning in each individual's soul hoping to connect to God. These two units exist in art as well. The freedom of spirit and creativity is the kavannah, where one allows the psyche to control the canvas. The keva is being simultaneously guided and modulated by the framework of skill and craftsmanship. For six months I melded the kavannah of drawing with the kavannah of liturgy and the framework of communal worship with the strength of the pen. I brought my sketchbook into a worship space three times a week for several months, observing the influence the one had on the other.

In the beginning of this experiment of the art of prayer and the prayer of art, I let my mind go free and the blank page was my siddur. I sang aloud and drew what came to me, quickly, in simple gestures, capturing shape and tone of the space and the feel around me. However, these sketches lacked craftsmanship.

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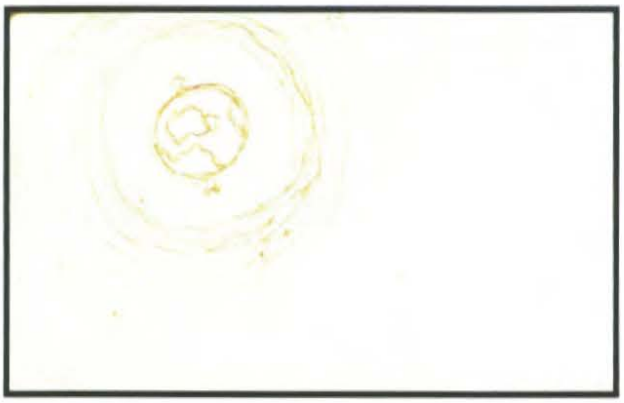
[30] Shokek, Shimon. Kabbalah and the Art of Being: The Smithsonian Lectures. Routledge. New York. 2000. Page 95



The next stage I returned to continuously even as I tried other exercises. I drew the space around me. I observed my fellow worshippers, saw them in prayer, reading Torah, and covering their eyes in Shema. I rarely followed the worship choreography as I was enmeshed in drawing, and only chanted when a tune or prayer particularly moved me. These sketches hold power. Many are unfinished, falling short when someone stood up or sat down, shifted their gaze in meditation. They bear witness to prayer.

I tried to move from the observer's position, yet art schooling, much like any other professional training, is about honing craft and not only listening to the heart. Therefore, the observer is THE position of the artist. The artist is in every picture because the image is from her perspective. For a few weeks I tried a different exercise, drawing and writing in accordance with the established liturgy framework: one drawing for birchot hashachar, one for shema and her blessings, one for amidah and one for concluding blessings. This exercise proved to be tedious. However, the repetitive nature provided the seeds for the final personal project of this thesis [see Chapter II: Part III].



This is the piece that inspired the long-term painting project:

> "When God uttered the words "Let there be light!" He did not create anything new. What He did was what artists and fathers and mothers do. He took something inside Himself and projected it into the external world, pouring His light into the container of created space."[31]

This is how I felt about drawing in a prayer space. At times it was awkward, drawing while others were formally addressing God, almost like I was getting away with something. More times, I felt like I was working along with everything else in the room, like I was participating in creation, not just in the creation of a piece of artwork, but in a form of prayer.

I believe this is true because of the response of other worshippers. Some chose to sit near me and watch. Others asked to see what I had drawn that day. Of course, most of the phone calls I now receive regarding art are primarily how visual art can be used in a vocational manner. Yet, I do believe that some of those people who were part of the ongoing experience of having a sketchbook, or easel or someone drawing them in prayer opened a place in their heart of how art can help them understand what it means to pray. Perhaps not for themselves, but maybe for someone else they will encounter along the way.

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[31] Gottlieb, Freema. "The Lamp of God" in, Wise Words: Jewish thoughts and stories through the ages" by Jessica Gribetz. Page 242

CHAPTER II: PROJECTS

The largest component of this thesis is a series of different projects that engage different Jewish populations in "visual art as a Jewish spiritual practice." Recorded herein are four separate modes of engagement:

PART I: HUC-JIR (Hebrew Union College Rabbinical Students)

Multiple workshops that bring visual art as a spiritual practice to a specific learned Jewish group.

PART II: JAI (Jewish Artist Initiative of Los Angeles)

A summary of experience forming a beit midrash, a monthly study group, with a group of professional Jewish artists.

PART III: PERSONAL PAINTING

A journal of my own work and painting as a mode of spiritual practice.

PART IV: MY COLORS OF PRAYER: An Interactive Siddur

This is a draft of how visual art might be used in a prayer setting for a community or a learning environment. This spiritual coloring prayer book is the concluding project of this thesis. It is the summary of the thesis research and composite of the learning from the projects and work with students.

PART V: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER II: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of concentrating on four separate demographics for the project portion of this thesis was to pull from as broad a range of experience as possible in order to synthesize research so that it might be applicable in a congregational environment. Each group maintained strengths in one area in what I was teaching. Therefore, when presenting information I could generally assume basic levels of knowledge in a given group. Depending on the group, the expertise was either in Jewish study or in visual art. However, there were very rare opportunities where I encountered students with basic knowledge and comfort in both arenas. This being the case, much of the project work centered around what it meant to teach basic skills and confidence about them to highly learned and professional groups. This was true for both the professional artists and for the rabbinical students.

Teaching in two spheres of professionals, I learned much that I was not anticipating learning. The primary lessons that coursed through both of these communities were about time management and end results. No one, artist or academic, no matter how safe the environment, likes to look unpolished. Time must always be taken seriously, never to be wasted or spent on things that seem frivolous. Art can be frivolous, even to artists, and prayer can be frivolous, even to those who pray by profession.

I used to think frivolous art was everything that fell under the title "craft." I used to think that frivolous prayer was anything that felt uncomfortable or "inauthentic." Now, I would be hesitant to call any art or any form of prayer

frivolous. I do think, though, that there is a frustration that occurs when one aspires towards a certain result and does not reach it. For whatever reason, generally because one does not have the skills or does not put in the required time to achieve the desired result, when someone falls short of their desired result – the prayer service suddenly is deemed meaningless or the art project frivolous. The most difficult lesson to convey was that both art and prayer require serious time, effort and hard work, just like any other skill.

The myth that many people are taught growing up is that art is fun and that prayer comes from the heart. Both are true, but they are not the only truths about art and prayer. Art is only about fun in its simplest forms. Once one wants to make something of value, crayons and collage work fall to the wayside and one must learn to work at drawing something over and over and over, in order to master how to draw it. Repetitively drawing something is never about fun. However, there are many lessons to be found within the process.

Prayer too, perhaps in its most natural and pure form comes spontaneously and simply from the heart. However, as soon as one wants the poetry and order of a service to develop, it requires work, language study and memorization. At times, the preparation for meaningful prayer experiences can feel contrary to spiritual practice. Yet, with the mastery of tools, whole worlds open up that were inaccessible before.

The lesson that one can find meaning in a skill one has not mastered dominated my lesson plans. However, I think what I left with was a frustration at the

students' frustration of either not liking the way something looked (rabbinical students) or a lack of confidence in delving into meaningful Jewish material (Jewish Artist Initiative). It is my hope that with each workshop and exercise, students were able to connect to the overriding theme of the possibility for exploring spirituality beyond the traditional venues.

As for the theme of hard work, I took that lesson to heart. While I strove to make visual art accessible to those who do not consider themselves artists, and religion open to those who do not consider themselves very religious, I worked on being serious about being both an artist and a worshipper. This work is manifested in section III in personal painting on Shabbat and sketches during prayer. This also extended to exploring how these projects could apply to the greater community.

In section IV, there is a draft of a "My Colors of Prayer: An Interactive Family Prayer Book". It is created with the idea of connecting all the themes in this thesis and bringing it to the larger Jewish community. This prayer book could be worked on in a family learning program, in a classroom or as a parallel siddur to the one being used in services. The goal is to bring people into the prayers, encourage them to think about their relationships to the prayer meanings and create their own definitions. These thought processes will be guided through verbal prompts but also through simple drawings that students may collaborate on, complete or re-imagine. These are not pictures to "color". These are pictures to prompt, guide and encourage the visual exploration of prayer.

These projects are all different attempts to involve learners from a multitude of demographics to bring to the table what they know well and learn something completely new as well. Personal expression, creativity and channeling each individual lesson into a larger communal lesson were the overarching goals of these projects.

PART I: Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion

The following are a series of six different projects that took place within the HUC-JIR community. The rabbinical student body comprised the primary participants in the workshops, though faculty, family, and friends were always welcome. The goal was to pool from a community with a strong sense of Jewish formal prayer, traditional Jewish study styles and basic Judaic knowledge. Any artistic experience was welcomed, but never expected.

All marketing materials were geared towards the lay-artist or the non-artist, ensuring as best as possible that it would be known that all levels would be welcome. Incidentally, the most artistically experienced people who attended the workshops had taken a few classes in their undergraduate university, though no one identified himself or herself as an artist. Each project speaks for itself. Yet, on the whole, at the very least I believe the presence of these workshops created awareness about visual art that was not palpable before in this community.

Attendance at workshops was not regular. Participation ranged from three people to eight people at a given event. Interestingly enough, after publicizing the workshops I receive several emails and phone calls a week from students who want

to bring visual art activities either into their own personal lives or, more often, into the lives of the communities where they work.

Students expressed the desire to participate in the workshops, but did not have time for extracurricular activities. Clearly, the workshops were seen as something "fun" rather than something to build their professional and personal portfolios, which is what they were in fact designed to do. This perception I accept as part of the universal reputation of art as an alternative activity and anything that does not seem directly linked to school or work as "extra". I also believe that my acquiescence to consult and help any student on a given project that they were interested in pursuing on their time and terms did not help attendance at my workshops. Perhaps, a better method would have been to have "office hours" to help students conceive of methods for classroom and community work. However, this side work was a byproduct of my visibility as an artist in a non-artist community and not my motivations for my workshops.

With the workshops, I hoped to bring confidence and love for visual art to a community that does not consider itself artists. I did not want to think of activities for youth groups and family programs; those ideas for programs come later. Meaningful art programming stems from the same place as a comfortable prayer service, from hard work, knowledge of tools and skills, confidence, and from the heart. It was my hope that through these workshops, some of these skills could be gained and a bridge to the knowledge that the students already possessed could be built.

Visual Art as a Spiritual Practice

Project #1: Visual art within an HUC-JIR worship service

Setting:

HUC-JIR Thursday morning service. This project is part of a creative/alternative service. The activity takes place right after the silent Amidah, in lieu of a sermon. Three tables (one in each corner), each with an array of cloth and markers on them. Ribbon hangs from the ceiling, awaiting safety pins and cloth to be strung up.

Learners:

Primarily HUC-JIR rabbinical, education and communal service students and some faculty are present. Most of those in attendance have a firm background in Jewish study and standard Jewish prayer format.

Concept:

We have the choice to see our lives in a certain way. Through this activity, we take some time to set our intention for the coming school year:

What do we want to achieve (in heart) in this coming year?

What do we want to develop at HUC?

How do we want to be perceived by others?

What do we want fellow students to see in us?

What are the choices that are in our power?

What is the role of gratitude in our life?

How do we make proactive choices that allow us to see blessings in our lives?

***Iyyun notes*:**

After 101 years, Cidelle started to see life very differently. After her 100th birthday, she decided it was time to talk to God for the first time. She made a list of things in her life for which she was thankful. Cidelle surprised herself by beginning each line by saying, "Thank you God for..." This was the first time Cidelle had ever addressed God- and here she was thanking God for everything in her life. She thanked God for her children, for her health, for her wealth and for her two husbands. She included a unique line that said, "Thank you God for not paying attention when I said I wanted to end it all".

Many of us see the world quite differently from Cidelle. She chose to phrase her list in "thank yous". She sees her life thus far, as complicated as it may have been, as a blessing. Another person might have chosen to dwell on the fact that life was so hard that at one point, she considered suicide. Instead, Cidelle thinks of all things in her life as different variations of blessings. Cidelle knows that God blesses her life because she chooses to see her life as blessed by God.

Seeing one's life as a blessing is a choice, as Cidelle teaches. This is a unique lesson for us at the beginning of the school year and on the eve of 5770. The parasha this week lists blessings and curses. We can tally our lives as Jews, as HUC second year, third year, fourth year, fifth year students, as faculty, as families, and as individuals in many different ways.

We can easily think about the way we as a community has been decimated by destructive hands of oppressors for centuries. We can think in more intimate terms,

about the hardship of this economy, of last year's coursework and of the mounting pressures of High Holy Day work. From this state of mind, certainly it can feel as though we have had our share of curses.

We may also think of ourselves as survivors, of times of celebration and of the joy that we felt the moment we found out that we were accepted into this institution. We can imagine the year ahead of us, what we will learn and teach, whom we will meet and how we will change. Some of our blessings lie in our frame of mind, in our choices; the choice to see our lives as blessed.

During the High Holy Days, we have choices as well. There is a lot of talk about improvement and transformation during the Jewish New Year; we even have ways to go about changing our fate. Our Machzorim talk a lot about decrees from God being set, though Teshuvah, Tefillah and Tzedakah can change the decree. Rabbi Yitzchak of Breslov commented on this High Holy Day theme, saying that God does not change the decree, WE do. According to our liturgy WE are the ones who soften the decree of where our lives our going, what are lives will be, wrestle to see our complicated existence as a blessed existence.

We have the power to inscribe our own names in the book of life- not in the literal sense of being able to choose physical life or death- but rather in the metaphysical sense of choosing how we want to approach our lives- Choosing to see our lives as blessed. The secret to a year of change and growth lies in the depth of our capacity for gratitude. Why wait until we are 101 years old to uncover the glimmers of blessings in our lives?

With the High Holy Days upon us and the new school year beginning, let us take a moment to learn from Cidelle. What are the choices you would like to make this year that will shape this institution, this community and your own life into a world that feels blessed? How do you want others to see you and what, in turn, do you want to be able to see in others?

[Explain prayer flag instructions→ including time, special considerations, color and material choices and how we will know when the work is complete]

Let us choose a life of blessing.

Enduring Understanding:

We have a choice in the way we see ourselves and our situation in this world.

Objectives: The students will be able to...

Create a small piece of art that connects to other people

Relate the activity of art making to the way Judaism views connections and blessings.

Goals: The teacher will be able to...

Provide a safe space for creative activity.

Correlate the activity with the concept in a meaningful and lasting manner.

Materials:

Cotton Cloth – several color choices, cut into 8 x 6 rectangles (about 100 swatches)

Safety Pins

Colored ribbons

Permanent markers

Time line:

10:30-10:37	Introductory iyyun and introduction to activity
10:37 – 10:50	Activity
10:45-10:55	Hanging Flags and stringing ribbon on ceiling
10:55	Sing Ufros Aleinu

Activity:

Draw/Write on one of the cloth swatches of your choosing, one of the answers to the questions stated above regarding setting an intention for what you would like to see from yourself in the coming year. Please do this in silence. As each one finishes in his/her time, we string the cloth with safety pins on ribbon suspended from the ceiling, creating a sukkah of prayer flags above the kahal. Note: Flags will remain above the synagogue for the duration of the High Holy Days. They will be in the sukkah for Sukkot.

Reflection:

At first I thought this project was pandering to the kahal. It was certainly not "high art" nor particularly meaningful artistically speaking. However, with hindsight, once the prayer flags were suspended above the congregation and time was spent really looking at each person's contribution, I felt differently. In each flag unit, each student truly took the opportunity to focus on setting an intention or the coming year. Looking at the flags strung together above our worship space was like seeing our intentions strung together and wrapping us in our own creative sukkah. This activity could be something students might take into their home practice or congregational work. I would love to try to do this in a synagogue community as well.

As far as serving as an Amidah exercise, I am unsure students prayed as though they were praying Amidah. Generally the feedback was positive regarding the flag project, though I did not think may people saw it as spiritually rewarding, opposed to just finding it interesting. However, as an exercise of *hidur mitzvah*, I think this was a great workshop with which to begin. The whole community, with the intention of prayer, created individual works of art that strung together to create a collective work that added meaning, color and beauty to our worship space.

This workshop taught me, that when given the opportunity to play with new materials and asked pointed questions, students with all different artistic comfort levels can come together to make something truly beautiful. I learned that what might have seemed like a glorified craft project at first, had weight because of the

directions given and the intention brought to the task by the students and the worship environment. Students did not shy away from honesty or spiritual depth, even though they knew full well that their flag would be on display. I would even like to believe that they opened their hearts for the very reason they knew this was an opportunity for others to read and react to their imagery.

Figure 1

Figure one is an excellent example of the desire to include and value others. The artist explained his work to me after the project in that he hoped to emphasize the possibility for each member of the community to bring their own gifts as best as each is able to benefit the whole. At the same time, his wish for himself was to be accepted by our community for who he is as a unique individual. His hope and prayer in his flag was for us each to find one another and to offer our best selves to the greater whole of the HUC-JIR school community.

Figure 2 ←

Figure 3 →

Figure two and figure three may at first seem to be very different pieces of art. However, after consulting with the students, both were expressing similar

messages in the mediums that were most comfortable for them. Messages of being seen, of hopefulness and of developing on a specific path.

Evidenced in this workshop is that one can never assume what some else will bring to a given project. Art, I have found, is not easy for everyone. It requires confidence, patience and in the projects that I have asked of students, soul searching. These are also requests that worship asks of us.

CALL TO STUDENTS FOR WORKSHOPS: Email sent out to HUC-JIR students:

Dear Artists, Non-Artists, Kinda-Artists, and those interested but a bit wary of art in school,

I will be leading a session this coming Tuesday, OCT 13 on "Visual Art as a Spiritual Exercise" from 5:30-7:30 in the student lounge at HUC.

Please RSVP to: mterlinchamp@gmail.com

We will begin with a short study session and then I will guide us in a batik workshop (silk and wax painting).

We will learn a bit together and then embark on art as a form of prayer - also- you can choose to use a small square (which could be used as a challah cover) or a large piece of silk (which could be used as a tallit) so your work may have a more utilitarian purpose after our session.

I am leading this as part of my thesis project in an effort to bring those comfortable and those not-so-comfortable closer to working with visual mediums as a tool to access spiritual awareness.

You do not have to know how to paint, batik or even have a steady hand to participate in the evening - please come and be part of the fun, stress-relieving effort to take spirituality to a different place. Also, friends, partners et al, are absolutely welcome.

If you do know how to batik and have your own tools/silk/brushes/wax/dye please feel free to bring them - otherwise I will handle all the materials for everyone.

If I am providing you with materials, I would appreciate $10 to cover the cost of your supplies.

Not to worry! This will not be the only time I will be leading this type of session. I will find another date later in the month either to expand on this work or try a new medium.

Also, there will be two lunch n' learn sessions in November and December on how to bring visual art into congregational work.

Please RSVP to mterlinchamp@gmail.com so that I can know how many people I need to bring materials for.

Thank you!

Miriam Terlinchamp

Visual Art as a Spiritual Practice

Project #2: Batik workshop at HUC-JIR

Setting:

Three table stations (one for dye, one for wax application and one for drying and wax removal) are set up in the student lounge of HUC-JIR, facing the window. This is an evening program, intentionally separate from the rest of the school/work day.

Learners:

Primarily HUC-JIR rabbinical students, though all students, faculty and friends may attend. Most of those in attendance will have a firm background in Jewish study and standard Jewish prayer format.

Concept:

This project involves relating to the tension between control and influence. When working with wax, there is not much control one can have in the beginning. The artist may guide the wax and have a semblance of an idea of where and how to use it. However, in the end the wax flows and dries where it wants. The next step in the activity involves bringing in color. Once again the artist encounters similar issues around control. The ink bleeds into the silk as it wants while the artist guides, blends and urges the ink into different areas. The process begins over again, with more wax filling in spots that now need attention, and then the ink works its way into another part of the work. This process is repeated several times, before the wax can be removed and the piece completed.

The push and pull of wax and color in batik work mirrors the way we encounter time and process in our everyday life. During most of the year, time is linear. We live in a Monday-Sunday, Fall to Summer, Rosh Hashanah through Shavuot kind of world. Except on Simchat Torah, when the end of the Torah connects with the beginning of the Torah- beginning the cycle again. Suddenly, time is no longer a horizontal plane, but rather, a circle. When we step out of our immediate space and situation, we see that the tension of push and pull, of beginnings and end, are part of a grander scheme of concentric circle-ness. Batik making embodies this philosophy, showing the artist what is in her control and what she may only influence.

Enduring Understanding:

Engaging in visual art encourages learners to appreciate varied modes of spiritual practice.

Visual art is a form of prayer when created with the *kavanah* (intention) of being such.

Objectives: The students will be able to...

- *Create* a work of art with spiritual intention
- *Learn* a new medium that may translate to future professional projects
- *Describe* how visual art could serve as a spiritual practice for some people

Goals: The teacher will be able to...

- *Encourage* students to approach a new medium with confidence and a specific state of mind
- *Facilitate* comfortable exploration of the relationship between prayer and art

Materials:

Iron	Foil	Clothes pins	sponges
Hair dryer	vinegar	silk	eyedroppers
Water cups	dye	drop cloths	gloves
Tins/paint cups	wax	newspaper	Hotpot
Masking tape	wax paper	dry rack	Music

Time line:

5:00-5:25 *Set up*/warm wax so that students enter a transformed space that exemplifies a melding of student lounge/rabbinical school/art studio.

5:25 -5:40 *Students arrive,* meet one another – reflect on meaningful prayer as a subjective entity, dependent on creating balance between *kavanah* and *keva*. Batik work will be our *keva* for the activity. Explain instructions.

5:40-5:50 *Meditation* – setting intention for art as a prayer practice – concludes with blessing for study.

5:50-7:10 *Activity*: Batik silk painting

7:10-7:20 *Clean up,* instructions for completing unfinished projects at home.

7:20-7:30 *Wrap up* and reflect.

Activity:

We batik on different sized samples of silk. Students select an 8 x 8 (challah cover size) or a 17 x 80 (tallis size) piece of silk. I demonstrate how to apply wax and use the dye to achieve certain results. Additionally, I explain the process of drying and reapplying ink and wax (and removing it) in a technical as well as spiritual framework. Students are asked to refrain from conversation for the hour and twenty minutes of painting. Music without lyrics is played close to the drying

and wax removal station (to distract from the sound of the hair dryer and maintain the ambience).

Reflection:

This workshop was very exciting. The students came in ready to learn something new and curious about what I intended to teach. I ended up spending much more time on the practical details of how one uses wax and mixes color, than I was intending. Also, the students were willing to experiment, though I think they were a little nervous about the silk being so unforgivable when it came to "mistakes", which was of course, part of the lesson in the first place.

I hung back, aiding students in basic skills for the first hour. The second hour, when students felt they were completing projects, I offered feedback on how they

could practically alter or enhance the depth of their work. I think that on the whole, the pointers were helpful. I delivered them as softly as I could, noticing that students were sensitive to the new skill set. This was not about product for me, and I know it is difficult to hear advice about something one might already be sensitive. However, I do think it is important to seize opportunities to learn how to improve skills. I am not sure they would have told me if they did not want help. However, most of the students had never experimented with color or considered that the importance of intentionally placing a symbol or color in a given place. Asking the question, "Why this color/shape in this particular spot?" can aid the artist in thinking about where to begin and end strokes and where and when to let paint glide smoothly over the silk as the pure intent.

I think this would be a great ongoing project, as learning the skills seemed to be very difficult for students. If they could come in with how to practically do the work , after a few sessions,–we might be able to concentrate on the spiritual aspects a bit more intentionally. However, I think students seemed to be more interested in learning new skills rather than honing art as a meditative process. All of the students wanted to go home with "something". They wanted to use their silk as a challah cover, or a tallit or as a gift. If we made several silk projects, perhaps the students would have felt more free to experiment and less inclined to cling to what they wanted to bring home.

In the debrief session, all the students commented that batik work was much harder than they had thought. They also all found it relaxing. Interesting, no one

found the silent time difficult, all felt like they could have spent more time with their pieces. This workshop really was a joy, and several students who missed it have asked for a repeat session, eventually I would like to offer one.

Visual Art as a Spiritual Practice

Project #3: Havdallah workshop Lesson Plan

Setting:

Courtyard of Brandeis-Bardin after Havdallah. Lights illuminate the arrangement of paper, ink and found objects placed in a circle on the ground. Students are able to walk by it for a few hours before I explain the activity. This cultivates a curiosity and allows the setting to stand as its own piece of work and not just a place to do an art project.

Learners:

Primarily HUC-JIR rabbinical students and faculty. All of those in attendance will have a firm background in Jewish study and standard Jewish prayer format. Most will have been on a meditative nature walk just before the project.

Concept:

Students gather items on their nature walk and place them in the bag I carry. No one knows what purpose the objects will later serve as in the art project. These objects act as the paint bushes for their activity as a means to connect to the experience in the woods. The activity asks the student to be conscience of where the "brush" came from and how/why it connects to the canvas now. It is simultaneously an exercise in release and in connection – a physical manifestation of what it means to live in the tension between the earthly and the ethereal worlds.

Enduring Understanding:

"Letting it flow" is a skill: release is something to be honed, practiced, embraced and treated as something beautiful.

Objectives: The students will be able to...

Connect back to their walk with their art – elongating the spiritual experience.

Bring back this activity to their congregations.

Embrace what they create non-judgmentally (because of the medium).

Explain this activity and its meaning to other students.

Reflect on art as a means to connect to non-verbal experiences.

Goals: The teacher will be able to...

Convey the possibility that everything can be made into a paintbrush.

Model that art can be a release.

Materials:

Canvas paper India ink cups oil pastels found objects

Time line:

8:00-8:05 Explain materials and first part of assignment

8:05-8:15 Paint silently

8:15 -8:25 Incorporate colors

8:25-8:30 Take one lap around the circle to look at everyone's work; reflection.

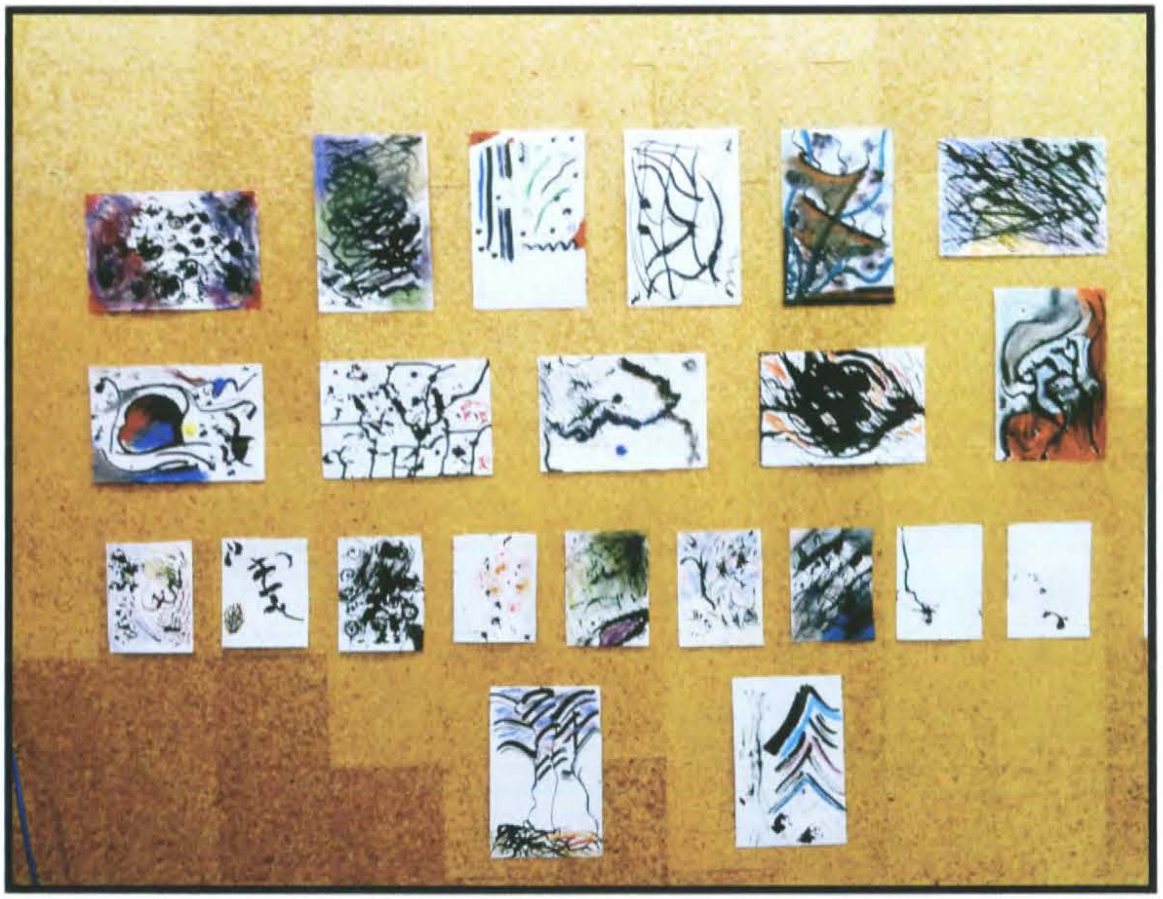
Wrap up relating activity to Havdallah (*hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol)*

Next week: Art hangs in the HUC-JIR student lounge

Activity:

Using India ink and canvas paper, students used the found items as brushes. Letting the black ink flow through the brushes aids us to tap back into the walk and the primitive nature of the experience. Slowly we add a new component (color).

Students are handed color (they do not choose the three colors they will be given). They are asked to be intentional about how to use color. By allowing the India ink to be the base and then building upon that foundation with the more controllable medium of oil pastels upon it expresses a sense of co-existence by not allowing one element to over power another.



Reflection:

All the participants were actively engage in the process of this workshop. I held the role of observer and affirmer, rather than guide, in order to let each person surrender to whatever occurred on the paper. This was not intended to serve as an activity of object/subject control but rather as a meditative exercise.

The feedback was primarily positive. Rabbi Richard Levy (figure 4) found himself drawing in and around the shadows cast by the lamplights above. This was his first experience of this kind and an unexpected pleasure for me to hear, as it was part of the gift of being able to create outdoors. Julia Weisz (figure 5) found herself drawing as precisely as she could with edges of her pinecone and tips of thorns. However, when the pinks and purples arrived she felt compelled to smudge and surround her work, creating a perfect tension and release.

Figure 4

Figure 5

"Letting the ink flow" seemed to be difficult for many people at first. Though the medium of found objects as brushes appeared to take some of the pressure away from the piece having to "be" anything. I think the concept of this activity was successful on the whole. In that it was a unique activity that offered a chance for a *hidur mitzvah* opportunity, enhancing the mitzvah of appreciating the beauty of nature and learning through the creation of new material.

If I were to do this project again, I wish, and I recognize now that this is a theme, that this workshop could have been a three-part activity with more time to delve into the work. I would introduce the found objects as a sculptural activity, imagining possibilities for the natural objects. The second stage would be India ink

and the objects as brushes. Finally, the third activity would be to integrate color. This way, text, philosophy and intellectual process could more strongly integrate with the meditative art making.

After the spirituality retreat I brought the pieces back and hung them on the wall in the student lounge at HUC-JIR along with a sign explaining the method in which the works had been created. Happily, many of the student artists brought friends in to show off their work. They pointed out the ones they liked and asked each other what they thought. I think this type of work is very open, and people feel comfortable commenting on it. Many people loved Ilana Schachter's piece (figure 6), which is a beautiful. She utilized her skill set as a calligrapher and incorporated her lettering into her work. However, I think the reason people point out her work is because it is the only piece that "looks like something" and therefore, the only piece that did not follow the activity directions of not relying on known symbols and images. Teaching how to appreciate and be proud of what we create, when it has no form but comes from the heart proved to be an important lesson that I learned from teaching this workshop.

Figure 6

Visual Art as a Spiritual Practice

Project #4: Still Life workshop Lesson Plan at HUC-JIR

Setting:

Two tables in the student lounge serve as drawing and painting stations (respectively). There is a still life of pomegranates in the center of the table and place settings for drawing/painting for each individual. Light music is playing in the background to disguise peripheral noises of staff and students on campus who are not engaging in the workshop.

Learners:

Primarily HUC-JIR rabbinical students, though all students, faculty and friends may attend. Most of those in attendance will have a firm background in Jewish study and standard Jewish prayer format.

Concept:

Still life drawing/painting is an opportunity to see an environment multi-dimensionally. It is an exercise of basic drawing skills that hopefully will prepare students for more complicated drawing sessions with figure work in future workshops. Additionally, still life offers a chance to focus on patience and attention to detail. We may see the image before us as a series of components that fit together to form the greater whole.

The activities in this workshop guide the participant to compartmentalize each piece of the still life in order to understand their relationship to one another.

After the drawing activity and painting theory, participants will be asked how analyzing each element as an independent unit informs life.

End Question: *Is there a uniquely Jewish element that we may utilize to inform perspective making? (Betzelem Elohim)*

Enduring Understanding:

In order to see the whole picture, we must know the individual pieces that make the whole in their own right.

Objectives: The students will be able to...

Identify and Exemplify: Contour drawing, shadow drawing and perspective drawing.

Explain how to make colors lighter/darker with color theory

Relate the activity of art making to the way Judaism views perspective and patience.

Goals: The teacher will be able to...

Model color theory and drawing concepts without doing the work for the students: i.e. allow room for students to explore and experience these concepts uninhibited by the need for it to 'look like art'.

Correlate the activity with the concept in a meaningful and lasting manner.

Materials:

Multiple materials for the students to experiment with so that the still life, though unchanging, will feel vibrant with the eclectic variance of multiple media choices.

Still Life: Pomegranates (8) on a box covered in velvet

Palette paper	pencils	erasers	wax crayons
Brushes	black charcoal	white charcoal	knives
Cadmium Red	Cadmium Yellow	Raw Sienna	Burnt Umber

Phalo Blue	White	Black	Black Paper
Fixative/Hair Spray	Text sheet	Brown Paper	Canvas

Time line:

5:00-5:20 Introduction to lesson and materials

5:20-5:48 Contour work:

5 min. draw at will, contour only: continue with 2 minute, 1 minute and 7 minute drawings times

5:50-6:13 Shadow work: 2 minute and 1 minute drawing times

6:13-6:40 Free Draw (7m, 10m) or Break

6:40-6:50 Color Theory

6:50 -7:00 Contour (5 minute) Shadow (5 minute)

7:00-7:10 Free Paint

7:10-7:20 Text Study/ Wrap Up

7:20-7:30 Clean Up

Activity:

Stagnated drawing cycles that contrast shadow and contour perspectives. Then, minimally experimenting with painting and color on the same still life, and analyzing how color changes (or does not change) perspective.

Text Study after Activity:

"The path of the upright is one of moderation in every trait, so that each trait is equidistant from either extreme and not close to either. Therefore the early sages commanded that man should put his traits before him constantly and direct them to the middle road, so that he would be complete in his person." Maimonides

(page 173 from Everyday Holiness)

Figure 7 Ethan Bair

Figure 8 Miriam Phillips

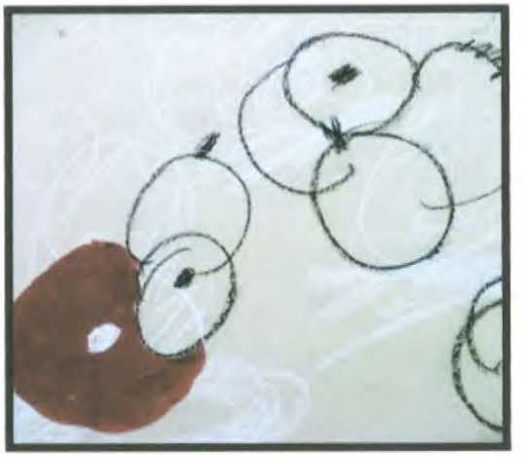


Figure 9 Ethan Bair

Reflection:

Two students participated in this workshop, each with different levels of comfort with art and experience. Both were resistant to the quick draw time, though they ended up being their favorite parts of the session during our feedback review. There was an impatience to have it be an art class, or a free draw class rather than what I had intended it be, which was a spiritual art exercise.

Much to my chagrin, I am beginning to see that art as a spiritual practice has pre-requisites. The heart of these requirements involves a binary element in that one must either be confident enough to "go with" the art or perhaps uncomfortable with art but confident in the teacher to the degree that they will fully involve themselves in the process.

A continuous struggle I have in these sessions is that students want three things:

1) Students want art to be fun, they want to play

2) Students want to learn something new

3) Students want to create something beautiful

This is frustrating as it takes hard work to make something of quality in any discipline, whether it's writing or visual art or teaching. Yet, when it comes to craft and art, many people expect to sit down, make something beautiful, useful and enjoy the process. How do I teach that this is hard work? Laborious, repetitive work in fact? Something that must be perfected day in day out? Just as the prayers that seem to slip off the lips of cantors and rabbis did not reach there overnight but rather after years of hard work, weeks of repetitive prayer and chanting so too with the drawing that seems to so effortlessly spill out onto the page.

Most things of quality are the result of hard work and training. However, that does not mean that the process of training is devoid of meaning or spirituality simply because it is repetitive or uncomfortable. I wonder if the small turnout I have been experiencing in my workshops relates to the fact that art seems impractical, or inapplicable to rabbinical school. On the surface, many students and faculty do not see the connection that I see. I wonder too, that if I were offering craft making classes, students would be more apt to attend, rather than esoteric workshops on applying spiritual concepts as forms of visual prayer.

This workshop taught me two values. Firstly: the importance of teaching quality as the result of hard work regardless of subject. One cannot expect to perfectly mix a given color the very first time. At one point during the workshop, a student who asked if I would be changing the still life caught me off guard. His tone suggested that he was exasperated by drawing the same thing, even though the

students had been encouraged to change positions, follow short time draws, and use as many mediums as they desired. I responded to his frustration apologetically allowing him to change the still life if he chose and explained my own experience simultaneously. I planned the workshop to be as dynamic as possible considering it was a still life drawing and painting session. In my experience, I have spent up to eight hours in a day and even months at a time drawing and painting from the same perspective the same figure or still life. The process, though at times tedious, was never boring since new depths always came into focus with time. I had designed the workshop with short, gesture still life drawings so I was surprised by the student's boredom.

If I were to teach the workshop again, I would unapologetically explain that drawing and painting takes time, hard work and dedication just like any other discipline. Time spent focusing on one perspective can offer a great deal to the artist, honing skill as well as patience and the breadth of what the eye is able to perceive. I probably would make the workshop less dynamic, expressly emphasizing the slow nature where still life painting and drawing thrives best.

Secondly, I will not dismiss the value of craft. Crafts bring people in who may not have pursued an art workshop otherwise. Crafts make people feel safe by offering structure and known frameworks that are familiar. Not everyone can "go wild" and "be free" with paintbrushes. Some people do their best when they "make something". I have underestimated this value. I have scoffed at craft making with these workshops, thinking of them as a-spiritual. However, I have learned that for

many people not only are crafts an entry point into "high art" they also might be the place where some people find spiritual meaning.

Craft must be included as part of artistic spiritual practice when creativity and personal expression are the priority and the creation of a tool is secondary. This is an essential point. In the busy world we live in, many people search for methods of multi-tasking even in spiritual practice. If art is part of one's worship style, and craft is one's art, there is no issue with dual purpose clouding the kavanah of the art and prayer practice. However, when the situation is reversed, as for example: you have to make a challah cover for a friend and you batik for your visual art spiritual practice so why not do both? It is when the intention behind the practice is muddied that craft making earns a negative reputation in the art world. However, craft making has much to offer a broad range of artists and non-artists as a path to technical skill building as well as spiritual practice in itself.

Visual Art as a Spiritual Practice

Project #5: Art Workshop Lesson Plan At HUC-JIR

Setting:

One table in the student lounge is covered with materials. Another table is set up with three candles in different colored glass holders (blue, red and purple), reading materials for text study and chairs.

Learners:

Primarily HUC-JIR rabbinical students, though all students, faculty, and friends may attend. Most of those in attendance will have a firm background in Jewish study and standard Jewish prayer format.

Concept:

Before beginning our study, this time we start our workshop with a ritual of physically clearing the air (and changing the space) with the burning of sage and a meditation ritual. Also, with a prayer offering over the lit candles of red, blue and purple (colors we will concentrate on in the class). We will also end with a ritual meditation and prayer offering. Hopefully, this will frame the workshop in a prayerful way and differentiate the space from the daily associations of schoolwork.

This workshop is based on a basic understanding and teaching of kabalistic sefirot and their interdependence. One cannot exist without the other, nor are they expected to be the other. They exist because they are in balance. Each sefirah has a color associated with it. Students learn the color associated with the sefirot. They also learn color theory associated with the sefirot colors.

In our discussion of sefirot, we discuss our attraction to colors in our lives and see if they correspond to our needs and relationship to the sefirot we tend to gravitate towards. After examining our relationship to the sefirot and color schematics (at least on a minimal level) we release ourselves into the activity to explore the issue fuller with our hands. After spending time in silent visual expression, students will have a chance to see one another's work and discuss their own process with one another if they so choose. The workshop ends with a comparable framing meditation to close the space.

Enduring Understanding:

Connecting to our ability to achieve balance lies in our strength to connect to what we need in any given moment.

Objectives: The students will be able to...

Explain color theory and meaning.

Relate sefirot and color theory to their lives.

Return to some of these concept, activities, and ideas later on their own.

Goal: The teacher will be able to...

Model color theory, prayer in a visual art context and sculptural freedom.

Correlate mysticism and color.

Materials:

Found Materials	Cans	Tea lights	Matches	Paint
Twine	Herbs	Razors	Scissors	Foil

Brushes	Hot Glue Gun	Hot Glue	Markers	Pins
Brown Paper	Black Paper	Oil Pastels	Tape	Glitter
Silk/Cloth	Modge Podge	Text Sheets	Magazines	Plates

Timeline:

5:00-5:20	Prayer/meditation/opening
5:20-5:50	Text study and color theory
5:50-6:00	Break
6:00-7:00	Sculpture
7:00-7:10	Clean Up
7:10-7:20	Wrap Up/Review
7:20-7:30	Ending Meditation

Activity:

Three-Dimensional work based on their relationship to sefirot and color theory study.

What color and sefirah do you connect to (and how do they relate to one another)?

Photos:

Figure 10

Rebekah Stern

Figure 11

Julia Weisz

Figure 12

Callie Souther

Reflection:

Three students attended this session. Two are very comfortable with art and have attended previous workshops; the third student was very vocal about not considering herself an artist. Setting the scene by lighting a candle and concentrating on the colors of the flame and the smells of sage in the room seemed to "work" for one of the students and myself. The self-proclaimed "non-artist" appeared uncomfortable and the third student made no comment about the change in opening framework of the workshop.

The color theory and explanation of sefirot with the visual aids that I created were of interest to all three students. Each noted that it helped to have someone explain kabbalah with visual diagrams. They each participated actively in conversation, asking pointed questions and seemed to crave the information. I introduced a short lesson on kabbalah in order to ensure that all students maintained the same basic information. All three students clearly had different knowledge on the subject. However, all possessed minimal understanding so it was easy to start from the beginning for everyone. At some point, I had to force our way to the visual art part of the workshop and move away from the lesson, leaving only an hour for visual artwork time.

The two students who were used to my style of teaching went right for the table of materials, diving into the supplies like there was a pile of gifts laid out before them (which was the intention). The third student was hesitant and needed a lot of guidance. She could not be told to, "let go" or "just be free and see where the

paper takes you". She required firm instructions to make her feel comfortable, and that was hard for me as a teacher. She asked when "the art part" of the workshop would be done, several times.

After a half hour, we set our brushes down and took a tour of one another's works. After a silent ten-minute block of time reviewing our own and one another's works, each person had an opportunity to share the method they went about creating their piece, if there was a story behind the work and how they felt about the art they had created during the workshop.

Figure 10 hoped to work with purples, not finding materials only in purple, she selected the pre-cut silks lining them with glitter so that they would stand out against the dark paper. She found the work fun, though she said that she did not feel spiritually connected to it. I asked her if she would feel comfortable hanging her work on a wall, meaning, did she feel good about it as a "piece"? She was unsure, though it opened up the conversation to all of us about what it means for each person to share process. We each shared what we appreciated about her work.

We all saw different images in figure 11 than what the artist herself saw. The three observers saw a skull and a baby, where she had seen a teardrop. She said she tried very hard to stay away from "making a pattern", which is her general approach to drawing. However, somehow the colors kept coordinating, no matter how hard she tried to work against a patterned motif. We talked as a group about our own need for order and pattern and about what it might mean to have images and patterns emerge when they are unintended.

The artist of figure 12 was satisfied with both her methodology and her end result. What she had focused on in her work was when to stop. She said that is often her hardest struggle in art, knowing that it looks just right. Often she continues to "fix" her work, leaving it without personality or smudged and unrecognizable. It should be noted that this artist also struggles bringing bright colors into her work. She has been to most of my workshops, and this piece was quite a movement forward for her in the realm of color, which was her intent.

My own work is not pictured here, but I will mention it because it was so different from the other three. I made a three-dimensional piece out of an egg carton. On the tips of the carton lay dried roses, and I painted the egg caverns in blues. Strung across the top of the carton is a single piece of string with a miniature clothespin holding a miniature handkerchief. When I shared my piece with the group, I explained how I made it, which was I told myself a story and created the work along with the story about a sea and a lost boat. Each fleck of white and blue were part of a storm, the handkerchief a remnant from a boat. We laughed together about the piece, because the story was clearly a fairytale. However, I think it showed that art could be made through all kinds of lenses. Not just as conscious process of what everything looks like or warring against what we do not want to do. Sometimes, art is the beautiful catharsis of what simply flows from the soul into our hands. We hung the works on the wall and reflected on what we each connected to in one another's pieces. We ended with a prayer and a brief moment of breathing back around the candle flame.

I felt positive about this workshop because I know that the students learned something substantial about kabbalah and color theory. I know that none of the students particularly enjoyed their works aesthetically (as they have in other workshops) but two of the students liked the process of the work very much. The third student said she left feeling different about her identity as a non-artist, but that does not mean she likes making art.

If I were to lead this workshop again, I would still teach the introductory piece on kabbalah. However, I would be more attentive to the time and the fact that rabbinical students are very comfortable learning text. My purpose was to introduce text, and teach the power and practice of art as a prayer, not to teach text. Yet, this is a balance that even after five workshops that I have yet to master.

PART II: Jewish Artist Initiative of Los Angeles [JAI]

The Jewish Artist Initiative existed as an artist based collective since 2004. The group focuses on dialogue around issues of Jewish identity, character and fostering the art of Jewish artists. It is the only national Jewish organization of its kind that involves artists at all stages of their careers. The Initiative believes that art has transformational capabilities, which may be nurtured in an environment with artists who believe that their identity informs the nature of the work they create.

Since its inception, JAI has focused on the cultural identity of artists. The artists display their work in Jewish cultural centers, places of worship and other alternative venues for artists. The pieces the artists create rarely contain Jewish subject matter and if they do, tend to center on cultural rather than religious expressions of Jewish identity.

Of the thirty-seven artists listed as members, thirteen members mention in their artist statements that their Jewish identity informs their art. Those thirteen I count generously, as some artists who did not mention being Jewish had work that was easily recognizable as "Jewish" in that it contact Jewish symbols, imagery or Hebrew Language. The remaining twenty-four artists clearly identify as Jewish in that they find it important to affiliate with a Jewish artist organization, but have chosen not to expound in words how their art has been affected by their Jewish roots. This should not automatically be read as a lack of interest in Jewish religion, rather evidence of a community that processes visually rather than verbally.

Membership requirements for JAI are based on artistic capabilities, not on "how Jewish" one's work appears to be. The caliber of artists involved in JAI would be very different if the categories for acceptance were based on synagogue membership and traditional Jewish ritual observance rather than the traditional jury application process of other professional art organizations. This being said, intra-religious dialogue and Jewish education are values of JAI, though little attention has been paid to them until recently.

Incorporating a non-sectarian forum for Jewish study as one of the opportunities JAI offers its members, was a longtime dream for a few of its members, specifically: Dean Ruth Weisberg (The USC Roski School of Fine Arts), Bill Aron and Joshua Abarbanel. Together with the help of Anne Hromadka, Program Director of JAI, we were able to develop a beit midrash model that fit the unique needs and gifts of the JAI community.

After several months of meetings, we conceived of a structure for a long-term, monthly artist beit midrash. JAI shows solicit artist involvement by announcing themes for work. The beit midrash also chose an annual theme.

The monthly meetings contain a two-part structure. The first hour is spent reflecting on the last session and any work that may have been generated as a result of the study. This hour is for the JAI beit midrash participants only, so that it remains an intimate, safe place of learning artistically and Judaically. This hour is a place to consult one another on new work as well as clarify Jewish issues that may have arisen throughout the month that relate to the theme.

A guest lecturer, preferably a local rabbi, visits the JAI community in the second hour. This is an opportunity for the artists to hear from a variety of scholars on the common annual theme. The lecturers need not base their teaching in the arts, though most have, and this has helped the participants feel comfortable with the material.

Between sessions, artists are encouraged to talk about their work or the topics stimulated by the lectures, via online discussion boards or emails. Communicating more than once a month, electronically or in person has been difficult for this group to maintain. However, after about four sessions, work did begin to emerge from the conversations that take place in the artist beit midrash. The conversations about new art I attribute to Anne Hromadka, who made a call asking those of us involved to contribute to a group show in June based on the artist beit midrash theme.

The annual theme we agreed upon as a committee is: *Yetzer HaRa* and *Yetzer HaTov*. It was not simple to pick a theme that appealed to a large range of Judaic knowledge and artistic media. We wanted the artists to both delve into new information and spiritual learning from Jewish sources while simultaneously to feel sufficiently comfortable exploring the topics on their own terms. Themes that I thought were complex light and darkness, creation, humanity's relationship to God- the group considered simplistic or untouchable. Themes that might have been visited in religious school were deemed uninteresting. Themes that outwardly mentioned God could possibility alienate artists. The annual theme had to be

graspable in both a single sweep and also rich enough to mine for a year. The process and time it took to pick a theme proved enlightening as to what active Jews are interested in learning about and from whom they want to learn it. The process made me feel at once out of touch and ready and able to meet the demand.

Theme decided upon, the next step was to compile a list of twelve rabbis whom the group would request to act as guest teachers. Again, our motivations differed. The group wanted rabbis whose names they knew, which is entirely understandable. I wanted scholars who would enjoy teaching to this specific group. Even more, an unspoken, almost sub-textual mission, was that I wanted rabbis to visit who would inspire JAI members to attend other classes, perhaps even enter different synagogue spaces. I wanted Judaism to open up a part of art for the artists that may have been inaccessible without that knowledge. Even more, I wanted the art created as a result of the study to open up Judaism to the artists. For me, the different scholars were a large part of that potential process.

Before we welcomed multiple scholars into our fold, I began the JAI beit midrash as their first teacher. My task was two fold: to explain and teach the nature of Jewish traditional beit midrash study and to introduce our annual theme. Within the introduction of the theme I also explained how other teachers might teach it.

JAI Lesson Plan – Sunday, August 23, 2009

Enduring Understanding:

The Jewish world has many ways of accessing meaning. With deep, honest study, one will find that everything in this world has a place and a value; nothing exists in the binary system of "completely evil" and "completely good".

Goals:

- Model and explain the unique nature of Jewish study (chevrutah)
- Students will leave with a basic grasp that there are a variety of sources that Jews draw from (Torah, Rabbinic Texts, Midrash, ect)
- Work through the theme of "Yetzer Hara" and "Yetzer Tov" as something that is not binary, but lives within the gray zone
- Discuss the future of the group organizationally, topically and practically

Timeline:

4:00-4:05	Introduction of who we are and what we are doing, instructions for activity
4:05-4:10	Individual Activity work : on post-its
4:10-4:20	Group Activity work : organize the post-its
4:20-4:30	Reflection on Activity : discuss the post-its
4:30-4:40	Explanation of Jewish sources and Chevrutah study
4:40-4:55	Chevrutah study (Yoma 69b) aided with resource sheet and questions
4:55-5:15	Group Reflection on text, segue to this time of year (Elul) living in Grayness (returning to the Activity) – Jews have many opinions on rights and wrongs- but less binary than what it may seem like at first.
5:15-5:25	Goals of this year within the *yetzer hara/yetzer hatov* theme and how it relates to the unique nature of this group and its efforts to do in-depth process through a visual lens.
5:25-5:40	Discuss future of the group

Activity:

On the wall will be three posters set next to one another:
"Evil", "Gray Zone" and "Good".

Students will be asked to give one-word examples of each topic on post-it notes. They may give as many examples as they see fit.

Students will then hand their post-it notes to the person to their right. They will each categorize the post-it notes in their hands on the wall. For example: post-it "gluttony" may go in the evil category whereas post-it "consumption" may fall in any of the three areas.

Supplies:

Post-it notes pens 3 posters with their titles

Resource sheet with text, questions and definitions

Take home sheet with resources for more information

CHEVRUTAH TEXT STUDY : YETZER HA'RA/YETZER HA'TOV

Background Info:

This piece is from the Talmud (a compilation of rabbinic writings from +/-400 ce). It is in the middle of a long conversation on how the people at the time were coping with "The impulse to do evil". The story has divided "the impulse to do evil" into forces that urge a human being to sin. We begin our study right after the people have killed the "impulse to do the evil of idolatry" and are ready to kill the "impulse to do the evil of lewdness". In this context, lewdness may be understood as sexual urges. At this juncture in our story, a prophet steps in.

Read through the text aloud to one another. Some vocabulary is clarified on the next page for ease of study. Then work through the text once more with the guided questions. Please do not feel pressured to get through them all – they are simply there to urge you to dig deeply into the text.

TEXT:

Yoma 69b, adapted and translated in "The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah" editors Hayim Nachman Bialik and Yehoshua Ravnitzky.

After people slew the impulse to [do] the evil of idolatry, they said: Since this is a time of grace, let us beseech [God's] mercy against the impulse to do the evil of lewdness.

They besought God's mercy and the impulse was turned over to them.

A prophet warned them: Consider Carefully – if you slay it, the world will be destroyed.

So [instead of slaying it] they imprisoned it for three days. But then, when a day-old egg was sought throughout the Land of Israel for a sick man, it could not be found.

So they said: What shall we do now? If we slay the impulse, the entire world will be destroyed.

So they painted its eyes [blinding it] and then let it go. What they did helped weaken its power.

Vocabulary:

Yetzer Ha'ra = Impulse to do evil *Yetzer Ha'Tov* = Impulse to do good

Impulse to do the evil of Idolatry: the impulse that drives someone to commit the sin of idolatry (worshipping other gods) – the gravest sin in our tradition.

Impulse to do the evil of lewdness: sexual activity

Day-old egg: An egg that would have been laid after the people had imprisoned the impulse to do the evil of lewdness. This was probably part of an indigenous medicinal practice.

Painting its eyes: the original language reads – they poked out his eyes – which is a common way of maiming but not killing individuals who deserve punishment.

Guided Questions:

1) *Time of Grace*: Why/How do the people achieve a time of grace with the killing of the "impulse to do the evil of idolatry"? Does this insinuate that God wants people to destroy the impulses in our midst that steer us away from a positive path?

2) Why did the people ask for God's help to capture the "impulse to do the evil of lewdness"?

3) Could this mean that God was holding the impulse or that the impulse belonged to God or that God simply knew where the impulse was hiding out?

4) Why would the prophet believe that destroying something that everyone knows is evil could destroy the world?

5) Are there some evils that belong in this world? If some evils belong in this world, does that still make them evil?

6) What was the problem that arose when the impulse was imprisoned?

7) What did imprisonment of the impulse mean for the rest of the world (i.e. if eggs were not laid, what else was not happening in the world)?

8) What does it mean that the impulse is now weakened?

9) From this rabbinic story, what do we know about the role of "impulses to do evil" in our tradition?

Resources:

Baigell, Matthew. Jewish Art in America: An Introduction.

Hayim Nachman Bialik and Yehoshva Ramitsky, The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah. *(The largest compilation of rabbinic stories in English – topically arranged)*

Loeb and Kadden, Teaching Torah: Insights and Activities
(general Torah study)

Rabbi Brad Artson, Bedside Torah
(follows each weekly portion. Summarizes the portion in one page and then offers three different ways to see the portion. A quick read, easy reference and very modern.)

Kugel, How to Read the Bible
(advanced, scholarly with an in-depth commentary from a variety of lenses)

Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews.
(A classic resource, a little dated linguistically, but pretty accurate translations)

Gellman, Does God Have a Big Toe?
(midrash/ rabbinic stories reworked for a young audience, but can be a great and fun resource for all ages- stories based on questions)

www. Myjewishlearning.com
(general information on basic Jewish questions, text materials and resources)

www.Ritualwell.org
(wonderfully creative and original rituals and poetry that do not exist in our traditional texts, liturgy and practice)

To be fair, after one year into planning the beit midrash and five sessions of meeting, it is too early to give an assessment of whether it has succeeded. However, this is the point where my work with the group will end. Therefore, I will have to base my opinion on its nascence.

I have no evidence that my dreams of Jewish renewal for the artists involved in the beit midrash have come to fruition. Yet, something does keep the members regularly attending our monthly meetings on the third Sunday of the month at two in the afternoon at the West Side Jewish Community Center. The meeting time is not one that is easy to make, yet the six to ten artists find value in making it a priority. This is a success.

For the first three sessions, the artists' conversations in the primary hour gravitated around art versus religion. This was frustrating, until I realized it was where the artists were comfortable as they seemed to argue the same points each time, always spiraling back to the spirituality in their own work. It took time for me to find my own voice in the group, not being either "one of them" as a professional artist or one of the rabbis of the second hour. As soon as I learned to own my position as the JAI beit midrash rabbinic presence, I was able to guide the first hour conversation to be about art as a spiritual practice. This was a unique perspective for much of the participants.

Also, I only recently truly learned what I could offer the beit midrash. I have been a resource, a person who answered detailed questions about what a previous rabbi had taught, someone to aid in research for Jewish based artwork and someone

who knew which rabbis to ask to come and speak. I wish for all of us, I had known my place earlier. This being the case, I think the beit midrash should continue with a singular rabbi rather than with guest lecturers. Having a stable presence would help student, teacher and the JAI community learn and grow in the deepest manner. I think too, that though I was told that professional artists do not create art in communal settings, bringing in art and/or presenting art and/or taking a half hour to create should be part of the beit midrash. In the act of studying in the authentic beit midrash style, the JAI beit midrash ignores it's most unique element, that they are artists. They should be artists, allow that art to be part of the study and include a rabbi to inform, participate and enjoy the work along with them.

PART III: Personal Painting

Painting plays a large role in my spiritual practice. Visual expression rarely is about replicating what lies before me, but more about what lies within me. I process what I think and feel and how I react to the world through drawing and painting. Oil colors and brush strokes take the place of words, where they are insufficient. Praying is not a compartmentalized act. Rather, prayer is an attitude.

> I am a painter. I pray as I paint, and my painting becomes a kind of prayer. If someone comes to me for help in prayer, I tell them to find what they most *enjoy* and do that, only do it for the glory of God. For you it may be writing or climbing a mountain. For me, it's painting. Start with what really energizes you and touches your heart: flowers, music, hiking, birds, gardening, whatever. Ask God to remind you, as you do it, that you are doing it for Him.[32]

Prayer as an expression of love and glory of God is a theme that can be gleaned from many traditional Jewish and Christian sources. However, The call to "do it for the glory of God" is not an easy one to answer. I am not sure that many people would know what that means, as prayer without liturgy is not an easy thing to teach.

The subtext behind Yancey's request of God to remind him that work done with joy is work done for God, is that we do forget. When we forget the purpose for which we work, it ceases to be prayer. When moving away from traditional modes of prayer structure, intentionality becomes of utmost importance.

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[32] Yancey, Philip. Prayer, Does it make a Difference? Zodervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 2006. Page 314

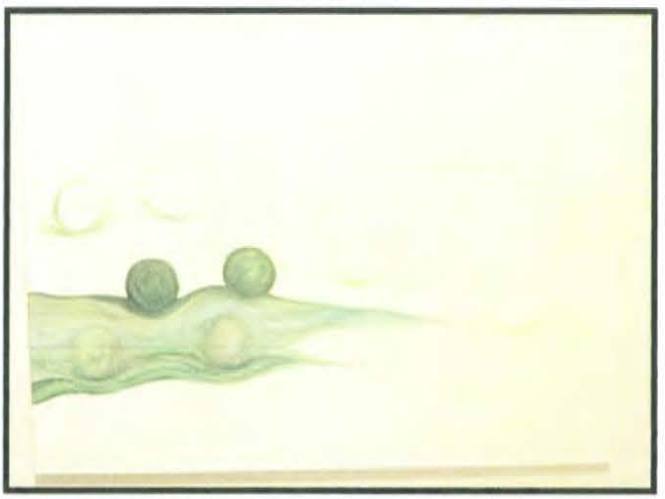
Intentionality should be understood on multiple levels. For painting to be prayer there must be kavannah of spirit that the work is for God, as discussed above. Also, there must be intentionality about the way the artistic materials are handled. Conscious choices about form, detail and where brush strokes begin and finish are essential. Awareness of how shapes and colors evolve in artwork does not preclude an artist from feeling free. Rather, in the act of opening oneself to the work and the prayer of painting, an appreciation for quality reveals itself.

I took the project of prayer painting as an intentional act very seriously for the purposes of this yearlong project. Beginning by sketching during prayer services at school, I waited to see if any themes emerged. After several months, images of spheres and acts of creation seemed to dominate my sketchbook. Finally, one sketch stood out above all the others, and I began to draw it repeatedly.

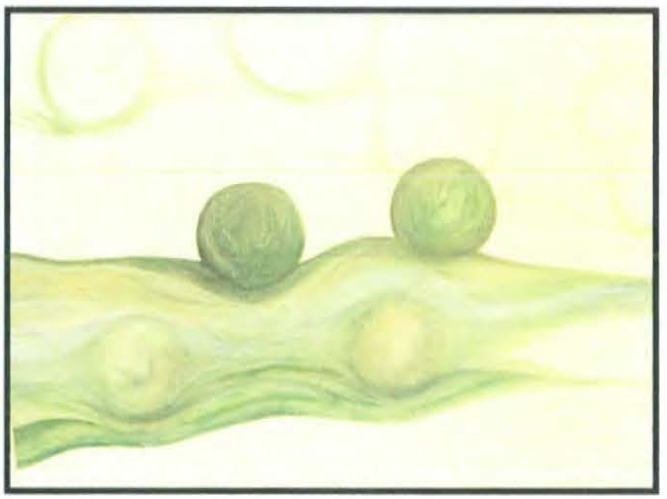
The image, which emerged from that sketch, represented the moment of creation where earth and water began to separate, forming, bubbling and growing, much like my own evolutionary relationship with visual art as a spiritual practice. The process for this work, once the sketch was transferred onto the canvas, was to take time each Shabbat to work through the theme of creation and differentiation.

The work is not complete as of yet, which makes sense given the theme. The progress of Shabbat work is documented in stages as follows:

STAGE I:



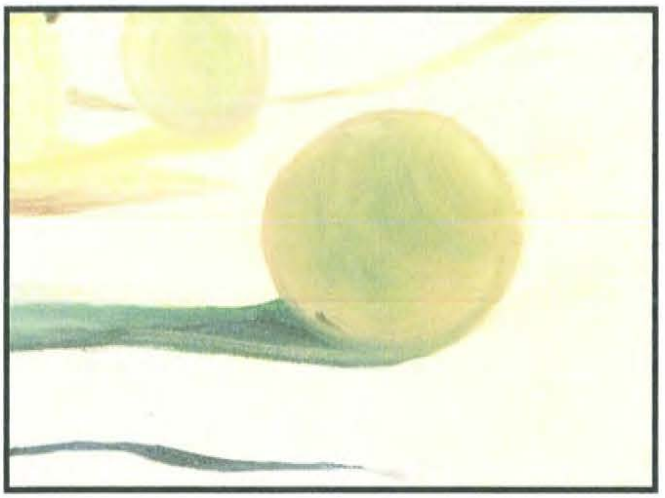
The land begins to emerge. As if the earth is growing out of itself. The greens and browns of the earth meld intentionally. Forming the ingredients of earth through color gradients. My intention is to make it feel as thought the formation of the earth comes from within the earth itself. The orbs that form, the pockets of earth that are beginning to take shape are part of the earth's sense of free will. As if the chaos of the earthly materials find their own method of being, and having found what it means to exist (the materials of earth, that is) they can create shape, which inevitably will be land.



STAGE II:

The Earth begins to take shape. It is no longer just coming into being; it now has an identity and a path.

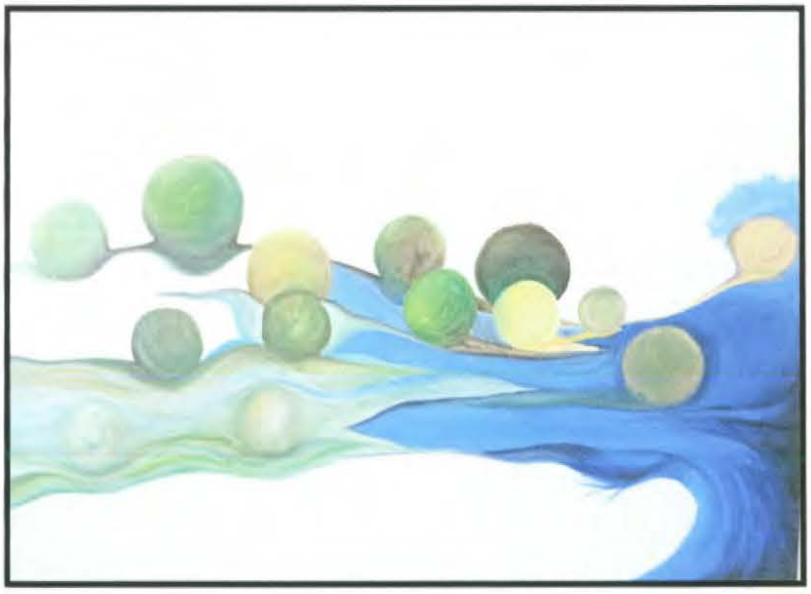
In this stage the earth develops a relationship with its own light and shadows. The orbs are intended to represent units of being in a human. These could be states of mind or experience. These orbs also represent units of terrestrial formation, such as islands and continents. Finally, these orbs represent the global elements of "becoming", units of time and history, and the many



different paths in the evolution of an earth. The color schemes of the orbs are heavily yellow ochre, a color used to make bright colors darker. This color is used to represent the multi-dimensionality of development. In the richness of growth there is always complexity and shadows of loss and change that create a diverse world. The land can be rigid and hard, soft to support the heavy weight of a full orb or flow almost like water. Earth, in this stage, is discovering what it means to be part of the formation of a world.

STAGE III:

The water comes into play here. It was important that water and land share equal footing. The water is at once rushing out of the land as well as pulsing into it. They feed one another. The blues of the water echo the light greens in the land in many places, it is not clear where land



begins and where water stops. This is the essential nature of separation and of self-definition. The water finds out who it is by knowing it is not land, though sometimes they overlap, they co-exist and compliment. I wanted water and earth to be like lovers, strong and unique, sharing their space equally, and helping one another create a holy space for creation to live and grow. There is evidence of this partnership in the painting. The water looks as if forms a birth canal out of the earth, rushing out against the wall of the canvas, only to return back to itself and back into the softness of the land. There are small lines of red in that canal, which allude to the creation of veins that will come later, and a flower that emerges in one of the golden orbs. The orbs themselves have a sensual appeal, growing bellies, pollen in the air, fertile eggs they can represent a multitude of things that elude to the continuous, rolling nature of creation.

PART IV: My Colors of Prayer:An Interactive Prayer Book

I see this piece as my summary work of a year of research and a lifetime thus far of interweaving my spiritual nature with my artistic inclinations. The purpose of this draft edition of a visual prayer book is to coalesce the lessons learned as part of this study and translate them into the broader scope of the Jewish communal world. This is one vision of how visual art might mingle with formal prayer in a congregational setting.

The title of the prayer book refers to the black and white simple drawings that accompany every part of the traditional liturgy. One page will contain Hebrew, English and transliteration of the prayer and a prompt for the image on the opposite page. The aim is not to have the congregant color-in the picture provided. Rather, the goal of the image is to spark a conversation, idea or interpretation on a specific piece of liturgy. The thinking and drawing are supposed to be included in the process of praying. This prayer book is intended to be a guided prayer process, with writing, drawing and singing prompts to aid the worshipper along the path to spiritual meaning.

This prayer book may be utilized in a full range of environments. The images could be introduced at a young age and then reintroduced when the child is learning to read the Hebrew. This way, the meaning of the prayer is taught along with the words at various stages of cognitive development. The prayer book could be used in an introduction to Judaism class or other adult education class where

adults are open to processing their relationship to the words they say during services.

The prayer book can be used in tandem with other siddurim for worshippers of all ages who find refuge in that moment in a visual expression of a prayer experience rather than the traditional call and response format. This siddur could open up a community to the variety of people within their congregation who may currently be overlooked: those who struggle with the meaning in prayers, children who connect to drawing more than music, and people of all ages with special needs. This siddur, though a draft in this format, may be an opportunity for congregants, artists or non-artists, to forge new prayer paths for their communities.

I presented this draft in two different environments and received oppositional responses. These diverse reactions reflect how art in a prayer situation is not the same as in an academic environment. When one is open to a given situation as an access point to prayer, they may be able to connect with the visual art experience more than they had ever imagined. What one thinks they can do, or their intellectual perceptions of what they can "do" as an artist may fade when the expectation is prayer not product.

I brought *My Colors of Prayer* siddur to Debbie Friedman's class on creating worship space. The students devoured the siddur. Firstly, they renamed it. I originally called it *The Spirituality of Coloring*. However, the students felt like it sounded too much like a coloring book and not enough like a siddur so we came up with a new name. They challenged the prompts, suggested test groups, asked how

many sketches I had drawn for each prayer, they asked about the simplicity of the drawings, some wanted more, some wanted less, all of them had different ideas of what they had done or someone else had done similarly, and two students even brainstormed a curriculum that could go along with the siddur.

I explained that I had not pursued any test groups. I made several different drawings for each prayer, choosing what I felt left as much up to the artist as possible. The drawings were the most important piece to me. I wanted them to be black and white, offering a visual prompt but not something necessarily to color. Drawing something that inspired another to create rather than someone to decorate is a very difficult and engaging process. No one had feedback for that part of my process. I appreciated the curriculum ideas and how to rewrite different prompts, however, I found myself writing down their ideas, with little intention to follow through. Perhaps I was tired at this point, which was entirely possible. More likely, was that something was missing from the conversation and I did not know how to explain it.

I tried to explain why blank pages and prompts were not enough for a visual siddur. Many people need visual prompts to feel safe, creative and to draw in ways that make them feel aesthetically satisfied. However, one cannot draw the whole piece for them. Increasingly, I saw that a curriculum or at least a paper to accompany a siddur of this kind would most likely be necessary, as it is difficult to understand on its own.

The second venue I brought the siddur to was Rabbi Richard Levy's *Mussar* class. Without fanfare or introduction, I spread markers on the table and handed out the siddur. I explained that it was my turn to lead the *mincha* prayer service and we would be praying from this siddur. It would be silent prayer for fifteen minutes. The cover is blank, yet the first drawing for the *barchu,* the call to worship, of an ark holding three torahs showed through the page. This signaled the beginning. Students could work through the siddur as fast or slow as they chose, taking notice that the colors would bleed through the pages, connecting the prayers and the art.

I watched as they tentatively began. Only one student remained on the front blank cover to free draw. The rest opened to the first page. I watched as my art came to life in their hands in ways I had not imagined. I never saw that happen before; so many hands changing the work of my hands. I saw that most started by coloring in the ark and torahs, a safe drawing with many lines, and as they continued, the drawings become more simplistic, with more room for imagination and the students opened themselves up to the practice as well.

Afterwards, in reflection the students reacted to the balance of the intellect and spiritual process of *mincha* prayer. All of them found it relaxing, some more than others. Many found it difficult to begin, but found one drawing or prayer in the process that they connected with. Interestingly enough, many students claimed they were not artists, and not proud of their work, yet after the discussion felt a strong need to show me their drawings and explain their process. Clearly, there was pride in what they had created.

Heath explained that there was an arc in his creativity. He began by filling in colors, there was a peak to his creativity where he drew his own shapes and in the last few minutes found himself returning to filling in shapes. I loved this observation, as I thought it mimicked traditional liturgy perfectly. We warm-up, not dive into prayer, we reach a peak in the Amidah prayer (where Heath reached his) and then we have a cool down prayer or a wrap up, in order to re-enter the secular world.

Rebekah stated that she is not an artist and found the prompts interesting but some of the drawings difficult. Her favorite prompt was, "where do prayers go?," yet she felt like the drawing did not provide her with the room to answer the question. However, this page landed up being her favorite aesthetic piece in the siddur. This too, delighted me. This was my intention, there is room in much of the book for white space and open draw. In fact, the page before that particular prompt has an almost completely open page. Yet, I also want worshippers to return to the work they create with pride. I want them to feel they can frame their work, show it to friends, meditate on the siddurim they create and discover inspiration from the art they create. I think Rebekah did this without even knowing it.

Sara spoke about time spent on each prayer. She said that usually we are on community time when it comes to prayer, and usually we do not spend long periods of time on a single prayer in communal worship settings. Since drawing takes time, praying on a single prayer takes longer than you might want. This can be positive, in that you have a chance to read deeper into a prayer than you would normally. This

can also be tiresome, in that you are still on a prayer because the physical work takes longer than the praying itself. I thought this was a very important comment.

When praying with this type of siddur, I suppose one would have to pick and choose which prayer to work on that particular week. I know from my experience drawing in worship services, that if you want to stay at the communal speed, one must draw very quickly. The end results are quick sketches. In this case, you would have to know your prayers very well and sing along while working at a given piece. I am not sure this issue is a problem, but it is something to be conscientious of if the whole congregation is not using this siddur, how do we all stay on the same page? Or, is it necessary to stay on the same page at all?

This siddur is still in draft form. Perhaps if I had written this thesis earlier in my rabbinical school career, the siddur itself would have been the capstone project. However, this paper has lead me to this next project, which I will continue to work on with great joy. My hope is to continue to perfect it, perhaps write a curriculum to accompany its distribution.

Clearly, when it came to involving students in an act of prayer with art, it came naturally and beautifully. The capacity is within us all. In fact, I believe that it is crying to get out, dance its way across the page and tell us of the deep meanings in our hearts. With humble hope, I think this siddur might be a chance for some people to reach that place.

MY COLORS OF PRAYER:

A SPIRITUAL COLORING SIDDUR

* * DRAFT FORMAT * *

Compiled and Created by: Miriam Pauline Terlinchamp

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ׃

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

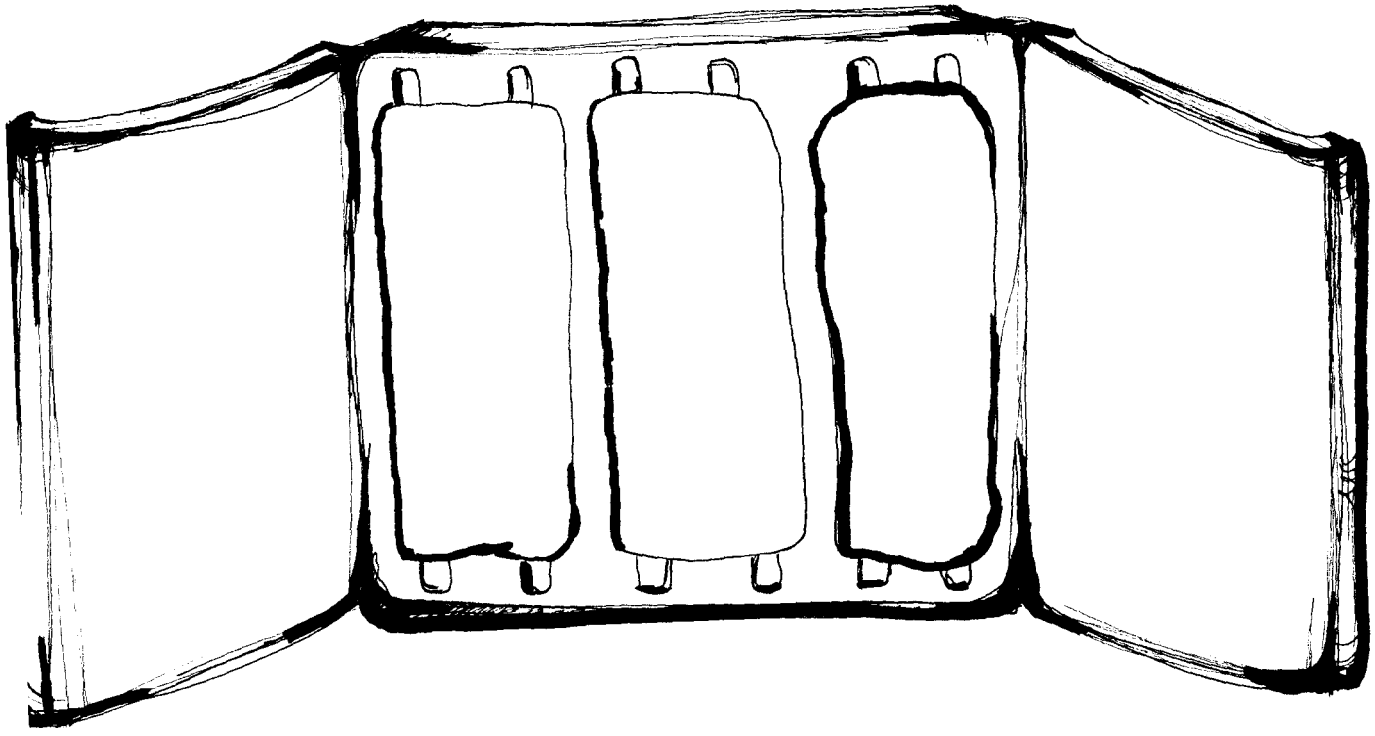
BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach!

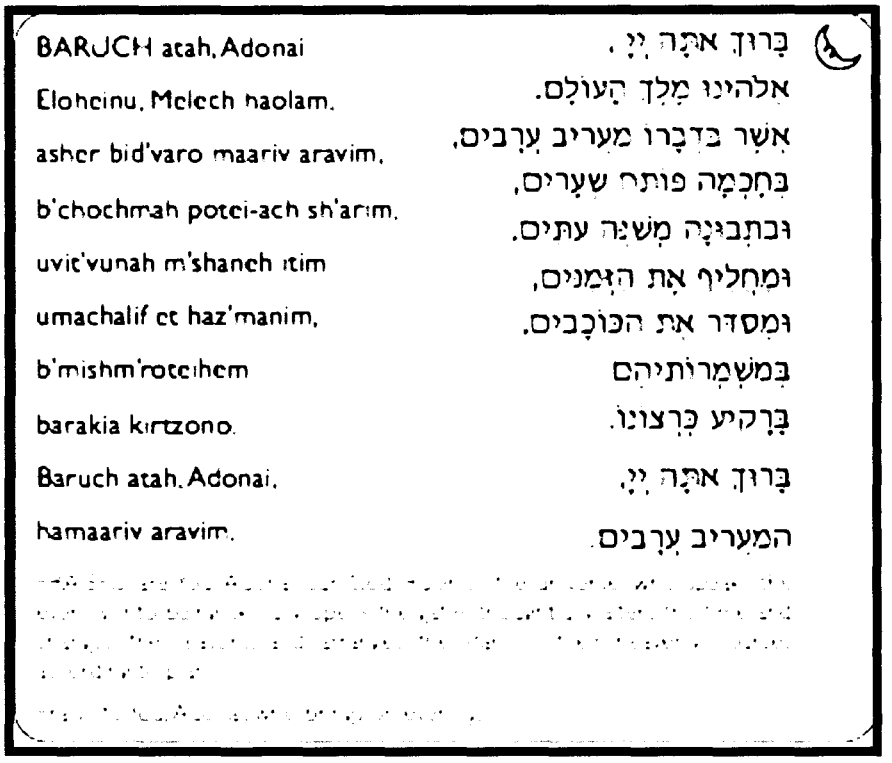
Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed!

PRAISE ADONA [illegible]

Drawing Prompt:

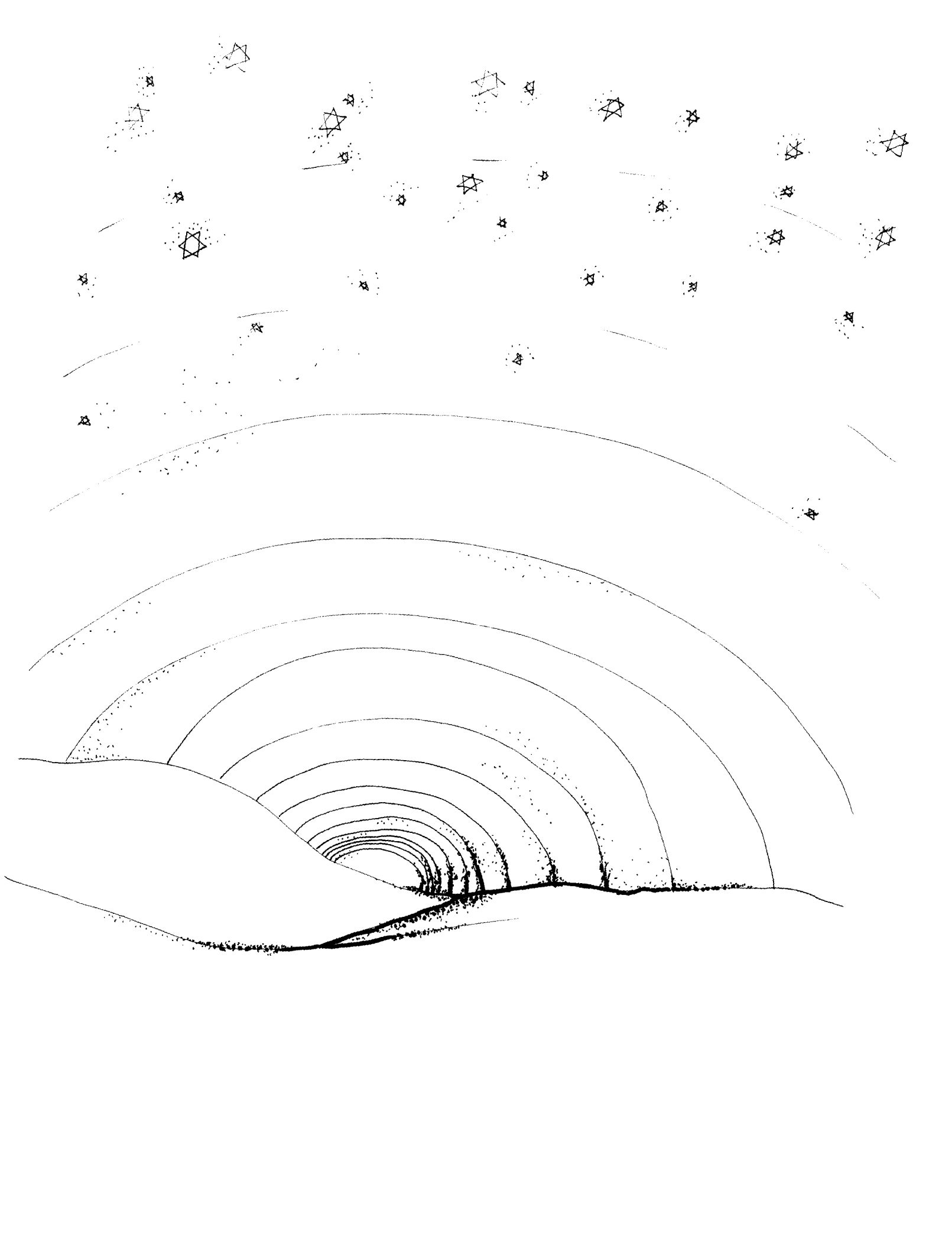
I believe in standing up for these three things.





Drawing Prompt:

Imagine a Sky, changing from Day to Night. I see so many colors.



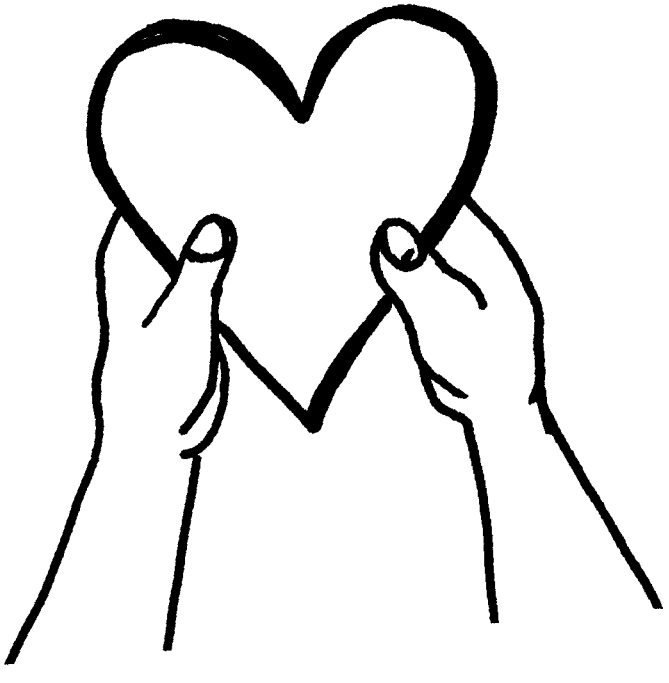
Ahavat Olam

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ אָהָבְתָּ, תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים
וּמִשְׁפָּטִים, אוֹתָנוּ לִמַּדְתָּ עַל כֵּן יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשָׁכְבֵנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ
נָשִׂיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ, וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאֹרֶךְ יָמֵינוּ, וּבָהֶם נֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה, וְאַהֲבָתְךָ
אַל תָּסִיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

AHAVAT OLAM beit Yisrael amcha ahavta, Torah umitzvot, chukim umishpatim, otanu limad'ta. Al kein, Adonai Eloheinu, b'shochveinu uv'kumeinu nasiach b'chukeicha, v'nismach b'divrei Torat'cha uv'mitzvoteccha l'olam va-ed. Ki heim chayeinu v'orech yameinu uvahem neh'geh yomam valailah. V'ahavat'cha al tasir mimenu l'olamim. Baruch atah, Adonai, ohev amo Yisrael.

Drawing Prompt:

These are some ways I see love in the world, and some ways I bring love into the world.



שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

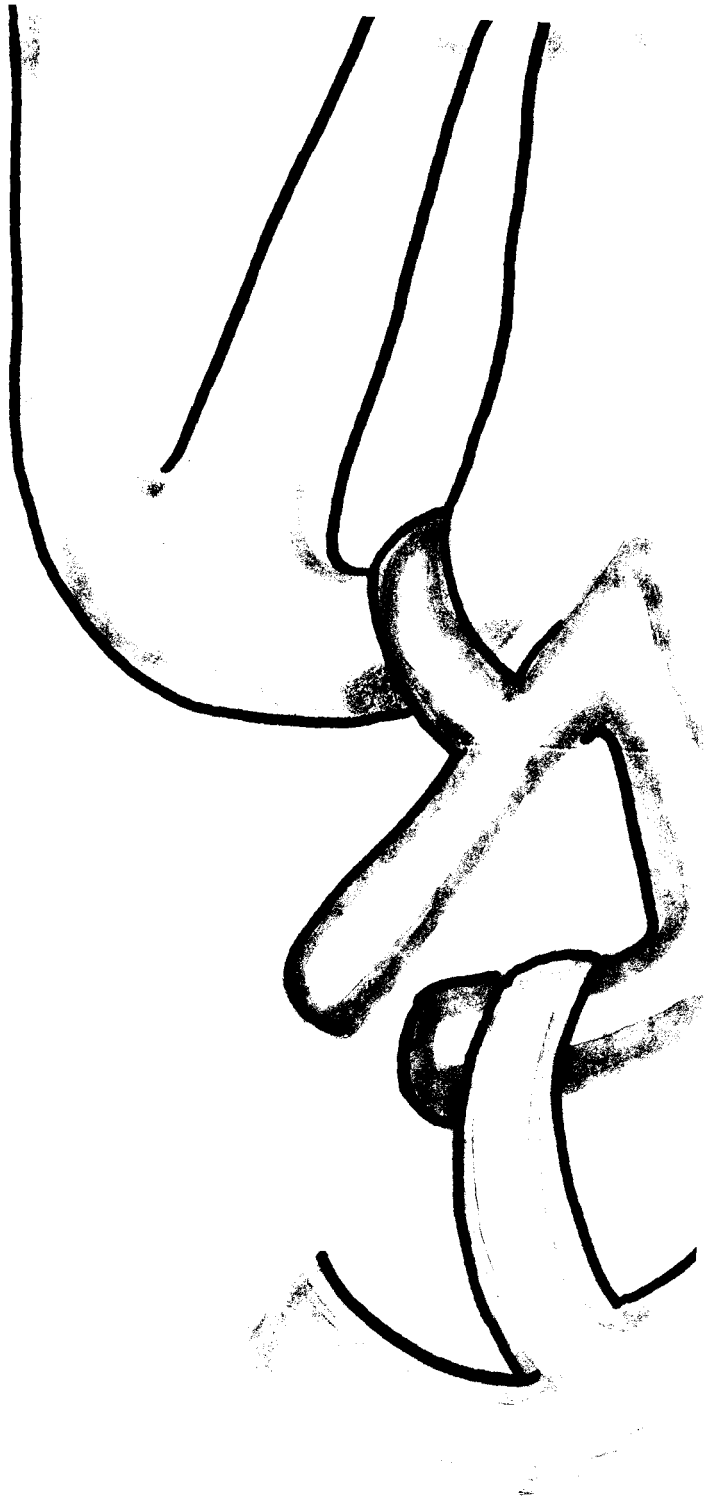
HEAR, O ISRAEL, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!
Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!

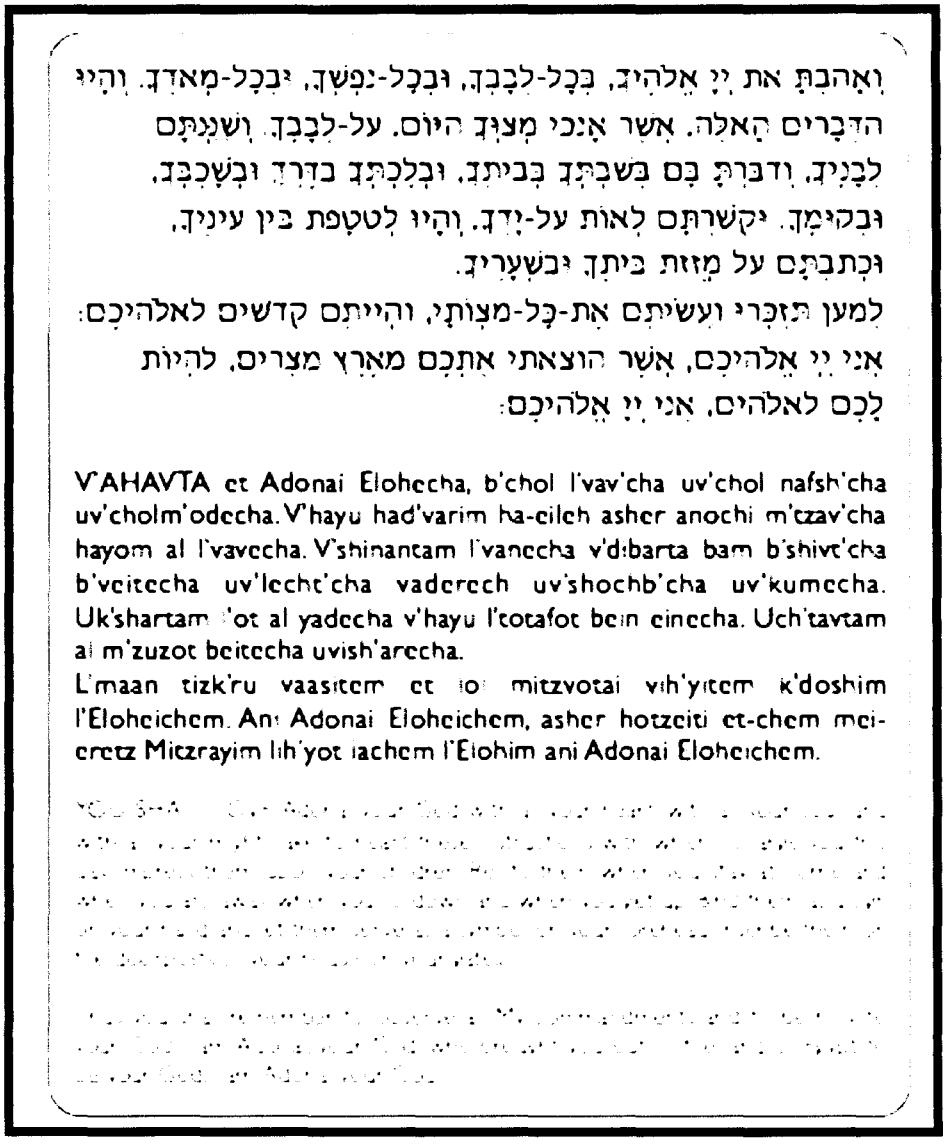
Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever.
Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed

Drawing Prompt:

Sometimes it is difficult to listen. Sometimes the most important thing in the whole world is listening. God asks us to listen. When we want to show our love, we listen carefully. When we pay attention we make sure to listen to every word because we do not want to miss anything.

This is what I believe about listening.





וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ. וְהָיוּ
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם. עַל-לְבָבֶךָ. וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם
לְבָנֶיךָ, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ, וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ,
וּבְקוּמֶךָ. וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדֶךָ. וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ.
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.
לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָי, וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם:
אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, לִהְיוֹת
לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים, אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

V'AHAVTA et Adonai Elohecha, b'chol l'vav'cha uv'chol nafsh'cha uv'cholm'odecha. V'hayu had'varim ha-eileh asher anochi m'tzav'cha hayom al l'vavecha. V'shinantam l'vanecha v'dibarta bam b'shivt'cha b'veitecha uv'lecht'cha vaderech uv'shochb'cha uv'kumecha. Uk'shartam l'ot al yadecha v'hayu l'totafot bein einecha. Uch'tavtam al m'zuzot beitecha uvish'arecha.
L'maan tizk'ru vaasitem et kol mitzvotai vih'yitem k'doshim l'Eloheichem. Ani Adonai Eloheichem, asher hotzeiti et-chem mei-eretz Mitzrayim lih'yot lachem l'Elohim ani Adonai Eloheichem.

Drawing Prompt:

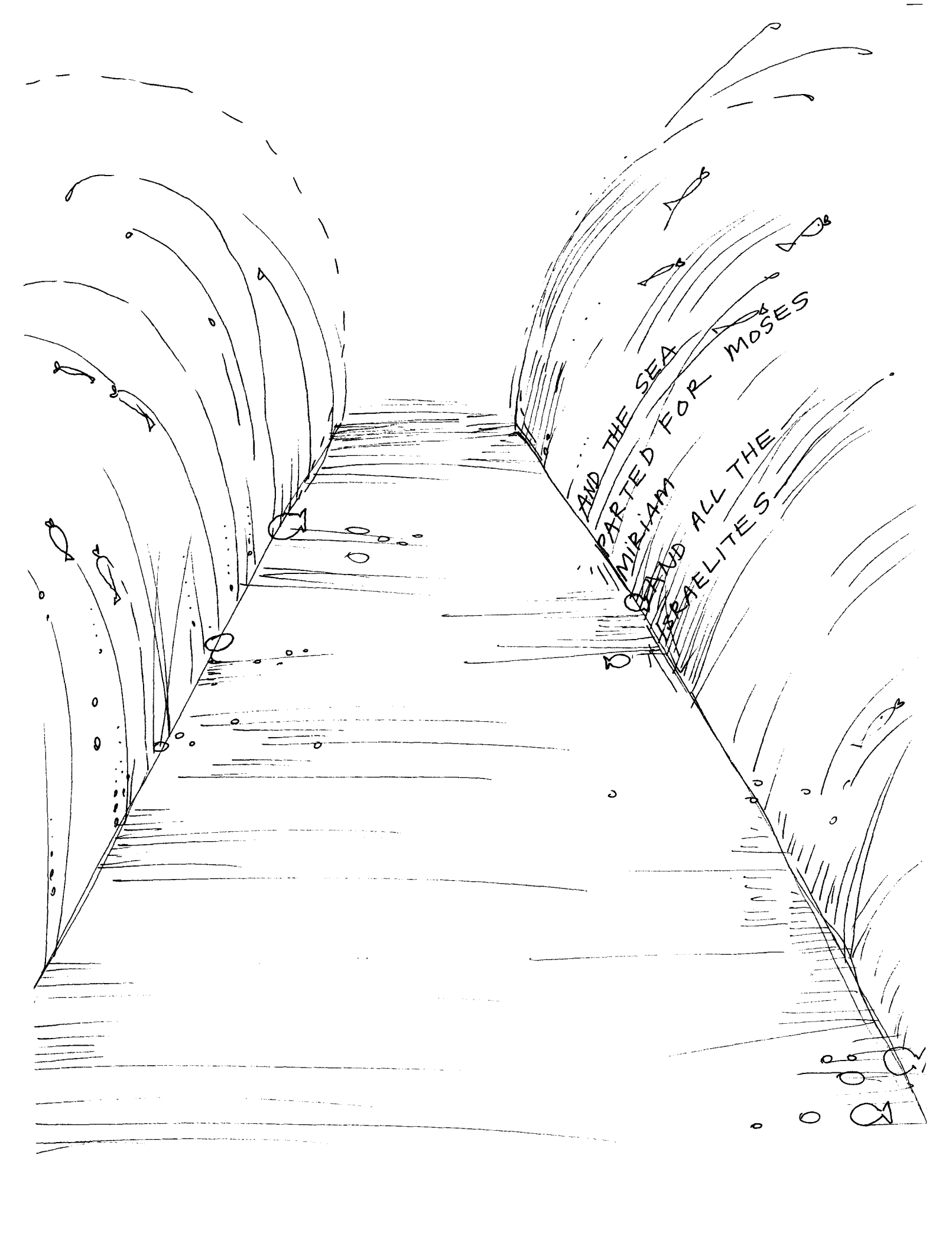
I want my coming and goings to fill my home with love. When I walk through my door after a long day, these are some things with which I would like to be greeted.

MI CHAMOCHAH ba-eilim, Adonai!	מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְיָ,
Mi kamochah nedar bakodesh,	כָּמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ,
nora t'hilot, osch fele!	נוֹרָא תְהִלֹת,עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא.
Malchut'cha ra-u-vanecha,	מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בָנֶיךָ
bokei-a yam lifnei Moshe u Miryam.	בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה,
Zeh Eli, anu v'amru,	זֶה אֵלִי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ:
Adonai yimloch l'olam va-ed!	יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
V'ne-emar: ki fadah Adonai et Yaakov,	וְנֶאֱמַר :כִּי פָדָה יְיָ אֶת יַעֲקֹב,
ug'alo miyad chazak mimenu.	וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חָזָק מִמֶּנּוּ.
Baruch atah, Adonai, gaal Yisrael.	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Drawing Prompt:

There are all kinds of things happening on the shores of the sea, in the sand, in the waves, between Miriam, Moses and all of the Israelites who crossed to dry land.

Sometimes we do not know where we are heading because we are still in the middle of our journey and all we can see are the waves at our sides. Where are you right now? Are you nervous because you are about to jump into some difficult waters? Can you see the dry land before you? Are you dancing like the Israelites because you witnessed a miracle? We are always crossing a sea, with the help of Adonai's might.

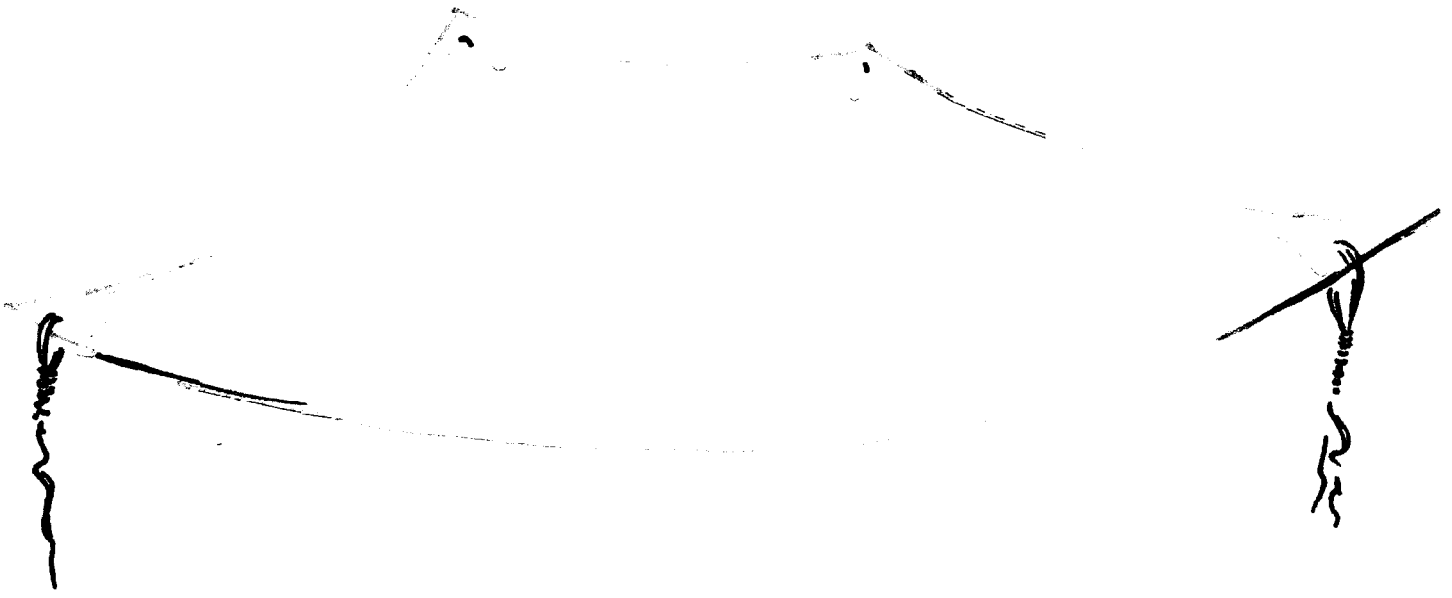

AND THE SEA
PARTED FOR MOSES
MIRIAM
AND ALL THE
ISRAELITES

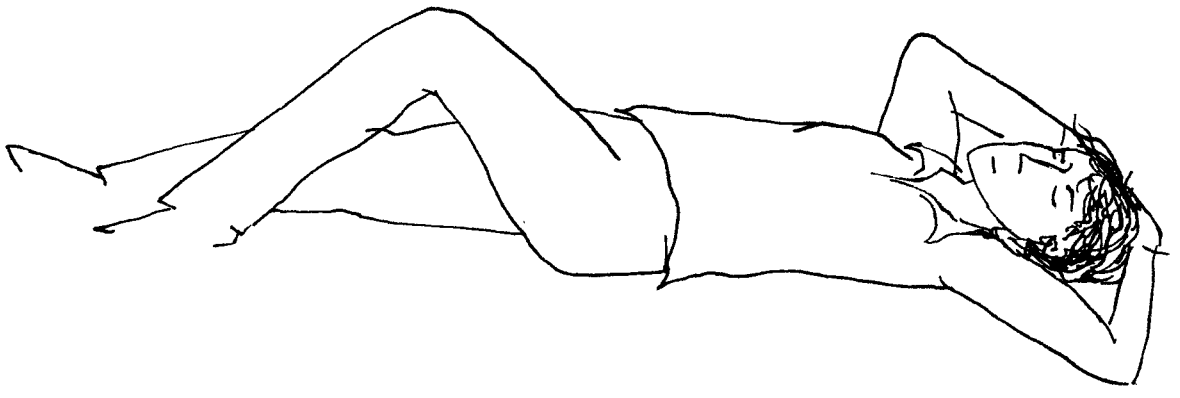
During evening services include:

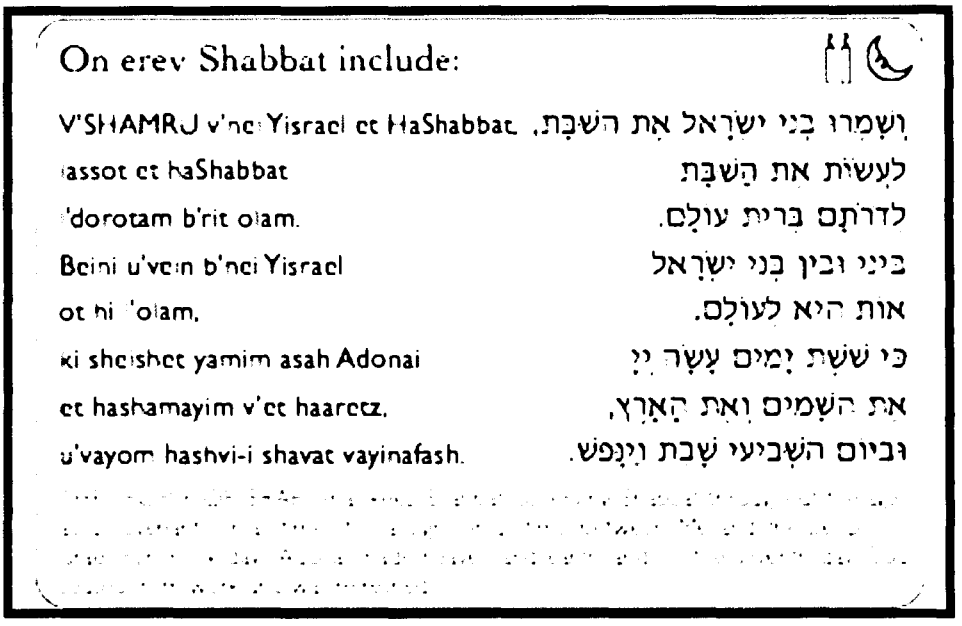
HASHKIVEINU Adonai eloheinu l'shalom,	הַשְׁכִּיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,
v'ha'amideinu Malkeinu l'chayim	וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ לְחַיִּים
ufros aleinu sukkat shlomecha.	וּפְרוֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ.
Baruch ata Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
hapores sukkat shalom	הַפּוֹרֵשׂ סֻכַּת שָׁלוֹם
aleinu v'al kol amo Yisrael	עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
v'al Yerushalayim.	וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָיִם

Drawing Prompt:

I am in a sheltered space, covered by peace and protected from the dangers in the world.







On erev Shabbat include:

V'SHAMRU v'nei Yisrael et HaShabbat	וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת,
'assot et haShabbat	לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת
'dorotam b'rit olam.	לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם.
Beini u'vein b'nei Yisrael	בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
ot hi 'olam,	אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם,
ki sheishet yamim asah Adonai	כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְיָ
et hashamayim v'et haaretz,	אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ,
u'vayom hashvi-i shavat vayinafash.	וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפַשׁ.

Drawing prompt:

We receive many gifts from other people in our lives. Emotional, physical and spiritual gifts are passed from one generation to the next, just like candlesticks, recipes for chicken soup and a love of Shabbat.

This is a gift I receive from someone in my family.

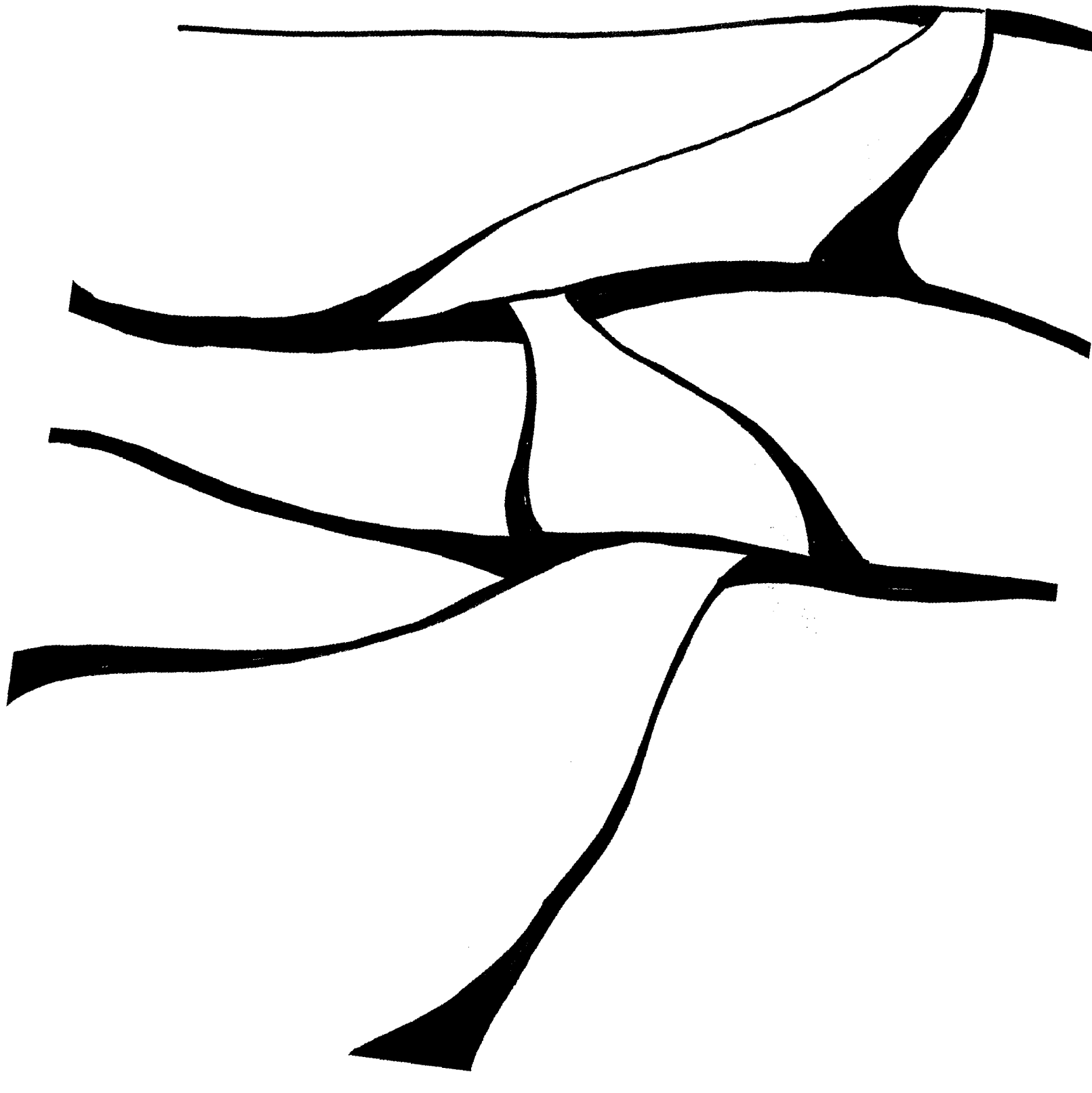
אֲדֹנָי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ׃

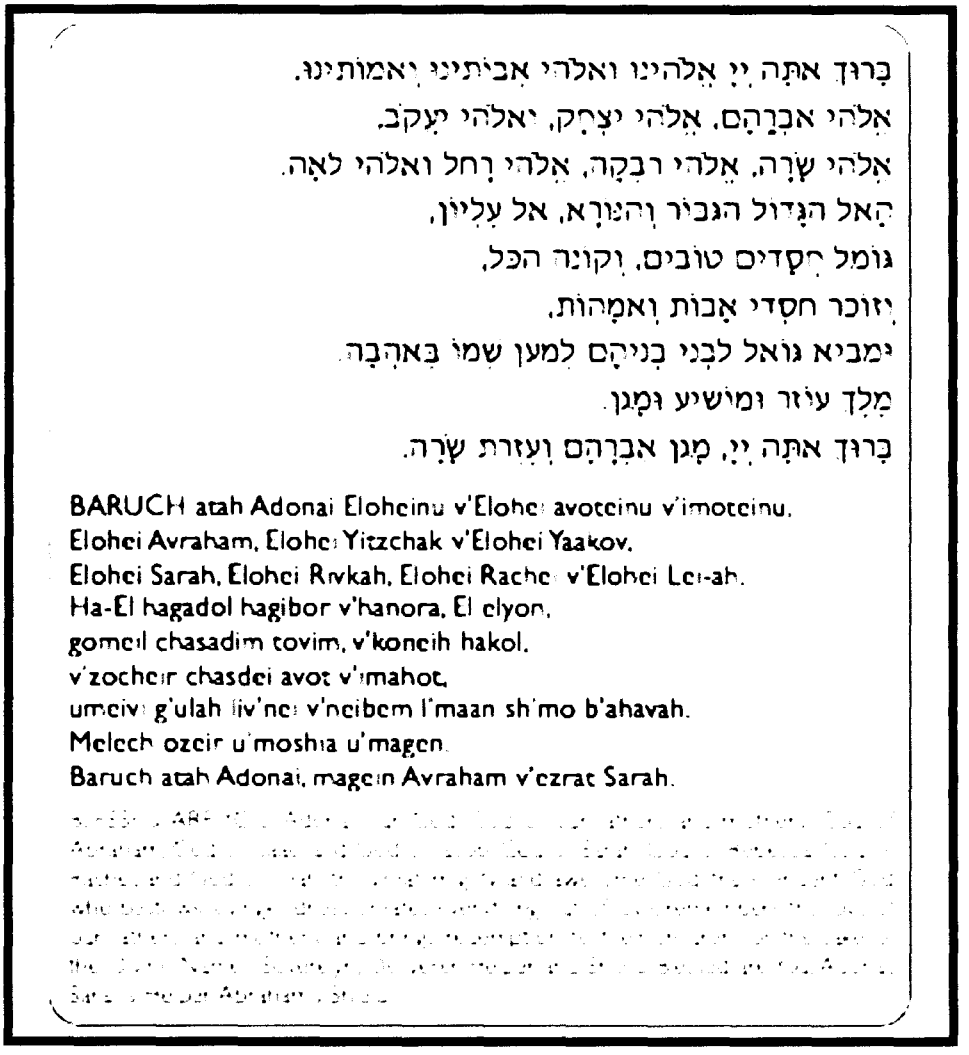
ADONAI, s'fatai tiftach, ufi yagid t'hilatecha

ADONAI open up my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise

Drawing Prompt:

This is where I think prayers go.





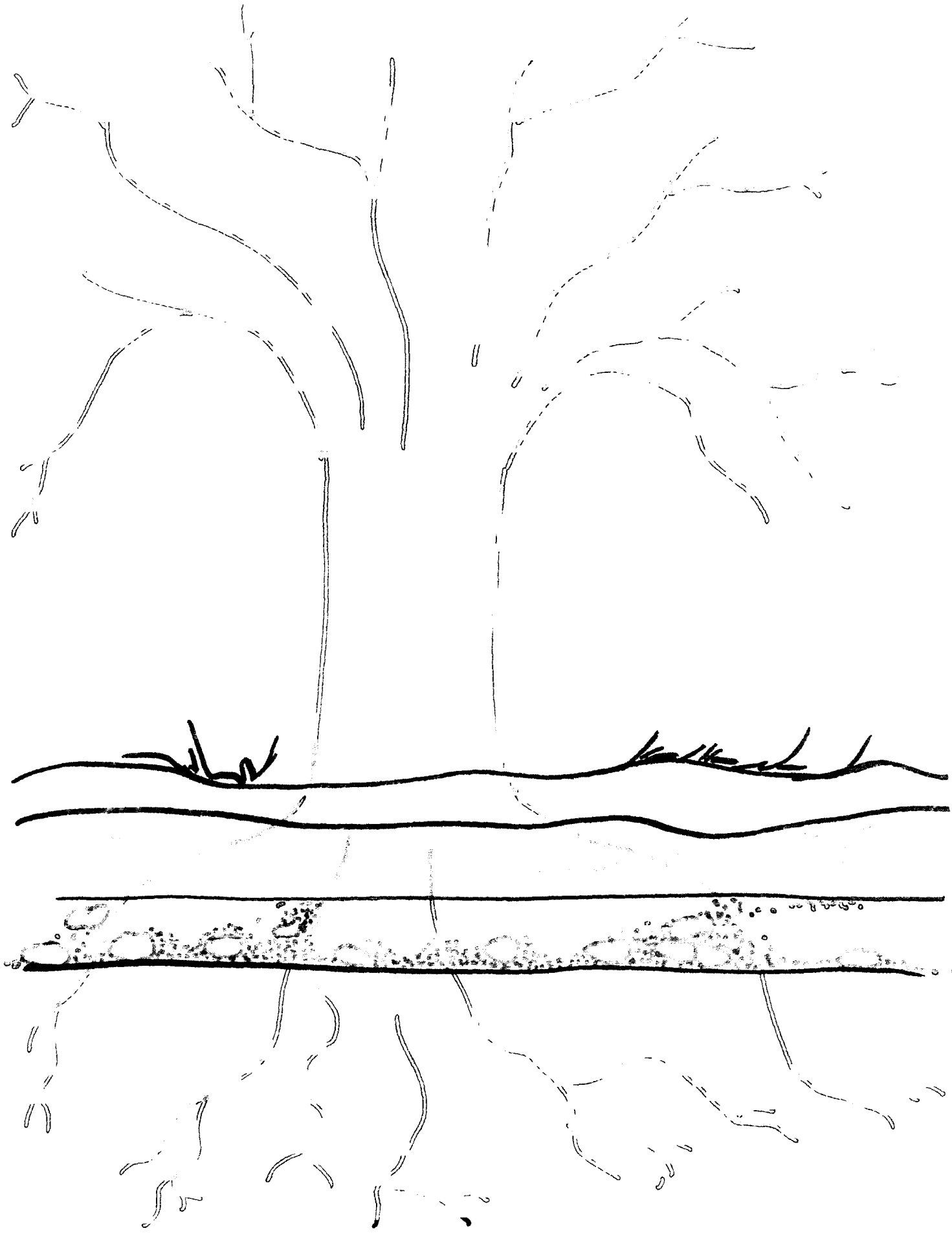
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ.
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל וֵאלֹהֵי לֵאָה.
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֶלְיוֹן,
גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל,
וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אָבוֹת וְאִמָּהוֹת,
וּמֵבִיא גּוֹאֵל לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.
מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמָגֵן.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְעֶזְרַת שָׂרָה.

BARUCH atah Adonai Eloheinu v'Eloheiavoteinu v'imoteinu.
Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak v'Elohei Yaakov.
Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rivkah, Elohei Rachel v'Elohei Lei-ah.
Ha-El hagadol hagibor v'hanora, El elyon,
gomeil chasadim tovim, v'koneih hakol.
v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot,
umeiviy g'ulah liv'neiv'neibem l'maan sh'mo b'ahavah.
Melech ozeir u'moshia u'magen.
Baruch atah Adonai, magein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.

Drawing Prompt:

Our ancestors , the people who lived before us, continue to affect us, grow with us and nourish us, like a Tree of Life.

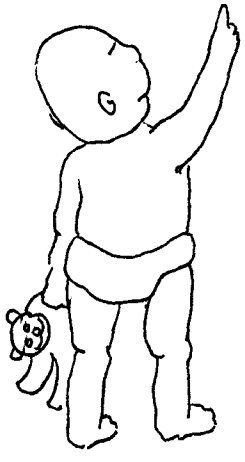
These are some of the people from my religious history, my family history and from other places in my life, who nourish me and who continue to shape me.



ATAH gibor l'olam, Adonai,	אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי.
m'chayeih hakol (meitim) atah,	מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל (מֵתִים) אַתָּה,
rav l'hoshia	רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.
WINTER – Mashiv haruach umorid hagashem	מַשִׁיב הָרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגָּשֶׁם
SUMMER – Morid hatal.	מוֹרִיד הַטַּל.
M'chalkeil chayim b'chesed,	מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד,
m'chayeih hakol (meitim)	מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל (מֵתִים)
b'rachamim rabim,	בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים,
someich noflim,	סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים,
v'rofei cholim,	וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים,
umatir asurim,	וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים,
um'kayeim emunato lishenei afar.	וּמְקַיֵּם אֱמוּנָתוֹ לִישֵׁנֵי עָפָר.
Mi chamocha baal g'vurot	מִי כָמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת
umi domeh lach,	וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָּךְ,
melech meimit um'chayeh	מֶלֶךְ מֵמִית וּמְחַיֶּה
umatzmiach y'shuah.	וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.
V'ne'eman ata l'hachayot	וְנֶאֱמָן אַתָּה לְהַחֲיוֹת
hakol (meitim).	הַכֹּל (מֵתִים).
Baruch ata Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
m'chayeh hakol (meitim).	מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל (מֵתִים)

Drawing Prompt:

In all the difficult place and ways in life, these are some of the ways that God shows God's strength, might and protection.



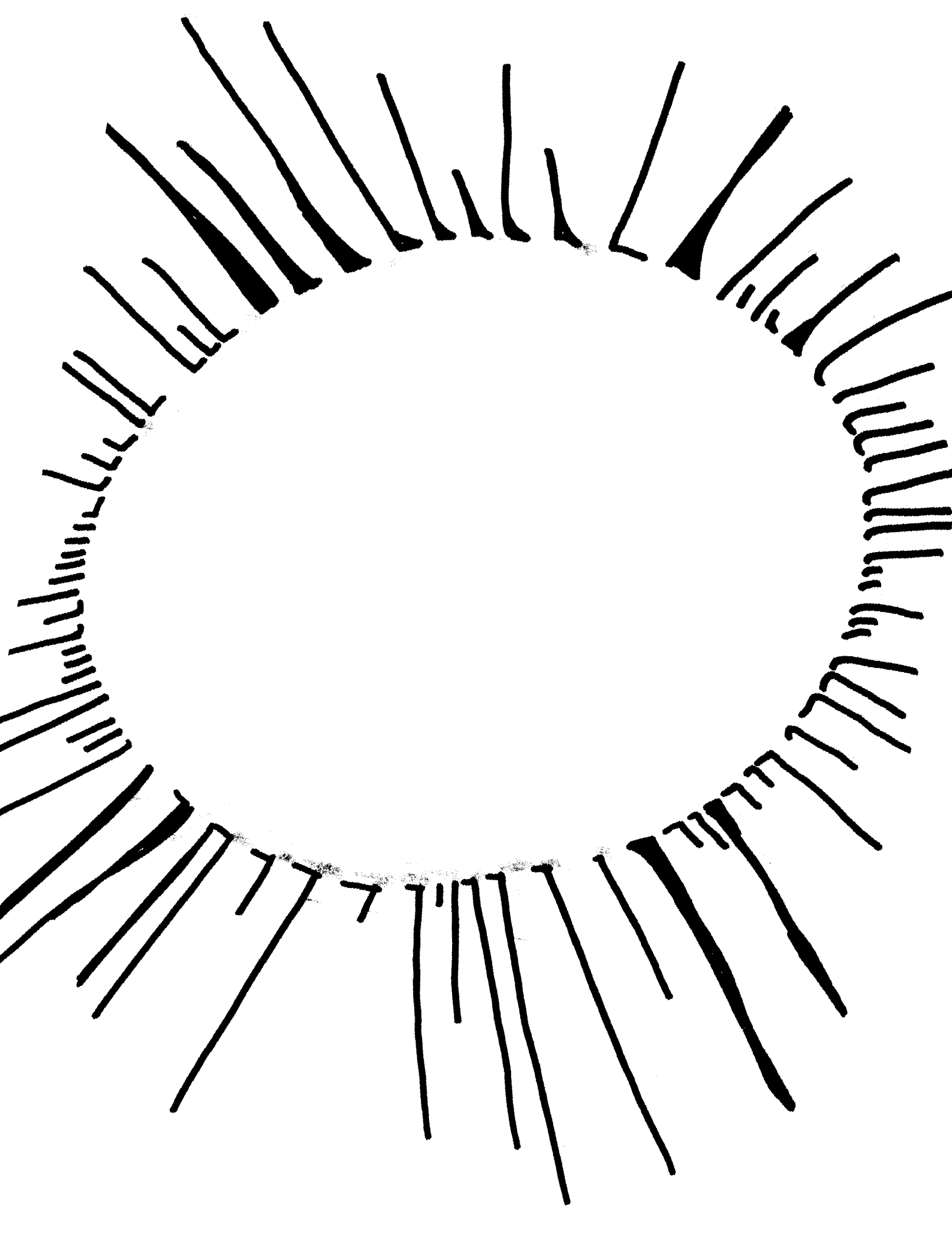
During evening services include:

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ וּקְדוֹשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם
יְהַלְלוּכָה, סֶלָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

ATAH kadosh v'shimcha kadosh uk'doshim b'chol yom
y'hal'lucha, selah. Baruch atah, Adonai, Ha-E hakadosh.

Drawing Prompt:

This is something really holy that not everyone would necessarily notice or think of as holy. I treasure and believe in its holiness.



Shalom Rav

שָׁלוֹם רָב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ תָּשִׂים לְעוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אָדוֹן לְכָל הַשָּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בִּשְׁלוֹמֶךָ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁלוֹם.

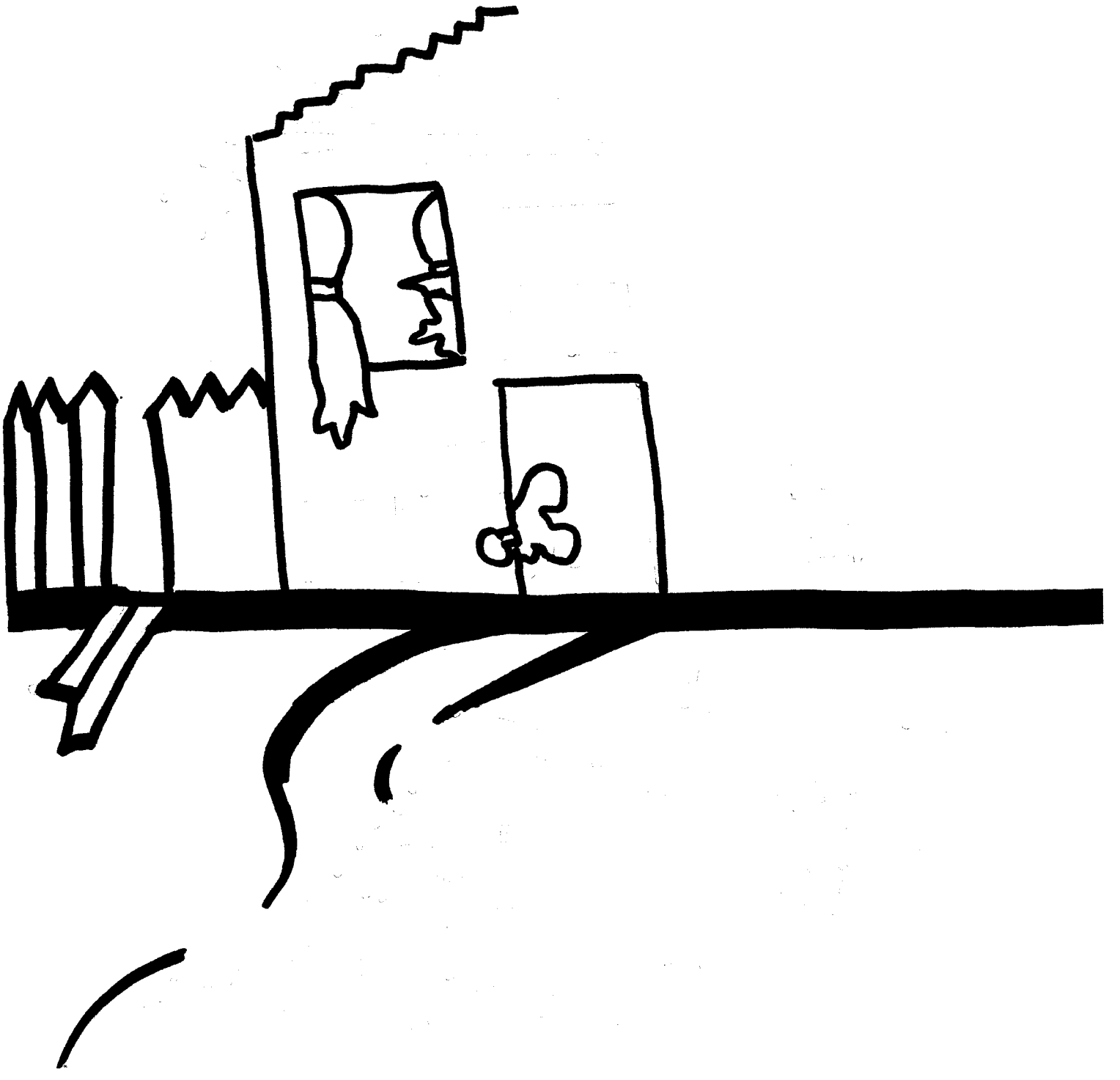
SHALOM RAV al Yisrael amcha tasim l'olam, ki atah hu Melech Adon l'chol hashalom. V'tov b'einecha l'vareich et amcha Yisrael b'chol eit uv'chol shah bish'lomecha.
Baruch atah, Adonai, ham'vareich et amo Yisrael bashalom.

Drawing prompt:

This world is not perfect. As humans we have the opportunity to help repair parts of the world where we can make a difference in the lives of others.

Where are some places that need help in this picture?

Where are some places that need Shalom, peace, in this world?



Yih'yu l'ratzon imrei fi	יִהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי
v'hegyon libi l'fanecha,	וְהֶגְיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ,
Adonai tzuri v'go-ali.	יְיָ צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי.

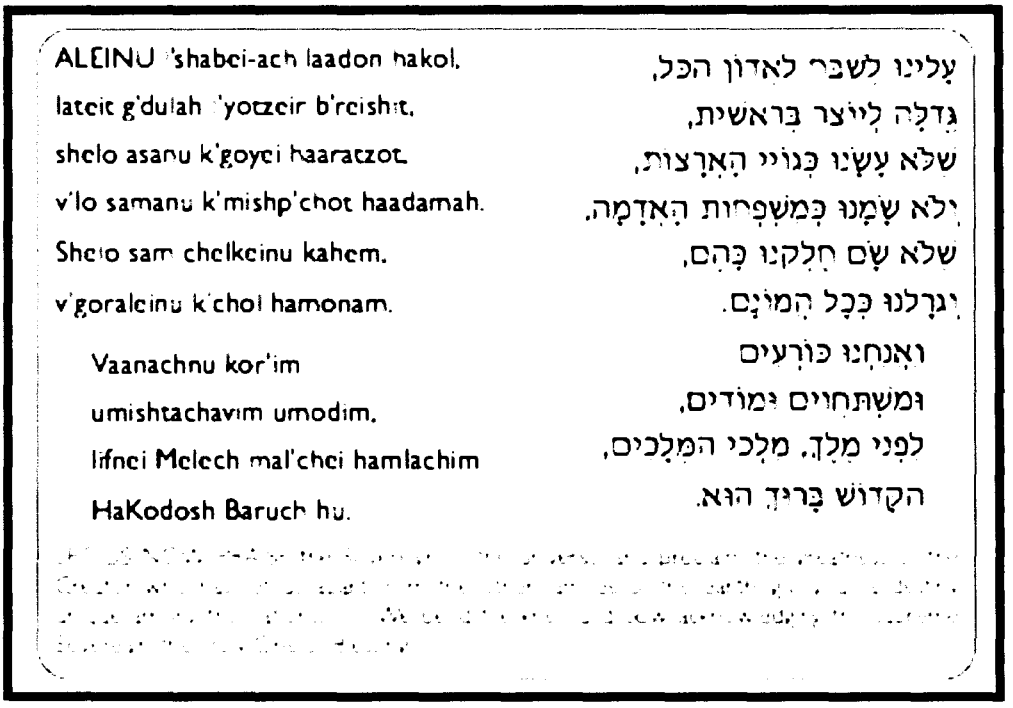
Osch shalom bimromav,	עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו,
hu yaasch shalom alcinu,	הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
v'al kol Yisrael, v'al kol	וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
v'imru: Amen	וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

Drawing Prompt:

There are a lot of people in this world who need healing: in body, in mind, in soul, from release of worry, pain, addiction, abandonment, divorce, loss, sickness, and need for love.

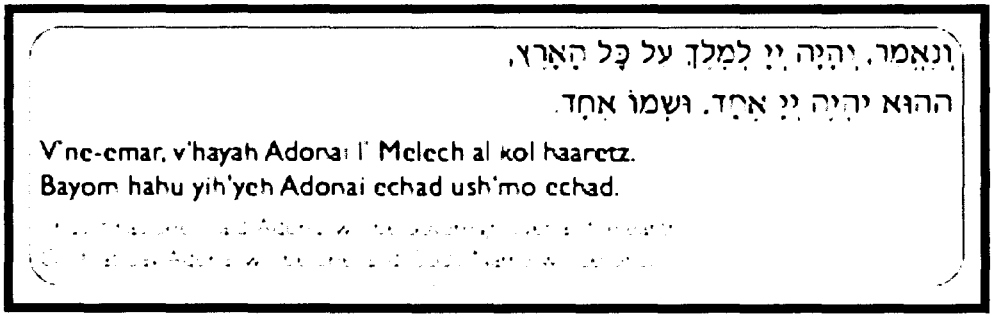
How do we show them that we care?

How do we include the people in need and our own needs and hurts in the prayers and love of our community?



ALEINU l'shabei-ach laadon hakol,
lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit,
shelo asanu k'goyei haaratzot,
v'lo samanu k'mishp'chot haadamah,
Shelo sam chelkeinu kahem,
v'goraleinu k'chol hamonam.
Vaanachnu kor'im
umishtachavim umodim,
lifnei Melech mal'chei hamlachim
HaKodosh Baruch hu.

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת,
וְלֹא שָׂמָנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה,
שֶׁלֹּא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ כָּהֶם,
וְגֹרָלֵנוּ כְּכָל הֲמוֹנָם.
וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים,
לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ, מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

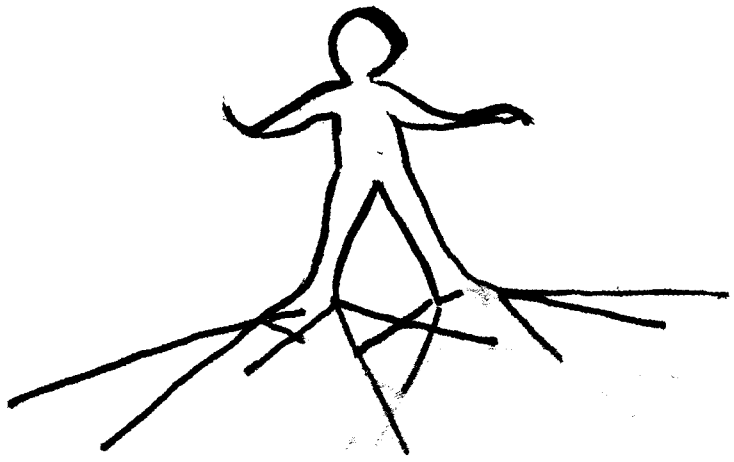


וְנֶאֱמַר, וְהָיָה יְיָ לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ,
הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְיָ אֶחָד, וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

V'ne-emar, v'hayah Adonai l' Melech al kol haaretz.
Bayom hahu yih'yeh Adonai echad ush'mo echad.

Drawing prompt:

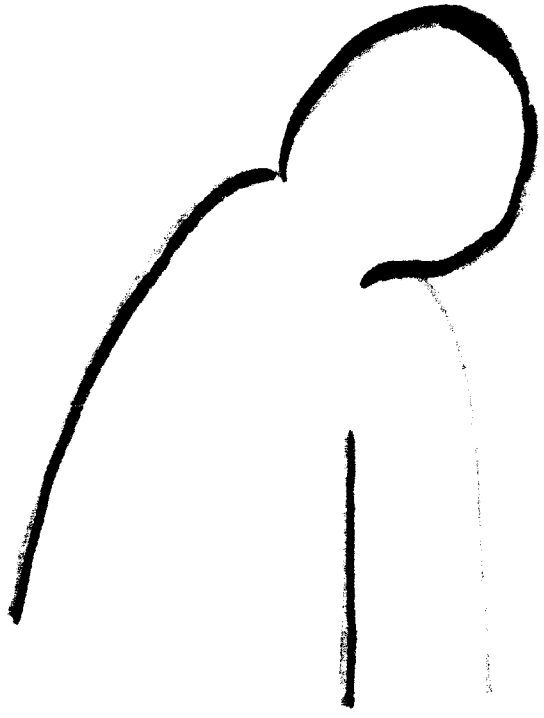
We rise and we talk about how we are chosen in this prayer. I have been chosen for many things in this life. I have choices about the person I want to be and places I want to go in my life.



YITGADAL v'yitkadash sh'mei raba.	יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
B'alma di v'ra chirutei,	בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ,
v'yamlich malchutei,	וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ
b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon	בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael,	וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
baagala uviz'man kariv. V'im'ru: Amen.	בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.
Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam	יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם
ul'almei almaya. Yitbarach v'yishtabach	וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא. יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח,
v'yitpaar v'yitromam v'yitnasei,	וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal	וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל
sh'mei d'Kud'sha B'rich Hu,	שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא
l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,	לְעֵלָּא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,
tushb'chata v'nechemata, daamiran	תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא, דַּאֲמִירָן
b'alma. V'imru: Amen.	בְּעָלְמָא. וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.
Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya.	יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.	וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
V'imru: Amen.	וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.
Osch shalom bimromav.	עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו
Hu yaasch shalom aleinu.	הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
v'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen	וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Drawing prompt:

This is how I remember those who have died in order to keep their spirit and memory alive around me.



This Visual Siddur Belongs To:

Created in the Year: _____ At Congregation : _____

Please treat this work of art as a sacred text containing the name of God and the visual expressions of someone's soul.

** DRAFT EDITION **

PLEASE CONSULT WITH THE ARTIST BEFORE REPRINTING

Created and Compiled by: Miriam Pauline Terlinchamp

PART V: Conclusion

This thesis was a capstone project in the best sense of the term. The research officially began in the Spring of 2009, approximately a year from the completion of this work. Yet, the collection of the ideas and information within this work started well before that time. The questions asked herein could not have been posed without the education of HUC-JIR. The compilation of this work served as an opportunity to revisit many of the teachings I have found valuable over the years, as well as subjects I wanted to learn about but did not pursue in classes. More importantly, this capstone thesis provided an opportunity to explore the relationship between my rabbinical school education and Jewish beliefs along with my passion for visual art. Knowing the relationship between these personal preferences has allowed me to grow spiritually. I will enter the rabbinate with a firm sense of how to best utilize these skills to my advantage. No longer will I need to leave one part of myself behind. With this research I have joined art and Jewish worship together. Perhaps, it is just the beginning for the communal world, but for my rabbinate and myself this capstone project provided a foundation with which to enter the greater Jewish world.

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