

**Individual Creative Liturgy Within the Reform Movement
1965-1985**

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Digest

While the development of creative liturgy is a well-known phenomenon, there has been no attempt to systematically study a large body of creative services. This thesis analyzes approximately 850 creative Shabbat, High Holiday, holiday and life cycle services written by Reform rabbis and lay people for use in Reform communities over a twenty-year period. By way of introduction to the actual study of the services, several important areas are explored in the first chapter. The nature of worship, ritual and liturgical change is one area examined. A brief overview of religious life in America is given, focusing on the major changes in the structure of and attitudes toward institutional religion in the past twenty years. In addition to a discussion of religion in general, specific developments in Protestantism and Catholicism are pointed out, focusing in particular on issues pertaining to worship. Finally, the development of prayerbooks in the Reform movement is examined, with an attempt to understand the liturgists' major areas of concern as well as their motivation for instituting changes and the implications of the innovations made. With this background, the services themselves can be more fully examined and analyzed.

In each category of services, certain key questions are asked. The creative services are studied in terms of the traditional liturgical texts that they incorporate, the sources used, the music that is selected and the major themes that are stressed. The way that the creative liturgists understand the nature of Shabbat or a particular holiday or life cycle event

is another central consideration. The comparison between the normative Reform liturgy and the creative liturgies is an important area of concern in this thesis. Similarities and differences in terms of the use of traditional liturgical text and structure, the themes emphasized and the image of God conveyed are highlighted in particular.

The observations made about the creative services based on the above areas of investigation are analyzed in terms of four particular issues. When it is possible to ascertain, there is an attempt to determine how creative liturgy changed over the twenty-year period. The self-definition of the worshipping community as it emerges from these services is another primary issue considered. The view of history that is integrated into the liturgical celebration and the image of God that is communicated through these services are two final subjects that are addressed. By focusing on these issues, the creative services help provide insight into the worship experience of many communities in the Reform movement and highlight the feelings, concerns and goals of these communities.

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Preface

The past two decades have seen the growth of a body of liturgy known as creative services, services written by rabbis for use in their communities as a supplement to or replacement of the official liturgy. While a prayerbook is often the work of an organization, compiled over an extended period, and is usually in use for many years, a creative service compiled by an individual is both produced more rapidly, and is more ephemeral in nature. Thus it will tend to reflect with better accuracy the concerns of a particular period, responding to new ideas and trends with greater spontaneity and flexibility. Such services are thus a valuable resource for understanding the ideological currents of the age in which they are written. The creative services will be examined with an attempt to see how they reflect the turbulent and revolutionary events of the past two decades.

Creative services can also provide valuable insight into the communities that worship from them. The worshippers' feelings, concerns and doubts about themselves, the world and Judaism may emerge from these services, helping to provide a clear image of the identity of the worshipping community. Again, because the services are not compiled for long term use, they may reflect the identity of the worshipping community in a more immediate and direct fashion than does the standard liturgy. While the standard liturgy provides insight into the Reform movement as a whole, an examination of creative liturgy is a means to gain insight into individuals and worshipping communities that make up the movement. The attempt to

understand the worshippers who use these creative services will be a focus of this thesis.

Since creative liturgy represents at some level a rejection of the standard liturgy, it will be very important to analyze the similarities and differences between them. The question of the motivation behind the compiling of creative services is an important one. Creative services may simply represent the desire for innovation and experimentation. Alternatively, they may represent a rebellion against the standard liturgy or a desire to emphasize certain themes and ideas that are not found in the standard prayerbook. By looking at the use of traditional liturgical texts and structures, as well as what is retained and abandoned from the standard prayerbook, the feelings of the worshipper toward tradition, and the ideas found in the official prayerbook, can be ascertained.

Methodological Considerations

Prior to discussing the services themselves, it is important to have a uniform set of definitions for certain terminology that will be commonly utilized. For the purposes of this thesis, the following definitions of key terms will apply:

Liturgy: The collective body of texts used for public worship.

Service: The written text used for a particular occasion of worship.

Prayer: One of the constituent elements of the service.

Worship: The religious activities (speech, song, etc.) that take place based on the written text.

Traditional Liturgical Texts: A prayer or prayer element that is part of the standard Orthodox or Reform Prayerbooks.

The method of collecting these services should also be clearly stated. The over 850 services to be studied fall into the categories of Shabbat, holiday and life cycle services. They have been acquired from several different sources. Approximately 150 letters were sent out to all rabbis residing in America who had written to the CCAR newsletter during this period in order to publicize the availability of a particular service. Slightly over fifty percent of the rabbis responded by sending material that they had written. Other rabbis known to be active in the area of liturgical development were solicited. In addition the collection at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the private collection of Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, professor of liturgy at HUC-JIR, and the collection of Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, Director of the Joint Commission of Religious Living, will be utilized. This material was supplemented by individual services acquired from fellow students, rabbis, and lay people.

In order to be included for study as part of this thesis, a service must have been written under supervision of a Reform rabbi (with or without the involvement of laity or youth). It must have been intended for use in a Reform community (synagogue, home or retreat setting), or as part of a broader communal celebration. It should be stated from the outset that in no way is the material to be studied comprehensive, or representative of creative services done during this period. The claims made will apply exclusively to the services in my possession.

The limits of what can be determined should also be pointed out. Clearly, the impetus for the creation of a service will not always be clear, nor will the response given to it be discernible. Other important details such as the use of music, the arrangement of the room, and the involvement of lay readers is also impossible to determine in many cases. In a few

instances rabbis included very helpful comments about the implementation of a service. These will be utilized when available, but they are few and far between.

The services will be analyzed from a number of different perspectives, as was indicated above. The technical aspects of the service will be examined: how Hebrew is used, what is done with the liturgical rubrics, what sources are drawn upon and how the services have changed over time. As important, however, will be to view the services as one reflection of a "religious community in search of self-definition through a life of prayer."¹ In his concluding chapter to *Beyond the Text*, Lawrence Hoffman outlines four questions that are important in studying liturgy. These questions contribute to the study of liturgy in a holistic sense, not just as a literary study of a given text. It is these questions that I will attempt to apply to the creative services, with the aim of understanding how a community strives for self-definition through prayer. The first question to ask is how the liturgy defines the world (and the relationship of the worshippers to the world) for those who ritualize. The second area of investigation involves identifying changes in worship practice (changes which may well have resulted from changes in the worshipers' self-perception). A third area to analyze is the sacred myth, the significant history presented by the liturgy. The nature of the divine-human relationship that is depicted constitutes the final area of investigation. Consideration of these questions (the use of a holistic approach) will hopefully enable us to see beneath the surface of the creative services.

¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* (Bloomington, 1987), 178.

Liturgy should concern itself with the liturgical field as a whole because only there is the meaning behind the text made evident to the worshipers...Toward that end, the holistic study of liturgy may begin with the text but must eventually go beyond it—to the people, to their meanings, to their assumed constructs and to their ritualized patterns that make their world uniquely their own.²

Hopefully, through a holistic approach to the study of twenty years of creative liturgy, we can begin to understand how Jews have understood themselves and their world, with an eye toward what this tells us about Jewish identity and its relationship to prayer today.

² *Ibid.*, 181-2.

Chapter One: Introductory Considerations.

A proper study of creative liturgy cannot take place in a void for the motivation for creating liturgy and the specific way that the liturgy is formulated are connected to larger issues and concerns. This chapter will examine some of these broader issues in an attempt to provide a framework from which to study creative liturgy. The nature of ritual and liturgy will be one area of study, focusing on the question of liturgical change which is central to any analysis of creative liturgy. Religious life in America over the past twenty years in particular will be examined as well, for the growth of creative liturgy cannot be divorced from the cataclysmic events of these years. Finally, the development of Reform prayerbooks will be reviewed. While creative liturgical endeavors are a reflection of contemporary reality, and represent a break from the standard liturgy, they are also an integral part of a broader history of Reform. Consideration of these topics will provide the necessary background and focus for the study of specific areas of creative liturgy.

Ritual and Liturgy

Ritual and liturgy are not synonymous; the latter is rather a subcategory of the former. An understanding of ritual will thus help to provide a context from which to investigate liturgy. Ritual is a complex phenomenon, and uniformity of definition is difficult to achieve. For the purposes of this thesis, it will be sufficient to define in a very general way a few of the key elements involved in the ritual process. A definition centering around the functions of ritual will be most constructive in considering questions pertaining to liturgy.

Ritual is a central means by which we make meaning of the world. This structuring of meaning involves many facets. Ritual reinforces categories ¹ and helps to define and form communities. ² It strengthens the role of individuals within the communities, and "gives immediacy to certain vital ideas on which society is based, through symbol and drama." ³ Defining a system of meaning involves helping individuals step over the boundaries of change, as Barbara Hargrove points out. While ritual can be used for ideological purposes ("to control the moods, values, sentiments and behavior for the good of the group"), it also serves as a form of revitalization. By revitalization, Hargrove is referring to the establishment of a new identity for society, "a way of creating, guiding, and incorporating social change." ⁴ This multiplicity of functions is best summarized by reference to the integrative nature of ritual.

It brings people together in ritual reenactment of their shared understanding of the structure of their world. . . . It functions to integrate society in the shared behavior it involves, as well as the meanings that behavior symbolizes. ⁵

By focusing on *meaning* it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the importance of ritual centers around the *content* that it presents. As Grimes points out, however, being able to identify the meaning of a given ritual is not necessarily the most important way to judge its efficacy. Ritual is not only comprised of words; it does not "originate solely in, nor is it exhaustively explainable by, conscious actions and theological

¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* (Bloomington, 1987), 38.

² Meredith McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context* (Belmont, 1981), 151 based on Emile Durkheim.

³ Orrin E. Klapp, *Ritual and Cult* (Washington D.C., 1957), 12, 29.

⁴ Barbara Hargrove, *The Sociology of Religion* (Arlington Heights, IL, 1979), 36-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

rationale."⁶ Lawrence Hoffman carries this idea even further by stressing that ritual is not automatically derived from our theological formulations, but may in fact shape them. He says:

For in the end our ritualizing *articulates* structure, by which I mean it does more than symbolically portray the shapes and ideas we have already been taught to believe. It demonstrates them in advance of our believing them, actually bringing them into being anew with each liturgical presentation, until we cannot imagine life without them. *Ritual is first, not last, in the chain of belief formation* (emphasis added).⁷

This leads to an obvious question about the role of liturgy in the ritual process since it is customary to associate liturgy with text, which is comprised of words that convey contentful meaning. It might be tempting to speak of liturgy as that aspect of ritual which centers around language, but Hoffman argues against this narrow definition in favor of a broader, more "holistic" conceptualization. He describes liturgies as "acted out rituals involving prescribed texts, actions, timing, persons, and things, all coming together in a shared statement of communal identity by those who live with, through, and by them."⁸ Liturgy, he points out, is not primarily a literary matter, since it comprises the core of *worship* which is not at all a literary activity. Worshipping is *not* reading. Instead, he argues, words can have a performative function, bringing a certain reality into being, establishing a meaningful past and imagining a particular future.⁹

This is not an idea unique to Jewish thinkers. Hilary Smith, writing for *Worship*, recognizes that liturgists cannot automatically assume that

⁶ Ronald Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington D.C., 1982), 60.

⁷ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer--Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C., 1988), 148.

⁸ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 6, 3.

⁹ Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer*, 225-242.

the meaning that they see in the words will be the same meaning for those present, for much of what happens in a liturgical celebration goes far beyond the contentful meaning of the words. Smith writes:

the problem of developing a meaningful liturgy for a given parish or institution involves much more than saying prayers in the vernacular and performing actions as they were performed in some past golden age of liturgy.¹⁰

Peter Schillaci, in arguing that liturgy within the Catholic church needs to have a wider appeal through a variety of arts writes that

Liturgy is prior to theology, at least when we consider that one can be a christian without theology, but not without worship. Liturgy is subject to many of the unconscious structures which afflict theology. Worship has suffered from the tyranny of words at the hands of those for whom all reality must be mediated by language.¹¹

The need to conceive of the liturgical experience as more than a mere recitation of a given text would thus seem to apply to Christian as well as to Jewish experiences of worship.

Within this broader understanding of liturgy it is also possible to see a spectrum of functions that worship has served over time and in different religions. Hoffman points out that in Christianity worship has traditionally served to convey truth, while in Judaism it has traditionally operated as a way to create limits. The modern age has challenged the ability of both Christianity and Judaism to fulfill these functions. Thus, in the present age Hoffman advocates viewing liturgy and worship as ways of making meaning, helping the individual create order in an increasingly turbulent world.

¹⁰ Hilary Smith, "Meaning in Worship," *Worship* 40, no.5 (May 1966): 288.

¹¹ Peter Schillaci, "Celebrating Change: The Liturgy," *Worship* 44, no.2 (Feb. 1970): 66-7.

If people come to pray today, it is surely no longer because, in the main, they want as Christians to learn eternal truths or because as Jews they want to obey yet another set of limits. . . . Other truths beckon; other laws summon. We can be secular through and through. . . . But astoundingly, Americans still come to worship, if not for truths and limits, then for something else. That something else is the satisfaction of the urge for order, form, coherence--what I have called the aesthetic side of life, and what I shall hereafter describe as the will to find meaning in a world that is oversaturated in truths and laws, but still threatens (more than over) to break down into chaotic emptiness, meaningless entropy. In our age worship serves to demonstrate that, even when chaos seems overwhelming, we can find meaning that sustains us.¹²

The function of worship today is thus integrally bound to the character and nature of modernity. The realization that the functions of worship have developed and changed over the course of history as society itself changes, raises the broader issue of liturgical innovation. If worship and liturgy are expressive of human behavior and operate as ways to establish systems of meaning, than change in the liturgical process is to be expected over a period of time. The issue of change is not that straightforward, however. On the one hand, ritual "need not be exciting in order to be effective."¹³ It need not always be different and new in order to be meaningful. In fact the opposite might be true because change can challenge the assumptions that individuals have made about the structuring of a world order, leading to insecurity and tension. On the other hand, if liturgy is a way of making the world meaningful, then the meaning-making process is going to change with new historical and sociological factors. Individuals involved in liturgical change must maintain a fine balance between these two forces. Hoffman provides a way of viewing change that

¹² Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer*, 129-130.

¹³ Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, 44.

strives for this equilibrium, and is in keeping with the broader concept of liturgy that he has outlined.

The real cause behind novel rites is a community's decision to see itself as descendant from a particular community of the past, on one hand, yet independent in its own right on the other. The first factor is expressed through the rite it inherits and upon which it builds. The second can be seen in the ways it goes about constructing its own unique definition of self, through the way it decides to pray. . . . The liturgy of Reform Jews . . . provides an excellent case in point. Instead of treating this liturgy as literature, we would do well to chart its development against the background of a new identity structure demanded by the entry of the Jews into the modern world of Western culture. . . . In general, with each change in the perceived social distance from others, there came also a change in Jewish liturgy.¹⁴

Hoffman makes it clear that if liturgy is to be viewed as more than text, then a social and historical perspective is necessary in order to understand the forces that shaped a particular liturgy. Prior to studying the liturgy (creative or otherwise) of a given community, a historical context is necessary if one wishes to approach liturgy holistically. A brief overview of key events in the religious life of America will provide the background necessary for understanding liturgical development and creativity among Reform Jews.

Religious Life In America: 1920-1985

While the primary focus of investigation will be the twenty years from 1965 to 1985, a few observations about certain key events in the years from 1920 to 1960 are in order. These years will not be dealt with comprehensively, but with attention to those trends relevant for liturgical

¹⁴ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 58-9.

and ritual development and change.¹⁵ 1920 is not chosen as a starting point arbitrarily, but because Ahlstrom depicts it as a decade in which events "threw American Protestantism into a state of disarray from which it would never recover."¹⁶ The awakening of previously dormant conservative voices, the rise of biblical criticism and liberal theology, scientific advances, and major social changes such as large scale immigration and urban growth, altered the long held dominance of American Protestantism. The decline of American Protestantism continued throughout the ensuing years and transformed the religious landscape of America.

The major ideological development of the following decade was the rise of Neo-orthodoxy. In very general terms, Neo-orthodox thinkers challenged the optimistic liberal assumptions of progress that had dominated earlier years with an increasing awareness of human finitude and purposelessness. Following the depression and World War I, this sober reassessment was not surprising, nor was the newly blossoming involvement in social issues. "The critique as a whole adds up to the single complaint that theological liberalism left men spiritually naked and morally unprepared in an age of depression, despair and international violence."¹⁷ It should be noted as well that one of the many results of Neo-orthodoxy was its influence on a liturgical renewal movement in the Catholic and Protestant traditions. This movement, emphasizing the role of the laity and criticizing ancient ceremonialism, was the beginning of liturgical renewal in the United States.

¹⁵ The following observations are drawn from Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, 1972).

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 909.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 945.

Following World War II, the character of religion in America changed once again. This was the age of the flight to suburbia of large numbers of people in search of status and affluence. Interest in liturgical renewal continued during these years (particularly the desire to broaden the involvement of the laity), but it is unquestionable that social activities brought people to church and synagogue more readily than did the opportunity for a worship experience of any kind. Church and synagogue membership was no longer stressed primarily for its *religious* significance but because it affirmed an American way of life. Religious identification was equated with American culture and behavior. This was all to change during the sixties. Although it can easily be seen that religious life in America was never monolithic, no changes were as radical and far-reaching as those that occurred in the decade of the sixties.

The sixties witnessed a breakdown of the national religious culture that had pervaded American life.¹⁸ The sixties are remembered as a time of protest and challenge, an era in which previously held assumptions about the nation, the family, and religion were cast aside and replaced by a wholly different sense of the individual's responsibility and obligation. Roof and McKinney identify three general trends during this era: a loss of faith in American institutions, a diffusion of values and an emphasis on personal self-fulfillment as a result of disenchantment with the American way of life. This last development was especially significant for religion in that it resulted in an emphasis on the experiential, as religion became a primarily focused on the individual experience. Furthermore, it led to a view of the

¹⁸ Wade Clark Roof & William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion* (New Brunswick, 1987), 31.

individual in opposition to the institution, with the latter obligated to the former.¹⁹ While the events of the sixties and their cataclysmic impact is well known, Ahlstrom asks a too infrequently considered question that is of central importance: Why did these overwhelming changes occur specifically in the sixties? Within a more general historical overview, he lists five specific reasons.²⁰ Unregulated urban growth created severe social problems that could not be coped with. Mass migrations led to changes in those factors that had previously hindered equality of participation. The growth of science and technology produced seemingly unending wonders, but at the same time awareness of the nuclear threat, overpopulation and the Holocaust made people conscious of a threatened future. Finally, the Vietnam war was a key catalyst in the loss of confidence in American institutions. The impact of these developments on religion was a growing view of the church as an obstacle to change, irrelevant to the social reality of the times. In addition, the relevance of religion was questioned as evidence of God's love seemed increasingly harder to find in a chaotic world. The decreasing importance of organized religion in the life of the individual continued to manifest itself in the seventies when the collapse of mainline religion became fully evident.

The greatest trend of the seventies was the continuation of the process of individualization or voluntarism.

Today choice means more than simply having an option among religious alternatives; it involves religion as an option itself and opportunity to draw selectively off a variety of traditions in the pursuit of the self.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 46-50.

²⁰ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 1091.

²¹ Roof & McKinney, *American Mainline Religion*, 40.

The center, or religious mainline, faced the possibility of collapse due to pull by both the right and the left, as well as an inability to bridge the gap between secular and religious world views.

As the gap widens between religious and secular world views, it becomes more difficult for the liberal faiths to bridge the two by means of creative synthesis. The result, the "collapse of the middle," involves a loss of credibility and persuasiveness within the larger context of religious and ideological alternatives. Lacking a unified transcendent vision of personal and social existence, the culture-affirming faiths suffer an identity diffusion and loss of appeal.²²

Roof traces the collapse of the mainline to demographic changes, shifts in value commitments, certain institutional policies, and the diffuse religious style of the liberal religions. Many of these factors are a result of the events of the sixties. The collapse of liberal religious institutions, the growth of conservative religion and the trend toward privatization all indicated a major shift in the pattern of religious commitment.²³

Another major indicator of a shift in the pattern of commitment was the popularity of "new" religions. The prominence of the new religions in the sixties came as somewhat of a surprise. Most people had foreseen the rise of increased secularization, which was believed to militate against a renewed search for religious meaning.²⁴ There have been many studies on the new religions; one of the most often quoted is *The New Religious Consciousness*, edited by Charles Glock and Robert Bellah. Glock and Bellah conducted a study centered in the San Francisco Bay Area, from which they concluded:

²² Wade Clark Roof, "Mainline Religion in Transition," in Mary Douglas & Steven Tipton, eds., *Religion and America: Spiritual Life in a Secular Age* (Boston, 1982), 138ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁴ Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago, 1976), 127.

While belief in a personal God is on the decline, a new self-awareness and spiritual sensitivity are finding expression in the lives of large numbers of people, especially among the young. . . . [The alternative religions] are powerful reactions to values and ways of living that we have ceased to satisfy, let alone inspire. Separately and together they are speaking in languages we do not at once comprehend, calling for a reorientation of national, social and personal goals, and of the means of reaching them.²⁵

The range of alternatives sought out is clear simply from the table of contents of the Glock & Bellah volume: Hare Krishna, Healthy-Happy-Holy Organization, the Human Potential Movement, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the Church of Satan, are only a few available options. Wuthnow labels the new religious atmosphere, emphasizing experimentation and the experiential as "religious populism." Religious populism is characterized by the validation of the popular will, fluidity of standards, extreme diversity, resentment of intellectuals and the treatment of people as part of a mass audience.²⁶ Clearly, this is a description of a radically different religious orientation. The two issues pertaining to this new religious outlook that need to be considered are the impetus for the turn to alternative religions, and the effect that this development has had on the religious mainline.

Glock and Bellah have already indicated that the turn to experimental religions should be viewed as part of a larger search for meaning and fulfillment, as well as a rejection of the path charted by society. Bellah further elaborates when he speaks of the deterioration of utilitarian individualism and biblical tradition in the sixties, leading to a new basis for

²⁵ Charles Y. Glock & Robert N. Bellah, eds. *The New Religious Consciousness* (Berkeley, 1976), ix.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

structuring a meaningful existence.²⁷ Furthermore, the churches did a better job of responding to the political aspects of counterculture (which could be adapted to their teachings of social justice) than to the spiritual aspects.

The demand for immediate, powerful and deep religious experience, which was part of the turn away from future-oriented instrumentalism toward present meaning and fulfillment, could on the whole not be met by the religious bodies. The major Protestant churches in the course of generations of defensive struggle against secular rationalism had taken on some of the color of the enemy. Moralism and verbalism and the almost complete absence of ecstatic experience characterized the middle-class Protestant churches. . . . The Catholic church finally decided to recognize the value of the modern world just when American young people were beginning to find it valueless. . . . Thus the religion of the counterculture was by and large not biblical. . . . [I]ts deepest influences came from Asia.²⁸

Robert Wuthnow, in another well-known study, summarizes some of the factors leading to religious experimentation.

The recent religious experimentation appears to have been facilitated by, among other social and cultural conditions, relatively high levels of education and economic prosperity, cultural pluralism, belief systems giving the individual a sense of responsibility for discovering his own conceptions of ultimacy, and a changing relation of young people to the larger society. These factors have probably functioned as preconditions making religious experimentation possible, while other factors, perhaps more unique to the person, have influenced the choice of specific experiments.²⁹

The effect of the youth on the rise of new religions cannot be underestimated. There was a feeling among the youth of marginality and

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 337.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 340-1.

²⁹ Robert Wuthnow, *Experimentation in American Religion* (Berkeley, 1978), 193.

alienation. The churches failed to ground social activism and the search for self in their identity and purpose as religious institutions. As a result, the youth sought other means, such as alternative religions, for personal fulfillment.³⁰ While this trend may have begun with the youth it by no means remained there. Glock and Bellah reported in 1976 that a sizable minority of the entire population was currently aware of and attracted to at least one of the alternate groups studied.³¹

The effect of the rise of experimental religions on the mainline religious institutions has been unmistakable. They have certainly created competition for the established churches by providing a radically new and different alternative to normative religion. But they have also had a "suffusive" effect, influencing trends within the mainline.³² The calls for experimentation within the established churches, the move toward greater participation and the recognition of the importance of non-rational symbols, may well be connected to the influence of more experimental religions.

Clearly the new religions have been perceived as a hostile force in some quarters, resulting in efforts to close ranks against them and to check their progress. In other quarters, they have been welcomed as a source of revitalization to the churches. From either standpoint, it seems evident that some of the values associated with the new religions have been diffused into the religious mainstream. . . . [T]he new religions seem to have initiated a renewed interest in the experiential dimension of religion, stressing personal experience in place of doctrinal or ecclesiastical authority. . . . Put differently, the extreme nonconventionality of some of the new experiments may have

³⁰ Barbara Hargrove, *Religion for a Dislocated Generation* (Valley Forge, PA, 1980), 77-87.

³¹ Glock & Bellah, *The New Religious Consciousness*, 292.

³² Marty, *A Nation of Behavers*, 129.

"made room" for greater diversity within conventional religion.³³

Alternative religions cannot simply be dismissed as extremist options for the fringes of society, for they have made a definite impact on the mainstream as well. While the rise of alternative religions may have begun as a response to certain historical and societal events, they have by no means disappeared as an available option. In fact, Martin Marty claims that by the mid-1980's "extraordinary religion acquired an ordinary cast."³⁴ Alternative religions have become simply one more of the available options. It is likely that they will remain significant for some time in the future, and mainline religion must continue its struggle to adapt to an environment that is conducive to alternative religious expression. Each particular religion is conforming to this changed situation in a different fashion, and before making a few summary comments concerning the state of religion in America today and a prognosis for the future, it would be beneficial to consider specific developments within Protestantism and Catholicism in order to see how they have accommodated to the developments of the past twenty years.

Developments in Protestantism and Catholicism: 1965-1985

Much of what has been said to this point about "mainline religion" applies to the major liberal Protestant denominations which have typified mainline American religion for so many years, but have been losing this position with increasing rapidity. The Protestant denominations have seen a discrepancy between those professing Protestantism as their religion, and

³³ Wuthnow, *Experimentation in American Religion*, 194ff.

³⁴ Martin Marty, "Transpositions in the 1980's," in Wade Clark Roof, ed., *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science--Religion in America Today* (July 1985): 17.

those who claim membership in Protestant churches. Membership in liberal Protestant churches has declined (particularly on the part of younger more educated men), while it has risen in the conservative churches.³⁵ The reasons for this decline must be traced to both external and internal factors. The external societal factors have already been mentioned, but it would be helpful to examine a few specific circumstances uniquely applicable to Protestantism. Marty points out that one factor that contributed to this decline was the emergence of a new gap between the clergy and the laity on social issues. As the churches became more involved with issues of social justice, they lost their distinctive sense of identity, and were more removed from the members of their churches. The reasons for belonging to a mainline religious establishment became less clear cut for individuals.³⁶ Roof agrees with this assertion, claiming that Protestantism lost its sense of identity and purpose by trying to provide something for everyone.³⁷ This also explains the opposite trend: the growth of conservative Protestantism.

The desire of the various emerging groups seems to have been the establishment of a more personal religious form which could better provide individuals with meaning and purpose. . . . The basic plea was for a religious form that the dissidents claimed would give people the opportunity to find a meaningful personal faith in a rapidly changing world. . . . It was no coincidence that denominational organizations faltered at this time...The concept of being "relevant" to the current mood of society resulted in social activism. . . . Being relevant, the conservatives argued, is not a virtue of the Christian or any other faith. For them, faithfulness to historic teachings and

³⁵ Jackson Carroll *et al.*, *Religion in America--1950 to Present* (San Francisco, 1979), 13ff.

³⁶ Marty, *A Nation of Behavers*, 72ff.

³⁷ Roof, "Mainline Religion in Transition," 145.

creeds is the measure of relevance for the Christian church. . . .
The uniqueness of the faith was being ignored.³⁸

Mainline Protestant denominations appeared to be caught in the middle of rapidly changing ideologies. As a result of anti-institutionalism and a growing mood that the churches were irrelevant to the social realities, the churches tried to *become* relevant. In doing so, however, many adherents felt that the church had lost its unique mission. Furthermore, the increasing mood of individualism led to a shift from a desire for social relevance to need for personal fulfillment, and the institutions were slow to respond to this shift.

One way in which Protestant institutions did respond to the mood of the times was in the area of liturgical change. This was an era of liturgical experimentation and creativity as the churches attempted to meet the challenges posed by the quickly moving ideological currents. There were a variety of free form experiments in worship style, which eventually led to more standardized reform. The 1970's saw the revision of the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, the Lutheran *Book of Worship* and the Presbyterian *Worshipbook*, among others. These liturgies all led toward greater participation of the laity, the use of language suited to modern needs and tastes, and some variety. Liturgical change is one indication of the attempt of the Protestant church to define itself and its function for its members, and perhaps to regain a sense of purpose that it seems to have lost for its liberal adherents.

For Catholics, these twenty years have been earth shattering in dimension. Martin Marty compares the impact of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) on Catholics to the Six Day War for Jews in terms of the identity

³⁸ Carroll *et al.*, *Religion in America--1950 to Present*, 97.

questions that it raised. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), created far reaching changes that had both positive and negative results for Catholics.

The most decisive change came when Catholics decided to remove some of the behavioral and ritual props that had helped people forge identities--just at a moment when many in the cultures were signalling a need for the kind of social location that Catholicism still provided. . . . In any case, ever after, a generation of young and middle-aged Catholics began to bemoan the "identity crisis" the Church had given them; their sometimes drearily regular recitation of this problem obscured the fact that the Church had at least been able to give them an identity to have a crisis about, while much older Protestantism could no longer do that.³⁹

Vatican II revealed an attempt by the Catholic church to give a clearer statement of its identity -- an identity that the church was attempting to shape for the modern age without abandoning the sacred principles of Catholicism.

The Constitution (on the Liturgy) seeks a balance of past and present. Recognizing that pastoral concern must be paramount, admitting the worth and value of creativity and inventiveness, it seeks sound precedent in the past and speaks of an organic development or growth from the known to the unknown, from past example and instance to future forms.⁴⁰

This balance between past and present, however, is a very difficult one. Following Vatican II, and into today, the question of the authority of the church remains paramount. The era of Vatican II was characterized by resistance to authoritarian trends in all arenas (a characteristic extending to our own time). Vatican II seemed to imply a loosening of the traditional

³⁹ Marty, *A Nation of Behavers*, 66-7.

⁴⁰ Frederick McManus, "The Implementation and Goals of Liturgical Reform," *Worship* 39, no. 8 (Nov. 1965): 482.

doctrinaire stance of the church. It became obvious, however, that this loosening was only intended to proceed to a certain point, and that the church had no intention of giving up its role as the supreme authority for Catholics. This was made abundantly clear three years after Vatican II with publishing of the Humanae Vitae encyclical confirming the Vatican's stance against birth control. For many this seemed to dash the hopes of a looser, less dogmatic church that Vatican II had pointed to. The encyclical produced a conflict of identity and affiliation for those who had supported the trends indicated by Vatican II, just as Vatican II had originally produced an identity crises for more traditional Catholics.

Andrew Greeley points out that this conflict was reflected in church attendance, which dropped drastically following the birth control encyclical. Attendance continued to drop until it bottomed out sometime in the mid-seventies, when readiness to accept church teaching on sexual issues was at an all time low. At that time attendance rose *in spite of* persistent disagreement with the church, and Greeley analyzes how individual Catholics dealt with this dissonance. He finds his answer in the religious imagery used by the individual. When an individual's image of God centers around a God of love, intimacy and compassion, then this imagery seems to outweigh his or her disagreement with the official church. A compassionate God is viewed as tolerant and forgiving of dissent and is a more compelling force in drawing the individual to the church than is the inflexible establishment in keeping him or her away. "Catholics who dissent can attend church regularly because the intensity of their religious imagination (experience and imagery) cancels out the negative impact of

their ethical dissent."⁴¹ Greeley summarizes the relationship between the faith of the individual and the authority exercised by the official church:

The most obvious positive gain from the Second Vatican Council is a deepened and more self-conscious loyalty to the Catholic heritage rooted in richer and warmer experiences, images and stories of God. Loyalty and faith as a result of rejection of official church teaching? Possibly. . . . Ecclesiastical leaders should be willing at least to entertain the possibility that the laity in the experience of turning their backs on the [official church] leadership, aided and abetted by their clergy, paradoxically emerged with greater loyalty to the church, if not to the leadership, and a deeper awareness of and sensitivity to the forgiving love of God.⁴²

The implication of these conclusions for liturgical development is crucial. Greeley points out that since the role of the religious imagination is important, and may in fact bind people to the church, the church should take more seriously those works which impact the imagination, such as art and music.⁴³ This is an appeal to a broader liturgical experience, based on some of the same ideas that Hoffman advances. While Greeley is quite pessimistic about the possibility of his specific suggestion being adopted by the official church, it is clear that the past twenty years have been dominated by a variety of other ritual and liturgical changes.

The liturgical changes that have taken place in Catholicism have occurred both officially and unofficially. The movement for liturgical change in the Catholic church actually began in Europe in the opening years of the twentieth century, and had spread to the United States by the

⁴¹ Andrew M. Greeley, *American Catholics Since the Council* (Chicago, 1985), 65. See 61-65 for a complete discussion of these issues.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 211.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 222.

1930's.⁴⁴ Liturgical reform was somewhat different in this country, connected to social reform and education, among other trends. In many ways, America provided a unique contribution to the process of liturgical reform:

America can claim four interpretations and implementations of liturgical reform which later came to be taken for granted and find sanction with greater or lesser explicitness in Vatican II's Liturgy Constitution. All four, moreover, are themselves variations of one basic insight: namely that liturgical reform is self-defeating if pursued in isolation from the totality of human and Christian values and goals. In sum, things must be kept together to achieve wholeness.⁴⁵

As Dickmann and Botte point out, the "official" statement by the Vatican on liturgical change was largely influenced by the liturgical renewal movement that had begun long before Vatican II. In the years before the official pronouncement of the Second Vatican Council there were statements from official sources that indicated the nature of the liturgical questions that the council was considering:

The fathers will decide whether it is true that the Roman liturgy is far removed from the faithful. The question for them to answer is whether the texts and rites should be changed in order that they express more clearly the divine things which they signify, and in order that the faithful, as far as possible, may easily understand them, and thus pave the way to full, active and community participation. The liturgical problem is no other than an application of a more general problem, namely, the place of the Church in the modern world. For the liturgy, however beautiful, will not exercise any influence on the mass

⁴⁴ Bernard Botte, *From Silence to Participation--An Insider's View of Liturgical Renewal* (Washington D.C., 1973).

⁴⁵ Godfrey L. Dickmann, "Is there a Distinct American Contribution to the Liturgical Renewal?" *Worship* 45, no. 10 (Dec. 1971): 580.

of the people if it is divorced from modern civilization and from the existing social situation.⁴⁶

The conciliar Constitution on Liturgy depicted three stages of reform, guided by an overall principle that recognized that the participation of the people was the key aim to be sought, as well as a balance between past and present. The first stage of reform related to the community and hierarchic nature of the liturgy. The second was concerned with the pastoral and didactic purpose of worship, and the third centered around adaptability.⁴⁷ The first stage involved now well-known changes such as the switch to use of the vernacular and the clergy turning to face the congregation. The second stage centered around making the text of the liturgy more intelligible and participatory through a process of simplification. Many called for greater flexibility as well. The third stage dealt with adapting the ritual to different countries and cultures.⁴⁸ While the aims of Vatican II were welcomed, it should be remembered that simply decreeing principles did not automatically lead to implementation in individual churches. As Botte points out, the attempt to implement the ideals of Vatican II was a long and difficult process, the commission that was formed to facilitate implementation was disbanded long before the reforms were fully instituted.⁴⁹

In addition to officially authorized change, there was a fair amount of experimentation with liturgical forms in the years following Vatican II.

⁴⁶ Hermann Schmidt, "The Liturgy and the Modern World," *Worship* 37, no. 8 (Aug.-Sept. 1963): 510.

⁴⁷ McManus, "The Implementation and Goals of Liturgical Reform," 482.

⁴⁸ James J. Megliven, "American Catholic Worship Tomorrow," *Worship* 40, no. 8 (Oct. 1966): 483-4.

⁴⁹ Botte, *From Silence to Participation*, 125ff.

In 1960 the suggestion that perhaps some of the liturgy of the church might be translated into English stamped one as a 'kook' in Catholic circles. By 1970 not only had the entire liturgy been transferred to the vernacular, but laymen were demanding drastic reforms in the parish structure and free experimentation in the Mass. Singers and dancers appeared, and guitars, brass ensembles and bongo drums sounded forth from beneath dusty organs in neo-Gothic churches. Small groups of suburban Catholics followed their teen-age children to services in the inner city church that had become a center for community action, liturgical excitement and general religious and social nonconformity. . . . [D]issatisfied laymen began their own 'floating' or 'underground' parishes, meeting in private homes, club rooms or storefronts for community religious celebration, discussion of social and theological problems and development of *avant garde* Sunday schools for the young.⁵⁰

As in the above quote, the unofficial worship groups are referred to as the "underground church." Narrowly defined,

this phenomenon denotes the growing tendency among U.S. Catholics to meet in small, informal groups, often with non-Catholics and non-Christians, to discuss matters of faith and morals, to engage in some form of social action, and to celebrate the liturgy, withdrawing from and often in opposition to the institutional church but claiming a deep loyalty to the Christian faith.⁵¹

Hovda broadens the definition by maintaining that a number of small groups are experimenting *without* withdrawing totally from the Christian community. In either case, this experimentation had clearly been a source of tension within the church.

Rome requires at this time . . . that a completely structured rite be approved there before it can be "experimented" with. The rule contradicts itself. The whole reason for

⁵⁰ David J. O'Brien, *The Renewal of American Catholicism* (New York, 1972), 10, in Marty, *A Nation of Behaviors*, 68.

⁵¹ Robert Hovda, "The Underground Experiment in Liturgy," *Worship* 42, no.6 (June-July 1968): 322.

experimenting, of course, is precisely to find out, in the experience of a living community, what elements should go to make up the structure of a rite.⁵²

Among other suggestions, he calls for emphasizing the small group worship experience, and broadening the liturgical material to include contemporary sources. The urge for greater experimentation was even expressed by somewhat higher authorities. The Archbishop of Atlanta said in 1968:

I feel a grass-roots approach to experimentation is absolutely essential if our liturgy is to be truly expressive and creative of a people dedicated to God. At this time you know that our request to authorize centers where true experimentation could be initiated with local approval has been refused by Rome; but we cannot call a halt to our efforts to seek experimentation from the bottom up, to complement those experiments which we have received from the scholars and theorists. Each community, each diocese represented here, must engender a creative spirit in its community which can produce and encourage the formulation of experimental rites.⁵³

The popularity of experimentation did not go unchallenged. Already by 1970 there were voices raised against the effectiveness of experimentation, feeling that it was not the way to solve the worship problems faced by the church.

We should not, for example, expect to overcome lack of enthusiasm by having a "new" liturgy each week. In working with groups doing experimental worship, I have found this to be a common fault. No matter how well constructed the service is, it will not do to keep changing the forms and the language from week to week. *The enabling factor in worship is a sense of being at home with the forms and the language in such a way as to say and mean the words with spontaneity and conviction.*⁵⁴

⁵² *Ibid.* 325.

⁵³ Paul Hallinan, "Toward a People's Liturgy," *Worship* 42, no. 5 (May 1968): 262-3.

⁵⁴ Don Sallers, "On the 'Crisis' of Liturgical Language," *Worship* 44, no. 7 (Aug.-Sept. 1970): 407.

There has also been a growing awareness of the kinds of concerns that Hoffman has raised: that liturgical reform involves more than changing the words, and that the importance of signs and symbols cannot be overlooked by emphasis only on what is rational and intellectual in worship.⁵⁵

Although liturgical renewal is still of importance and concern within the church, it is no longer the center of controversy that it once was. Greater lay participation is now common, and the highly alienated can easily find experimental services, thus reducing some of the stress within the official church bodies.⁵⁶ While liturgical reform may not spark the controversy and heated debate that it did twenty years ago, it is by no means an issue that the Catholic church has resolved. It will have to continue to consider issues of liturgical reform as it shapes its identity in the future.

Turning to the future, how should one assess where Protestantism and Catholicism, as well as religion in general stand in America today?

American Catholicism is becoming more and more pluralistic. Individuality in terms of belief and practice is growing, challenging the official authority of the church. In terms of religious behavior, Catholics are moving closer to the Protestant volunteer-membership model. Bishops are becoming actively involved in sociomoral questions in an attempt to involve the church more deeply in issues relevant to the life of individuals and the nation.⁵⁷ One challenge that Catholicism faces is to deal with this new tendency in a fashion that will make the religion more vital and significant for its

⁵⁵ Rembert Weakland, "The 'Sacred' and Liturgical Renewal," *Worship* 49, no. 9 (Nov. 1975): 512-529.

⁵⁶ Patrick McNamara, "American Catholicism in the Mid-Eighties: Pluralism and Conflict in a Changing Church," in Wade Clark Roof, ed., *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science--Religion in America Today* (July 1985): 65.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 64-74.

adherents. Perhaps they can learn a key lesson from Protestants who are still challenged to provide a meaningful identity for their followers. Following an increase in voluntarism, and social involvement (the very trends evident in Catholicism today) Protestants have lost a sense of identity and focus. The challenge for Protestant mainline denominations is to

be true to their heritage as 'bridging institutions' in the culture in a time when religious energies have turned inward . . . [and to engage in] honest and constructive confrontation with the culture, by means of wrestling with enduring human quests for meaning and belonging in this particular time and place.⁵⁸

The changes that have occurred in the past two decades, and the drastically different shape that religion seems to be assuming, have caused Sidney Ahlstrom to refer to this era as the "end of the Puritan epoch."⁵⁹ The nature of the new epoch, however, is uncertain. Religion is tremendously different today, and furthermore, it is still rapidly changing, making prediction difficult. Recent surveys can perhaps begin to provide a sense of direction.⁶⁰ While new forms of religious expression are more commonplace and widely accepted, it would also seem that there has been a resurgence of interest in mainline organized religion. A majority of Americans say that they are more interested in religious and spiritual matters than they were five years ago; eight in ten say that religion is important in their life, and most people pray and believe in God and the efficacy of prayer. Of course this renewed interest is not without its

⁵⁸ Roof, "Mainline Religion in Transition," 146-8.

⁵⁹ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 1095.

⁶⁰ George Gallup, "Religion in America," in Wade Clark Roof, ed., *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science--Religion in America Today* (July 1985): 167-74.

problems and contradictions, as Gallup also points out. Many people, while expressing interest in religion, still demonstrate a thorough lack of knowledge about their religion; nor does participation in religion seem to lead to a particular ethical stance. Yet it would appear that there is a new receptivity to religion, thus giving organized religion the opportunity to have a significant impact on people and society in the future. It will be interesting to see if these trends are manifested in a resurgence of interest in religious vocations. These vocations have suffered with the crises and changes that have confronted institutional religion (among other complex reasons). If the emphasis on individual self-fulfillment continues, however, than even a renewed interest in institutional religion may not manifest itself in an increased interest in careers as religious professionals.

It would seem, however, that religion is increasingly valued in today's world. Marty points out that in this decade religion of all kinds has gained dominance over the forces of secularism, and he predicts a re-orientation of mainline religion to the current religious landscape.⁶¹ People more frequently claim to believe that human effort alone will not solve the world's ills. Despair, loneliness and disenchantment with modern lifestyles have added a new intensity to the quest for spirituality. In spite of the turbulence of the past several decades, and the radical changes in the form of major religions, religion itself may indeed prove to be desirable and necessary for many people. The challenge is to provide the form of identity and meaning that will meet the needs that people are expressing in an ever evolving world, without abandoning the standard and values intrinsic to religion.

⁶¹ Marty, "Transpositions: American Religion in the 1980's," 12, 22-23.

Prayerbook Development in Reform Judaism

Prayerbooks prior to *The Union Prayerbook*

With a clearer understanding of the nature of liturgy and ritual, and against the backdrop of the forces that have shaped and changed Christian religion in America, it is appropriate now to turn to Reform Judaism, where, indeed, many of the same trends have been evident. Most of the focus will be on the development of Reform prayerbooks in America in an attempt to determine how they are reflective of both the times in which they were compiled, and the developing identity of Reform Judaism. This specific liturgical focus will also provide the necessary background for studying liturgical creativity within the Reform movement.⁶²

From the very beginning, America provided a unique environment, conducive to reform. The lack of religious authority or established religious traditions as well as the pluralistic religious philosophy of the United States encouraged the development of religious reforms, liturgical and otherwise. The first radical reform prayerbook (in this country or anywhere else) was printed by the Reformed Society of Israelites in Charleston, South Carolina in 1830.

Much of the service was in English, though basic prayers and a few hymns remained in Hebrew. . . . The compilers apparently felt free to rearrange passages arbitrarily and even to leave out such basic prayers as the *avot*. . . . Although resurrection remained, references to animal sacrifices, return to Zion, and the anticipated advent of the messiah were all excised; the

⁶² The following discussion is based on Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (New York, 1988), chapters 6-10 and Eric Friedland, *The Historical and Theological Development of the Non-Orthodox Prayerbooks in the United States* (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, June 1967), chapters 1-6.

additional service for the Sabbath was eliminated and the worship was reduced to a fraction of its normal length.⁶³

The prayerbook was guided by biblicisms, anti-rabbinisms and American liberalism and pluralism. These latter factors may well have contributed to the freedom that the compilers felt to change the service as they saw fit. Friedland points out that a key feature of the prayerbook was that it represented a liturgical attempt of an indigenous *lay* movement. This was a unique feature of the Charleston prayerbook and distinguished it from future prayerbooks which were under rabbinical supervision.

The next prayerbook was compiled in 1855 by Rabbi Leo Merzbacher, of Temple Emanu-El in New York (which was founded expressly as a Reform temple). The prayerbook, *Seder Tefilah: The Order of Prayer for Divine Service*, was the first American Reform prayerbook written by a rabbi, and was an important influence on the *Union Prayerbook*.

It opened from right to left and retained references to resurrection and the restoration of the Temple. But it radically abbreviated the service, omitting not only repetitions but a large portion of the less central elements in the liturgy. The Additional Service (*musaf*) was retained only on Yom Kippur. Angeology was excised as were references to the sacrifices, vengeance, and the exaltation of Israel above other peoples.⁶⁴

This prayerbook was obviously a mixture of traditional and non-traditional elements. Merzbacher explains his method and goals in his preface:

The more appropriate remedy for our present exigency, it seems to us, will be found in retaining the Hebrew part of the Service in its pure and perfect type, discriminately selected; and in annexing to the instruction in the vernacular tongue hymns and prayers, adapted to the particular wants of the

⁶³ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 231.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 237.

congregation. . . . So the "Order of Prayer," as presented in this publication, has been regulated in strict adherence to the ancient standard, retaining the essential parts intact, following the customary order, without any foreign interposition, and removing only the grievances complained of, with due regard to their justness and urgency. ⁶⁵

Merzbacher's reference to retaining the ancient standard reveals a concern with hearkening back to an earlier age, a concern that leads Friedland to conclude that this prayerbook was not truly radical in its aim.

Even though Merzbacher may have broken off from accepted services, particularly those having their origin in the medieval period, he would in each case consult long-forgotten variants or minority viewpoints recorded in the Talmud, to support his changes. The motives may have been dictated by modern-day considerations, but anchorage in the ancient codes is sought. ⁶⁶

This concern indicates that the attempt to mesh contemporary reality with traditional considerations was a guiding principle of change. For Merzbacher, a degree of reconciliation between stability and innovation was achieved by trying to use ancient sources to justify the changes that were made to meet modern needs.

The two major prayerbooks that next appeared on the American scene were each guided by different goals and priorities and competed with each other as did the rabbis who compiled them. In 1857 Isaac Mayer Wise produced *Minhag America* as part of his vision to create a unified American Jewry. This was the goal that preoccupied him in both his liturgical and non-liturgical endeavors. Because it was authorized by the Cleveland Conference (1855), Wise could claim that *Minhag America* was not a result on any one particular interest group, but rather that it had broader based

⁶⁵ Rabbi Leo Merzbacher, *Seder Tefilah: The Order of Prayer for Divine Service* (New York, 1855), xi-xii.

⁶⁶ Eric Friedland, *Non-Orthodox Prayerbooks in America*, 36.

origin and appeal. It was important for Wise, as it was for Merzbacher, to be able to claim that his reforms were sanctioned by the ancient rabbis (no doubt to satisfy the more traditional elements of American Jewry). Wise was trying to balance many different goals, and in many ways, his prayerbook was a strange combination of features.

Opened from the right, it presented a totally Hebrew text, with even the prayer rubrics and instructions in (unvocalized!) Hebrew. . . . But opened from the other side, there was a complete translation of the Hebrew texts. German-speaking congregations could acquire the prayerbook with the German vernacular, Americanized ones with Wise's--rather wooden--English version. By shuttling back and forth between Hebrew and translation each congregation could create its own preferred mixture. . . . [It left] the Hebrew text intact, altering only the vernacular renditions. Consistency and uniformity of ideology were clearly less important than devising a prayerbook that could gain entry into the largest number of congregations.⁶⁷

While Wise's 1872 revised version was less supernatural and more ideologically consistent, it never approached the style of its main competitor, *Olat Tamid* by David Einhorn.

Einhorn's prayerbook came out in 1858 and was very direct and clear cut about the ideology and philosophy that it advocated. It was this theology that was important to Einhorn, who had little interest in the creation of a specifically American prayerbook.

Olat Tamid consistently expresses the religious ideology of its editor. Einhorn modified the Hebrew text, provided his own--sometimes non-literal--translations, and composed a number of well-crafted original German prayers. Repeatedly he voiced his commitment to Israel's priestly and messianic role among the nations. And he transformed the concept of resurrection

⁶⁷ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 254.

into immortality of the soul. Moreover, *Olat Tamid* did not provide for alternatives. The worshiper opened it--from left to right--and followed along a liturgy that contained some prayers in Hebrew and others in German, but did not allow for altering the given language of a particular text.⁶⁸

Einhorn and Wise were guided by a different vision of what it meant to be a modern Jew in America and the results of their liturgical creativity reveal their very different goals.

In spite of the fact that two very different prayerbooks were available and widely used, liturgical innovation by no means ended. This was likely reflective of a country that had no authoritative religious institution; there was nothing to prevent the continued development of liturgy even when a supposedly "American prayerbook" had been published. In 1870 Reverend Raphael D.C. Lewin published *The American-Jewish Ritual* for use in Temple Israel in Brooklyn. He makes it clear in his preface that a central concern guiding the compilation of the prayerbook was the production of a liturgy in the vernacular.

Hebrew is a language of the past, which as a study, will be confined only to theologians and to those whose avocations or tastes lead them to ancient Jewish lore. The American people are a practical people and will certainly never devote their time to the acquirement of that from which they cannot possibly derive any practical benefit. . . . [F]or some time to come Hebrew should be retained for obvious reasons, but only in a minor degree and only in such parts of the service as are not actually prayers. . . . All exclusive and sectarian passages, all petitions for a restoration of a Jewish nationality, for a return to Jerusalem, and for the advent of a personal Messiah, all needless repetitions must be carefully omitted. The universality of Judaism and the Messianic mission of Israel must be positively proclaimed . . .⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 254.

⁶⁹ Rabbi Raphael Lewin, *The American Jewish Ritual* (New York, 1870), ix-x.

Like Wise and Einhorn, Lewin is clearly searching for a synthesis between what he perceives as Jewish and American values, but he never states why Einhorn's prayerbook fails to meet his needs. One might suspect that although it is similar in ideology, the amount of Hebrew fails to meet Lewin's desire to rely primarily on the vernacular as the language of prayer.

Prayerbooks were also developed to meet specific needs. Joseph Krauskopf's *Service Ritual* (1892) and Joseph Leonard Levy's *A Book of Prayer* (1902) were both intended to be used primarily (although not solely) for Sunday rituals. They each contain a tremendous variety; Levy's prayerbook has *thirty* different services. They follow no particular structure, contain little Hebrew, and are highly original in almost all ways. Neither prayerbook necessarily intended to replace any existing prayerbooks. Krauskopf specifically states about *Service Ritual*: "It does not intend to interfere with, or to supplant, any of the prayerbooks now in use. It simply aims to be supplementary to them."⁷⁰ Clearly, rabbis felt quite free to use their own initiative in adding to or altering existing prayerbook publications (particularly for Sunday services) and many did so.

Another example of this trend is David Philipson's 1891 prayerbook, *Services for Sabbath and Holidays*. While he was in the process of compiling the prayerbook, the CCAR met to prepare a Union prayerbook. Philipson says:

If the prayer-book compiled under the auspices of the Conference meets with the approval of the Congregation, it will be introduced and this book will serve the temporary purpose of filling the want of an intelligible ritual felt by my Congregation for some time.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, *Service Ritual* (Philadelphia, 1892), 3.

⁷¹ Rabbi David Philipson, *Services for Sabbath and Holidays* (Cincinnati, 1891), 3.

While the willingness to write liturgy was present, Philipson indicates the desire among at least some rabbis for greater standardization, and a willingness to have their own liturgical efforts subsumed by one central prayerbook for the sake of greater uniformity in the movement.

The tension between these two trends is best revealed in the concluding remarks of *Prayers of Israel, Arranged for The American Reform Services in the Temple "Gates of Hope"* by Rev. Dr. Edward Browne. He states his opposition to the new prayerbooks as based in the controversy and bitterness that they arouse (referring to the acrimony between Wise and Einhorn). He reports that he wrote in a recent article, "Do away with the prayerbook evil and engage competent, non-partisan men to write a 'Union Prayer-Book,' to be sold by the Union *at cost*." He continues:

The people, knowing this, will be surprised to see a new prayer-book issued by Browne, and therefore I owe them this explanation: The Temple Gates of Hope having a larger attendance by far than any other of our Temples, the congregation saw fit to secure a prayer-book of its own, because its dignity requires it to do away with an "adopted" book. I publish this prayer-book therefore, chiefly because my congregation wished it, yet do I still hope for a "Union Prayer-Book," and shall gladly be the first to give up my prayer-book for Union and Peace.⁷²

While there existed a desire for the unity of an authorized prayerbook, a certain status was still associated with having one's rabbi write a prayerbook for the congregation. In spite of Browne's protestations to the contrary, he seems to have at least some sympathy for this latter view, and thus was willing to compile a prayerbook that he would then gladly give up!

⁷² Rabbi Edward Browne, *Prayers of Israel Arranged for the American Reform Services in The Temple "Gates of Hope"* (New York, 1885, second ed.), 168-9.

The Union Prayerbook, Gates of Prayer and Creative Liturgies

In 1892 the earliest version of *The Union Prayerbook* was adopted, marking the first of a long series of steps toward greater standardization and centralization in Reform Jewish liturgy. In light of criticism of this work, the CCAR appointed a new committee that published a High Holiday prayerbook in 1894 and a satisfactory prayerbook for the rest of the year in 1895.⁷³ The age in which the *UPB* was compiled emphasized universalism, and inevitable progress, and this was reflected in the optimism of the text.

Its two volumes opened from left to right as befitted a prayerbook that was preponderantly in English. Its theology was basically Einhorn's, the style of the translations elevated, sometimes even poetic. Responsive readings were introduced to increase congregational participation. Appended for Sabbath use were brief readings in English from the Pentateuch and the Prophets or Writings. In keeping with the importance classical Reform attributed to content, these readings did not correspond to the weekly portions assigned by tradition. It mattered more that the selection read should convey a meaningful religious or moral message. . . . Necessarily, the prayerbook also reflected the optimistic mood of late nineteenth-century America.⁷⁴

UPB was somewhat revised in 1912 to include more Hebrew, and in the High Holiday volume, more material from non-biblical literature. There were no other revisions until 1940.

A great deal occurred in the intervening two decades. There was a turn away from the major ritual debates that had been so predominant in the earlier years, in favor of greater attention to social activism (at home and abroad) and educational concerns. Other contemporary phenomena led to an increased emphasis on the search for personal religious meaning and

⁷³ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 279.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

fulfillment. All of these trends influenced the revision of *UPB*. There was more variety, more congregational participation and a return to certain traditions and rituals.

Growing folk sentiment and historical consciousness lie at the root of the ongoing hebraization and judaization of the *UPB*. The desire to get closer to the sources of tradition and to identify more strongly with the worldwide fellowship of Israel by the reinstatement of classical texts does not mean that the Reformers have suddenly retrogressed or abandoned their experimenting, progressive posture. . . . [T]he forward-looking stance is not for one moment relinquished, but knowledge and appreciation of the past is seen as deepening and enriching it immensely.⁷⁵

The existence of an official prayerbook (even one that attempted to change with historical and social developments) in no way prevented the development of other prayerbooks, any more than it had in earlier years. As in the Christian churches, experimentation continued in spite of official reforms. Prayerbooks continued to be compiled, and some, such as *The Order of Services for Sabbaths and Holidays* (1906), compiled for Rodeph Shalom in New York, even utilized parts of the *UPB*. It would seem that this trend lessened over time, as more and more congregations accepted the authority of the CCAR to produce the "official" liturgy for the movement. *UPB Newly Revised* continued to be used throughout the forties and fifties. It met the needs of "suburban religion" in the fifties, when belonging to a synagogue was an American thing to do (as was affiliating with a church), and concern with worship was low.

The sixties, however, was a revolutionary decade for Jews, as well as for other religions and the country as a whole. Not only were Jews affected

⁷⁵ Friedland, *Non-Orthodox Prayerbooks in America*, 128.

congregants saw deficiencies in *UPB*, it was by no means universally disliked.

Among rabbis there was more agreement that some form of change was essential. The nature of the changes needed, however, aroused a fair amount of controversy. There were numerous specific criticisms of *UPB*. Some felt that it did not provide enough choice, or enough for the congregation to read, and thus there was a call for greater dialogue between the pulpit and pew in a new prayerbook. Part of the desire for greater choice consisted of a perceived need for a broader scope of ideas within the liturgy. There was a sense as well that the optimism of *UPB* was increasingly out of step with the mood of the people. There were other concerns expressed that related more closely to the content and structure of the liturgy. A desire for more Hebrew was expressed, and the role of Israel in the liturgy was a growing concern. Criticisms of music relegated to the "invisible choir" were heard, and an often heard complaint was the misleading nature of the interpretive or adapted translations, which appeared to the average congregant to be literal translations.⁷⁹

There was also a large discussion in the years prior to *GOP* of the phenomenon of creative services, indicating their growing popularity during this time period. Indeed, the production of creative liturgy had significantly increased. By 1969 one synagogue had already created twenty-one services in the previous two years, and there is nothing to suggest that this was

⁷⁹ Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, "A Practical Critique of *The Union Prayerbook*," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1959): 8-11; Rabbi Louis J. Siegel, "Some Deficiencies in *The Union Prayerbook*," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1959): 8-16; Rabbi Bernard Martin, "Can Jewish Worship Be Restored?" *CCARJ* (April 1965): 26-32; Rabbi Joseph P. Klein, "The Next Edition of *The Union Prayer Book*," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1967): 26-30.

atypical.⁸⁰ The growth of modern technology clearly contributed to the ability to produce such large numbers of services. The Xerox machine, electric typewriters or computers, electric collators and staplers have been critical for the development of mimeographed services, as has the existence of anthologies of readings and Jewish texts, printed clearly and indexed according to subject.⁸¹

The sentiments toward the creative liturgy movement were mixed, with some deeply opposed, and others feeling that these efforts were a necessary part of the future of Reform liturgy. The opposition to liturgical "dabbling" was largely based on the feeling that an individual rabbi could not compete adequately with the weight of the tradition, as well as the opinion that familiarity in worship was a greater value than variety.⁸² Others called for various degrees of experimentation. The desire for innovation ranged from Gittelsohn's relatively conservative desire to "combine tradition and innovation . . . [by] retaining as much as possible of our Hebrew prayers, while translating and reinterpreting them freely"⁸³ to the more radical view expressed by Joseph Narot:

I do not believe that we should be frightened by the many efforts, lay and rabbinic, being made to create new services. On the contrary, we should be encouraged by these efforts and we, in turn, should encourage them. Let fixity and improvisation now, as in former ages, be given acceptance. Let the mystics and the rationalists, the existentialists and the radical theologians, the Hebraists and the vernacularists, those who think we should retrace our steps back to the liturgical

⁸⁰ Rabbi Harry Essrig, "A Hasidic Creative Service (creative service, University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1969).

⁸¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Creative Liturgy" *Jewish Spectator* (Winter 1975): 42-50.

⁸² Rabbi David Polish, "Revision of the Prayer Book?" *CCARJ* (Jan. 1961): 13-14; Rabbi Bernard J. Bamberger, "On the Revision of *The Union Prayer Book*," *CCARJ* (April 1965): 39.

⁸³ Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "New Words for Old Truths," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1967): 45-51.

rock whence we were hewn and those who believe that we should take new and bold steps into the future, let them all create each in his own ways. Time and the concern of all of us [will] effect a synthesis.⁸⁴

The spectrum of opinion within the movement in regard to creative liturgy was well expressed by Daniel Jeremy Silver's reaction to Maurice Eisendrath's liturgical proposal.⁸⁵ Eisendrath advanced the following idea:

... wide-spread questionnaires, unlimited experimentation, the cooperation of the finest minds and spirits in the realms of poetry, dance and art must be enlisted in our free uninhibited search for those forms and conditions, that quality and quantity of worship which will win from our contemporaries some more satisfying response than can be seen in our forsaken synagogues.

Silver expresses strong opposition to these "free-forming services" because they fail to inspire and bring the worshipper to awareness of Jewish teachings and love of God. He concludes:

For all its failings the *Union Prayer Book* is a useful book and when handled reverently a touchstone for reverence. Let us avoid any sense of panic and the urge to tinker for the sake of making a splash. I began with Eisendrath because he represents the mood of impatience and because we have seen the fruit of his thought at services at Union Biennials. I submit that a patient and reverent use of our present *Union Prayer Book* is infinitely more beneficial and beautiful than these "free and uninhibited" extravaganzas.

With a clear disagreement about the problems of the *UPB* and the alternatives that people were experimenting with, it is not at all surprising that there was tremendous division on what action the CCAR should take concerning a new prayerbook.

⁸⁴ Rabbi Joseph R. Narot, "Why We Do What We Do," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1967): 15.

⁸⁵ Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver, "On *The Union Prayer Book*," *CCARJ, A Special Issue on Worship and Liturgy* (1971): 72-80.

The suggestions advanced were multiple and varied. Some rabbis advocated a more creative and effective use of the existing text, emphasizing the possibility of changing the way services were led and the option of adding supplementary readings and ceremonies (wedding blessings and other special prayers) to the services.⁸⁶ Others argued for expansion of the existing prayerbook by restructuring its form and creating more consistency between the Hebrew and the English text.⁸⁷ The key decision that needed to be made, as Robert Kahn identified as early as 1959, was whether to engage in *revision* or major *reform* of the prayerbook.⁸⁸ The central argument against major reform was the tremendous theological diversity that existed within the movement. It was felt that it would be impossible to reach the theological agreement that would be essential in fashioning a new prayerbook. This agreement was felt necessary because of the widely held view that "liturgy must follow theology."⁸⁹ It was recognition of this theological turmoil that led to the idea that only a large degree of choice would permit a major reform to be carried out. There was a feeling that any attempt at uniformity would entail a process of compromise that would leave no one happy. Thus, guidelines proposed for a new prayerbook emphasized the inclusion of more variety and choice, as this was seen as the only means to achieve reform.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, "The Practical Use of *The Union Prayer Book*," *CCARJ* (April 1965): 21-25; Rabbi Beryl D. Cohen, "Rethinking Our Worship Practices," *CCARJ* (Oct. 1967): 16-25.

⁸⁷ Rabbi David Polish, "Revision of the Prayerbook," *CCARJ* (Jan. 1961): 11-16.

⁸⁸ Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, "A Practical Critique of *The Union Prayerbook*," 9.

⁸⁹ Rabbi David Polish, "Revision of the Prayerbook," 14.

⁹⁰ Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "New Words for Old Truths," 48; Rabbi David Polish, "Where Do We Go From Here?" *CCARJ* -- *Special Issue on Worship and Liturgy* (1971): 126.

In 1975 a new prayerbook was issued, *Sha'are Tefilah--Gates of Prayer*. The atmosphere of renewal in the seventies made it an era conducive to the publication of a new prayerbook.⁹¹ It is also clear that this prayerbook was a result of the specific needs perceived as existing at the time and the criticisms voiced by those who had grown dissatisfied with *UPB*.

Rather than an integral prayerbook, it was a compendium of multiple liturgies done by many hands. . . . In one form or another, in one place or another, the new prayerbook contained nearly every classical theme except for the messianic hope of reestablishing the ancient sacrificial service. But the radically inclined, too, could draw satisfaction. There were some highly innovative liturgies, some that were mostly in English, and a Friday evening alternative that bordered on religious humanism. . . . Yet the internal dissonance was troublesome only if consistency was judged more valuable than inclusiveness. . . . The new prayerbook represented--and celebrated--the diversity that, for better or worse, characterized the movement.⁹²

It was clear that inclusiveness *was* considered more important than consistency. Rabbi Robert Kahn, Chairman of the Liturgy Committee wrote:

Which (view) has the right to impose itself on the rest? . . . Our committee set out quite deliberately to develop a Union Prayer Book which would include rather than exclude, which would give options to rabbis and to laymen, at the same time seeking to preserve as far as possible the traditional structure of the *Siddur*.⁹³

Gates of Prayer did become widely used, although it too met with criticism. Ironically, it was considered *too* diverse, functioning more as an anthology than as a prayerbook. Some complained of the lack of poetry in the language,

⁹¹ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 373-86.

⁹² *Ibid.* 374-5.

⁹³ Rabbi Robert I. Kahn, "We Were Mandated," *CCARJ* (Spring 1973): 89.

and the use of masculine God language has developed into a major source of dissatisfaction in the years since the prayerbook's publication.

While it will be seen that the greatest quantity of creative liturgy was produced in the years immediately preceding *GOP*, the development of creative liturgy by no means stopped with the publication of a new prayerbook. In this sense, creative liturgy is part of the history of American Reform prayerbooks. As Hoffman says, it is part of the ongoing process of creating novel synthesis between American and Jewish culture:

Gates of Prayer is neither the end nor the beginning of that synthesis. It was preceded by a movement which bore the name Creative Liturgy. . . . Seen in its historical context, however, the thousands of mimeographed services which constitute the Creative Liturgy movement represent a significant attempt to present a novel Jewish consciousness. Like prayerbooks at other times and places, these services provide their own message in which content, structure and choreography all combine to give a consistent picture of American Judaism as defined by their services' authors.⁹⁴

Creative services are thus not wholly separate from Reform prayerbooks but are part of the continuing history of liturgical development. There is nothing to suggest that creating alternative liturgy will disappear in years to come.

There has continued to be discussion, however, about the value of creative liturgical endeavors, with no greater unanimity of opinion than was achieved in earlier years. A symposium in the *CCAR Journal* held ten years after the publication of *GOP* reveals the diversity of opinion that exists

⁹⁴ Lawrence A. Hoffman, "The Liturgical Message," in Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed., *Gates of Understanding* (New York, 1977), 151.

about creative liturgy *GOP* and the relationship between them.⁹⁵ Some observed that communities that continued to worship with their own liturgy had a higher level of spirituality than those who used *GOP*. On the other hand there were complaints that *GOP* reflected the dedication of the Reform movement to creative services, at the expense of needed focus on the fixed aspect of prayer. Robert Kahn noted that the listing of creative Shabbat services in the CCAR Newsletter drastically declined following the publishing of *GOP*. He understands this as a positive development, affirming his belief that *GOP* effectively satisfied a real need.

In spite of the fact that *GOP* tried to satisfy everyone by its inclusiveness, this very inclusiveness was faulted. Nor did the new prayerbook succeed in stopping the arguments about the function of liturgy and the most effective methods of worship. In fact, one of the most startling realizations reached following the publishing of *GOP* was that it was not *the* answer to the problem of worship.

When *GOP* was published, it played a nasty trick on many of us. Welded to our enthusiasm for a *New Union Prayerbook* was the hope... that renewed, rewritten, refined, and reformed prayer language would rekindle the passion for worship among modern Jews. Sadly it has not.⁹⁶

After a century of prayerbook revision, the truth of what Hoffman points out is becoming ever more evident. Worship, in order to be meaningful, must go beyond the text itself. Prayerbook revisions or reforms may contribute to meaningful worship, but, as Christians and Jews alike are beginning to realize, they will not operate as a panacea.

⁹⁵ All of these comments are found in "Gates of Prayer: Ten Years Later--A Symposium," *Journal of Reform Judaism* (Fall 1985): 13-62.

⁹⁶ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "Gates of Prayer - A Symposium," 21.

Summary of Prayerbook Development

Having looked at a selection of the American Reform prayerbooks, it would be beneficial to briefly examine their development as a whole.

Hoffman provides a summary of American Reform prayerbook development by focusing on their sacred myth—one of the key areas to investigate as part of a holistic study of liturgy, as was mentioned in the preface. A “sacred myth” is the

subjective and selective perception of our background that we choose to remember and to enshrine as our official ‘history’... We can speak, therefore, of the liturgical act functioning to convey a sense of the ultimate significance of the worshiping group, by providing a sacred myth.⁹⁷

One function of liturgy is to present “these sacred myths to sacred assemblies that through a selective vision of their past, they may learn how to plot their future.”⁹⁸ These sacred myths are important in that they reflect and shape identity through establishing a certain perception of one’s history. A method of looking at the development of Reform prayerbooks that will facilitate looking beyond the prayerbook as only a literary product toward this question of identity is a comparison of the myths provided by Wise, Einhorn, *UPB* and *GOR*.⁹⁹

The myth developed by Wise and Einhorn, although different in some respects, was similar in its overall message.

They both supplied diaspora life with positive purpose. In their scheme, the Temple’s fall had actually freed Jews to proclaim God’s universal message to the world. Medieval misery was a sort of necessary testing period until humanity grew to

⁹⁷ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 76.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 144.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 116–144.

sufficient moral stature to accept Israel's witness. But with the Enlightenment, that period was over. The prophetic prediction of a messianic age was about to be realized, at last. ¹⁰⁰

Hoffman calls this the "classical Reform myth"--a myth that remained basically the same until recent years. The compilers of *UPB* provided an added dimension to the myth, pertaining to their concern with social justice. While the early reformers had a vision of justice based on the prophets, it was later reformers who emphasized the need for a social activism that would lead to improvement of specific societal ills.

Though reformers had discovered the prophetic cause, they had not converted wholeheartedly to a religion modeled almost exclusively after prophetic example. What had yet to be added to the myth was the repainting of the prophets as biblical social activists. The step was begun in the late 1800's and was a Jewish reflection of a general religious development in America, notably, the social gospel. . . . For Reform Jews. . . imbued with the doctrine of evolutionary progress leading inevitably to universal human right, this down-to-earth doctrine of caring for the poor and protecting the powerless came as a welcome addition to the mythic role of the prophets. . . ¹⁰¹

By the time that *GOP* was published, a new and different sacred myth had developed. The need to reconcile the religious sacred myth with scientifically objective truth created a demand for alteration of the previous myth. Key events such as the Holocaust had shown that the belief in inevitable progress was false; we were not ushering in the age of social justice and righteousness, and in fact, this era was only seen in the distant future. A new sacred myth has developed to accommodate the new reality, a

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 121.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 124-125.

myth in which history is not viewed as a series of inevitable steps toward improvement, but as a cycle of "catastrophe and consolation."

The fact that this new sacred myth is different than the myth that had existed with various alterations in Reform Judaism for many previous years, provides another clue as to what finally led to the development of *GOP*, and why it was ultimately a *new* prayerbook, and not a revised version of *UPB*. Hoffman says:

Minor changes in experience provoke new prayers, which are added to old books. Accumulated alterations in life's circumstances lead to a revised book. Major cataclysmic events make for a new liturgy of such massive alterations as to be tantamount to the inception of a new rite. Borrowed from the past, it is an amalgam of the past and the present, a true representation of the worshipers themselves. It might be said, then, that whatever worshipers presume to say to God, they are at the same time directing a message to themselves. The very act of worship takes on the function of identifying for the worshiper what it is that he or she stands for, what real life is like, what his or her aspirations are. ¹⁰²

Events in the Jewish and secular world were such that a new sacred myth was needed in order to present the worshippers with a new sense of self, a sense that would be meaningful in a very changed environment.

Conclusion

Religious life in America is radically different now from what it was twenty years ago and the creative liturgy movement has both reflected and contributed to this change. Since liturgy and ritual are related to the way that individuals make meaning of the world around them, major societal

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 69.

changes often lead to new liturgical formulations. This is revealed in the publication of *GOP*, and certainly the growth of creative services is connected to the events and changes of these twenty years. The question that will need to be addressed is how the major events of these two decades have influenced the specific form and content of this liturgy.

The services will be able to do more than provide insight into contemporary religious expression, however. As the Reform prayerbooks revealed how early Reformers viewed their past and present realities, so too can creative liturgy help us understand how Jews today perceive both past events and their ever changing world. Discerning the sacred myth behind Reform prayerbooks provides one example of how studying liturgy can be more than a literary exercise. Studying liturgy can be (and should be according to Hoffman) a way to understand how Jews have viewed themselves, and the systems of meaning that they have constructed to understand the world. As we turn to an examination of the first group of creative services--Shabbat services--these will be the primary concerns addressed in the attempt to arrive at a more complete understanding of this body of texts.

Chapter Two: Creative Shabbat Liturgies

The creative Shabbat services form the largest single category of creative services to be studied. They reflect a great deal of diversity and a wide range of sources, formats and perspectives. This breadth of material will make it possible to analyze the change in creative Shabbat services over the course of the twenty years in light of events in both the society at large and in the Reform movement. Examination of these services will help to provide a basic understanding of the use of traditional liturgical texts--a foundation that will be helpful in studying other categories of creative services. While these are creative services composed for Shabbat, celebration of Shabbat in the traditional sense is not their primary focus. Nor are they necessarily focused on prayer and worship. There are a multiplicity of themes and goals that will be seen to emerge from these services. Certain goals, however, such as the creation of community and the celebration of togetherness, as well as celebration of the survival of our people, will be seen to be paramount.

In looking at the services, the first area of investigation will be the way that they are structured (both contentfully and aesthetically) and the use of traditional liturgical texts. The meaning of Shabbat, the use of secondary source material and the nature of Shabbat services other than those intended for Friday evening synagogue worship, will all be areas to consider before moving to consideration of the questions raised by Hoffman as intrinsic to a holistic study of liturgy.

Structure and Use of Traditional Liturgical Texts

I studied approximately 235 Shabbat services (overwhelmingly Friday evening services), of which 155 could be definitely dated within a five year period. The statistics that follow refer only to that material which is dated.

EREV SHABBAT SERVICES				
	1965-1969	1970-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985
number of services	18	79	22	36
candles	28%	68%	77%	58%
<i>kiddush</i>	39%	43%	23%	53%
<i>barechu</i>	78%	70%	64%	94%
<i>ma'ariv aravim</i>	22%	20%	50%	61%
<i>ahavat olam</i>	22%	13%	27%	47%
<i>shema</i>	78%	81%	86%	92%
<i>v'ahavta</i>	39%	65%	86%	94%
<i>geulah</i>	56%	40%	59%	89%
<i>avot</i>	28%	38%	77%	83%
<i>gevurot</i>	22%	19%	41%	64%
<i>kedushat hashem</i>	17%	4%	55%	36%
<i>kedushat hayom</i>	22%	3%	23%	36%
<i>avodah</i>	17%	5%	23%	19%
<i>hoda'ah</i>	22%	3%	18%	25%
<i>birkat shalom</i>	39%	16%	55%	72%
<i>aleinu</i>	72%	63%	91%	92%

	1965-1969	1970-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985
<i>kaddish</i>	61%	80%	86%	92%
<i>v'shamru</i>	28%	22%	32%	64%
<i>yismechu</i>	11%	9%	14%	28%
<i>chatzi kaddish</i>	11%	5%	18%	33%
<i>hashkivenu</i>	6%	5%	14%	25%

There are a several important observations to be made about this table. The greatest number of services (by far) appeared in the years immediately prior to the publication of *GOP* in 1975, although liturgical creativity by no means disappeared following the publication of *GOP*. In each of the five year periods following the publication of *GOP* there was a marked increase in the quantity of traditional liturgical texts used in the creative Shabbat services. (When referring to the inclusion of a particular prayer in a service, the word "inclusion" is intended in the broadest possible sense. The prayer may be in either Hebrew, transliteration, translation, interpretive English, or some combination of these. It might be used in its entirety, or just the *hatima* might be found.) It is interesting to note, however, that not one traditional liturgical text is included in 100% of the services in any five or ten year period. In the years before 1975, no traditional liturgical text appears in over 85% of the services, although the *shema* and the *kaddish* approach this figure. In 1976-1980, the *shema*, *v'ahavta*, *aleinu* and *kaddish* appear in approximately 85-90% of the services. From 1981-1985 the *barechu* and *geulah* can be added to this

list forming a type of "minimum standard requirement" that seems to exist in regard to the inclusion of the traditional prayers.

By looking at this list, as well as at the table as a whole, it is clear that the liturgy of the *shema* dominates the liturgy of the *amidah*. Although the inclusion of portions of the *amidah* becomes more common, it does not ever become more important (or even as important) as the traditional liturgical texts of the *shema* and her blessings. This has been characteristic of Reform liturgy in the past, and based on what rabbis pick and choose from the liturgy to include in their creative services, a certain preeminence is still given to the *shema* today, whether based on custom or ideology. The centrality of the *aleinu* and *kaddish*, in addition to the *shema*, is likewise reflective of the historical priorities and particular values possessed by the Reform movement. Interpreted as representing (respectively) the vision of a better future for all humanity, the Jewish heritage or chain of tradition and the contribution of monotheism made by the Jewish people, these three texts reflect ideas that have maintained significance and meaning for Reform Jews today.

Other observations about the use of traditional liturgical texts are less easily explained. For instance, why is *ma'ariv aravim* a more frequently included prayer than *ahavat olam*? Certainly some of the decisions regarding which texts to include could be random and based on non-ideological decision such as the length of the service, or the desire to balance novel and familiar elements. Other characteristics of these services suggest, however, that the decision may not be wholly random. There appears to be some discomfort with the idea of God as Revealer of Torah. It seems to be easier to accept the presence of God in nature and in the physical world than in relation to Torah and mitzvot. A similar question

about the choices made can be asked concerning the *amidah*. Why are certain texts of the *amidah*, such as the *hoda'ah*, less frequently found than other texts such as the *avot*? Surely there is no ideological opposition to thanksgiving! There are indeed many prayers and readings about thanksgiving, yet very few are found at a point in the service where they can be understood to be interpretive of the *hoda'ah*. Perhaps as the theme of thanksgiving and gratitude grew in importance and permeated the entire service, the need for a designated prayer in a particular place was lessened. Or again, perhaps it is an arbitrary choice. These are only two examples of many similar questions that could be asked about how and why these texts are used. It is clear that choices are made about which liturgical texts are to be included. It is not completely clear, however, what the criteria for inclusion are. These choices may represent random decisions based on custom and preference, or they may be reflective of certain attitudes and values.

In discussing traditional liturgical texts, particular attention should be drawn to the use of both Hebrew language and Hebrew printed text. There was almost no creativity in Hebrew during these twenty years, although some of the creativity in *GOP* was drawn upon. Services from 1965-1975 contained remarkably little printed Hebrew text at all, perhaps due to lack of Hebrew typing. Most traditional liturgical texts were transliterated and translated, although the *v'havta* and *aleinu* often appeared only in English. Not infrequently there would be no text at all, with simply the word "*shema*" indicated. It is unclear whether these prayers were recited just by the rabbi, by the choir, or whether it was simply expected that the congregation would know them by heart.

In the years 1976-1985, two changes in the use of Hebrew were seen. Firstly, more liturgical text appeared printed in Hebrew letters and much less transliteration was used in the services (although songs remained frequently transliterated). Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, the use of Hebrew as the language of prayer increased in these services during these years. Not only were more traditional liturgical texts included, but they were more likely to be included in Hebrew. There are several possible explanations for this. The impact of the State of Israel and the renewed openness to tradition certainly influenced the creative services, as they did *GOP*, and may have contributed to the increased use of Hebrew. It has certainly become technically easier to include Hebrew in more recent years, as was indicated above. Yet it would also seem that *GOP* itself influenced the creative services. The increased use of Hebrew following 1975 is so clear that *GOP* (which was published in that year) cannot be ignored as a factor. It would seem that, in this regard at least, the standard prayerbook used by Reform synagogues has had an important impact on the creative liturgy movement.

In addition to the increased use of traditional liturgical texts in Hebrew, creative services following *GOP* were more likely to utilize interpretive English rather than direct translation accompanying a traditional liturgical text. This is one way (similar to the method used by *GOP*) in which new, creative elements were integrated into the standard liturgical structure. Given that creative services are a combination of old and new in some proportion, the relationship between new, creative compositions and traditional liturgical texts is an important one to consider. There are services that closely follow the guideline of the traditional liturgy, using some portion of the traditional liturgy in Hebrew

or English as the basis of the service. These services add interpretive readings (sometimes from *GOP*) corresponding to the topics of the prayers or centering on the theme of Shabbat as opposed to other themes.¹ This could be said to be utilizing the traditional liturgy as the primary focus, and although it becomes more common after *GOP*, it is not characteristic of most of the services studied.

It is more common to find the traditional liturgical texts and structure secondary to other material that is included for a wide variety of purposes, whether it is exploration of a theme or celebration of a particular occasion. The occasion that is celebrated is not necessarily Shabbat, or rather, the celebration of Shabbat is often incidental. As will be discussed later, Shabbat is clearly a secondary and not a primary focus of these services. "Secondary" is meant in a descriptive, rather than a pejorative sense. The goals possessed by those who compiled creative services simply do not appear to center around, or be furthered by, the use of the traditional liturgical texts. A given theme such as family, sisterhood, Shabbat, love, peace, hasidism, elders, or the thoughts of a particular rabbi, often supplants the traditional liturgy itself, resulting in the dominance of a variety of other sources and formats. For example, "A Shabbat of Social Concern: The Jews Who Are Afraid of the Sabbath," consists of songs, a candle blessing and selections from *The Jews of Silence* by Elie Wiesel and "Babi Yar" by Yevgeny Yevtushenko.² Another service, containing only

¹ See for example, Yoel Kahn, Rabbinic Intern, "Qabbalat Shabbat Service" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, 1983). This service follows the traditional liturgical structure, albeit abbreviated. The readings that accompany each text, drawn from *GOP* or other sources, are clearly and directly on the theme of the traditional text.

² Rabbi Jerold B. Levy, "A Shabbat of Social Concern: The Jews Who Are Afraid of the Sabbath" (creative service, Congregation Or Ami, Richmond, VA, 1971-76).

candles, *kiddush* and *aleinu* consists of readings on the meaning of life and the need to reawaken dormant spiritual lives.³ It would seem that in these services the traditional liturgical texts are virtually abandoned in favor of other sources.

The secondary nature of the Shabbat and the liturgy is evident in many services even where there is a more substantial utilization of the traditional texts. Sometimes the traditional liturgical texts are put together in one place, either at the middle or the end, while other readings, slides or films comprise the bulk of the service in quantity, as well as its primary focus. In one service, entitled "Future Shock," the congregation begins by viewing the film "Future Shock," and then adjourns to the sanctuary. While blessing the candles and the recitation of *shema* take place in the middle of the service, the rest of the liturgy (*barechu, ma'ariv aravim, kiddush, aleinu, kaddish*) is read consecutively at the end of the service. The service itself is much more devoted to readings that are meant to focus attention on the current situation of individuals and society, such as "Idols and Images: A Dialogue between the Prophets of Biblical and Future Shock," or "The Four Sons of Future Shock -- the Denier, the Specialist, the Reversionist and the Super-Simplifier."⁴ Even Harvey Fields' "Multi-Media Midrash for Shabbat" which (unlike many creative services) has Shabbat as its central theme ("I hope it will reveal the Shabbat, uncover some of its power, and send more than a few of us to probing its significance"⁵) has the candle blessing and *v'shamru* during the service, and

³ Rabbi Morton Siegel, Untitled (creative service, Woodsdale Temple, n.d.).

⁴ Rabbi Ronald Goff, "Future Shock" (creative service, 1973).

⁵ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Multi-Media Midrash for Shabbat" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, 1971), 28.

the rest of the liturgy (*barechu, shema, ma'ariv aravim, avot, kaddish*), placed consecutively at the very end of the midrash following the Torah service. He is exploring a way to celebrate Shabbat that does not center upon the standard liturgy, although the midrash is presented in a liturgical setting.

In some services there is also willingness to rearrange the order of the traditional liturgy to suit the needs of the themes or readings that are utilized. In "A Service Devoted to Love of God and of Faith" the first line of the *v'ahavta* is the opening of the service followed consecutively by: a reading, candle blessing, *barechu*, the next two lines of the *v'ahavta*, the *hatima* from *ahavat olam* and the *shema*.⁶ This reflects the primary nature of the theme and the secondary nature of the liturgical texts which are used so as to enhance and help develop the theme.

It seems as if Shabbat provides the pretext for bringing people together and having a service. Once gathered however, both Shabbat and the traditional liturgy is secondary to other goals that the rabbi may have such as teaching about the plight of Jews in the Soviet Union, or providing an opportunity for self-reflection and introspection. While in many cases the new texts and formats seem to be striving for a more meaningful prayer experience, it would also appear that other purposes, such as education, can completely overshadow the purposes of prayer. Services focused on certain occasions, those that are a selection of different readings from Reform prayerbooks through history, or those that are composed of different

⁶ Rabbi Howard A. Simon, "A Service Devoted to Love of God and of Faith" (creative service, Temple Beth Israel, Atlantic City, NJ, 1974), 1-2.

languages⁷ do not seem concerned with worship as much as with education, public recognition or bringing people to the synagogue.

Perhaps because worship is not always the primary goal, the aesthetics of the services themselves were often ignored. When compiling a prayerbook or a service, the structure of the service must be considered not only contentfully, but in terms of how it is presented on paper. This latter element appears to be of lesser concern for those who write creative services. Type is of all sizes and arrangements and typographical errors are common. Rarely are liturgical rubrics indicated; there are many services that contain long explanatory or narrative paragraphs. In many cases one has the feeling of reading a book or listening to a lecture rather than worshipping.⁸ At other times passages designated for unison reading hardly lend themselves to being read by a group. In one service, "Judaism and the New Woman," a congregational reading begins:

During the nineteenth century, reform spread in Germany and western Europe. 130 years ago, the Breslau Conference granted women total equality: Here is what the rabbis said in this historical convention. . . .

The congregational reading continues with a list of five points about new-found rights for women in regard to mitzvot.⁹ Another service dedicated to exploration of Jewish wit and humor has the group telling a joke about

⁷ See for example: Rabbi Harry Danziger, "Evening Service for the Sabbath" (creative service, Temple Israel, Memphis, TN, 1979); Anonymous, "Boy Scout Service" (creative service, Beth Am Temple, n.p., 1972); Anonymous, "From the Tents of Jacob" (creative service, n.p., 1982).

⁸ See for example: Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Sabbath Service Dedicated to the Memory of Maurice Samuel using quotations from several of his books for the non-musical liturgical portions" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Sharon, MA, n.d.); Anonymous, "Family Worship Service" (creative service, Temple Beth Shalom, n.d.).

⁹ Rabbi Fred M. Raskind, "Sisterhood Shabbat: A Creative Service Based on *Judaism and the New Woman*, by Rabbi Sally Priesand" (creative service, Temple Israel, Greenville, SC, 1977), 2.

Hitler in unison.¹⁰ There is a proclivity for colloquial language in the earlier years, with phrases such as "turned on for love and freedom and peace" or "music that digs a language we must understand."¹¹ There are also many services that contain no directions as to which parts are read by the reader or rabbi, and which are read by the congregation.

These characteristics are typical of many services, but are most common in the early years, perhaps due to less advanced technology. Failure to attend to the aesthetic element could be attributed to these technological factors which made it more difficult to easily present an attractive document free of errors, or to the nature of producing services for one time use. Perhaps rabbis are focusing on theme and content of the services at the expense of presentation and aesthetics. However, these characteristics could also be construed as a deliberate attempt to step back from the formal, hierarchical nature of worship in normative Jewish communities by using a less clear-cut, more informal structure than is found in the standard prayerbook. This is supported by what is known about the choreography of worship in the creative services.

Worship choreography is difficult to determine, since information about the settings in which these services took place is largely unavailable. The choreography that is apparent is deliberately non-hierarchical, however, and one can certainly make other conjectures about the environment in which these services were held. One might suspect, for example, that in more than a few cases the services were taken out of main sanctuaries and

¹⁰ Rabbi K. Baker, "Laughter--the Best Medicine" (creative service, Beth Israel, Plattsburgh, NY, 1978 or 79), 3.

¹¹ Dr. Edgar E. Siskin, "A Service in the Modern Idiom" (creative service, North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL, 1968), 7.

placed in more intimate surroundings, or that worshippers sat in a circle, but there is no way to be certain of this. In general services are less choreographed and this would appear to be an intentional attempt to reduce the formality of the worship experience. What is choreographed is the interaction of the worshippers (as opposed to those sitting on the *bimah*) through movements such as hand holding. There are also some attempts to have varied patterns of reading in which the worshippers interact with each other, through antiphonal readings between men and women or the left side of the room and right side of the room. Lay readers are frequently included, and sing-along music often replaces choirs. This has the effect of bringing the service down amongst the people, requiring less "staging." This appears to reflect an effort to work toward the creation of a closer, warmer, more communal setting, which as we will see, is a key goal of these services. One way in which the importance of community is stressed is in relation to Shabbat.

The Meaning of Shabbat

As became clear in the above discussion, prayer and celebration of Shabbat is often not the primary goal of the creative services, especially in the early years. Before 1975 there are services in which only passing or casual reference is made to Shabbat. It becomes more common after 1975 to find celebration of Shabbat at the center of creative liturgy (primarily through inclusion of songs and readings pertaining to Shabbat) but even then there are often other purposes that overshadow both Shabbat and worship. When Shabbat is mentioned, it is often valued as a means to another important end such as creating community or providing time for self-reflection.

Shabbat is meaningful partially because it is an opportunity to strengthen one's bonds to the community, to feel love and warmth. This message is often implicit; the importance of community, togetherness and belonging, while emphasized, is not always specifically connected to Shabbat. Sometimes, however, this relationship is clearly stated:

As we observe Shabbat together, may we understand its meaning and capture its mood.

Bring us closer to one another in love;

With laughter and soft words,

With shared concerns and mutual respect. ¹²

Similarly:

We give thanks, O God, for love and companionship. In the spirit of the Shabbat may we always find rest from our labors and refuge from cares; may our joys be deepened and our griefs softened by the love we give and receive. ¹³

Shabbat is a time to celebrate love and companionship. It gives one a feeling of belonging to a greater whole and provides a sense of togetherness that is very important to worshippers. This theme will be addressed at greater length when looking at the question of how the community views itself and the world. There are also other ways in which Shabbat is considered important, however.

Shabbat assumes special significance when considered against the frenzied quality of life. The appeal of Shabbat as a time out from the world, a forced pause from the continual motion of the week (as expressed in popular readings by Abraham Joshua Heschel and Mordecai Kaplan) grew

¹² Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Shabbat" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, 1977-80), 9.

¹³ Anonymous, "From Generation to Generation" (creative service, Temple Beth Am, n.p., 1982), 2.

stronger as lives became more chaotic and rushed. Sentences like, "This moment is a respite from our busy running and frantic schedules—a period of peace"¹⁴ dominate the mention of Shabbat and become increasingly common. In this context Shabbat takes on an almost utilitarian feel at times and it is not infrequent to find formulations such as this one:

The world is too much with us. We are so busy providing for our loved ones, caring for our children, being with our friends, that sometimes we forget the purpose and direction of our lives. . . . This is why our people created this Shabbat day.¹⁵

Shabbat is seen as a human creation that allows individuals to gain the refreshment and perspective that they need in their lives. As part of the general narrowing of the focus of concern that will be seen in these services after 1975, readings tend more and more to direct the worshipper inward to his or her own flaws and needs. Shabbat is portrayed as a response to the individual's need for pause and introspection. In this respect, Shabbat has an almost psychotherapeutic value for the individual, in addition to its role in binding the individual to the larger community. It can be a time for the individual to gain control of his or her life, and to experience a feeling of togetherness with others. These are new levels of meaning ascribed to Shabbat and they greatly overshadow any more traditional language about the importance of Shabbat.

In spite of the fact that interpretations of Shabbat such as these are found in these services, it is important to realize that Shabbat itself is only one theme among many of these services. Readings from other sources, centered on diverse themes and ideas dominate the standard liturgy and

¹⁴ Rabbinic Intern Yoel Kahn, "Qabbalat Shabbat" (1983), 1.

¹⁵ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Shabbat Family Service" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, n.d.), 1.

celebration of Shabbat. While the reasons for this are unclear, the de-emphasis of Shabbat would seem to indicate an increasingly varied understanding of the purpose of communal worship and prayer. Indeed, worship and prayer does not often appear to be the true purpose of gathering as a community. Other issues, related to contemporary society and Jewish Identity are uppermost in the mind of the liturgists and the worshippers, as will be seen shortly. Many of the creative services provide more of an opportunity to focus on these concerns, than to celebrate Shabbat in and of itself. The source material drawn upon in compiling these services gives some indication of the nature of these issues and concerns.

Secondary Source Material and Music

While the traditional liturgical texts discussed above are chosen selectively, so are the readings and sources that have become such a prominent part of these services. Some sources are drawn from the English texts of the prayerbooks themselves. From the *UPB*, three readings remain consistently popular, and all in fact are also included (with some alterations) in *GOP*.¹⁶ These three readings are the reading before lighting the candles, the reading for *birkat shalom*, "Grant us peace, Thy most precious gift...", and the reading that is part of the *aleinu*, "May the time not be distant, O God..." The latter two in particular refer to love of God, Israel's mission and the unity of humanity, expressing confidence about a future era of peace. These remain powerful ideas, and their formulation in

¹⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *The Union Prayerbook*, Newly Revised (New York, 1940), 7, 22, 71.

the *UPB* continues to be meaningful, even when other parts of the *UPB* have been rejected.

It is more difficult to speak of use of *GOP*. This prayerbook is used as an anthology, with rabbis picking and choosing readings from various services. One service contains selections from services 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9.¹⁷ Oftentimes readings are chosen from services that would seem to be ideologically opposed to one another, leading one to question how significant the different themes of the services in *GOP* are to rabbis and lay people. It would appear that readings are chosen because they sound nice, or have an emotional appeal, rather than based on the desire for intellectual consistency. In spite of the diversity of material from *GOP* that is utilized, certain selections are found with particular frequency. The *avot* is commonly chosen from *GOP*, particularly from services 6, 7 or 8 (the latter two include the matriarchs). In fact, several parts of service 8 are commonly drawn upon. "This service assumes in the worshiper a degree of alienation from Shabbat and Jewish tradition and provides a way back through a confrontation with this estrangement."¹⁸ The common use of material from service eight provides an indication of the spiritual state of many congregants, or at least their rabbis' perception of their state. Of course, it is also possible that the motivation for creating a non-traditional service is to appeal to a segment of the community that would feel alienated from tradition and thus it is not surprising that the themes of challenge and confrontation are found.

¹⁷ Rabbi Murray Saltzman, "Brotherhood Shabbat Service" (creative service, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Baltimore, MD, 1979).

¹⁸ Rabbi Chaim Stern, "Guide to the Services and their Themes," in Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Gates of Understanding*, 175.

There are four readings from service eight that are most frequently included, beginning with the English that is between the *ma'ariv aravim* and the *ahavat olam*: "Once we learned one truth . . . Now we are told that the world can be perceived by many truths. . . ." A second widely used text is the reading that accompanies the *v'ahavta*, with references to Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Finally, the English accompanying the *avot* and *gevurot* is very common: "Our Fathers prayed, each through his own experience of God . . ." and "We pray that we might know before whom we stand, the Power whose gift is life . . ." ¹⁹ These readings share several important characteristics. They speak to common concerns: the increasing relativism of society, the Holocaust and the nuclear threat, the loneliness, isolation and meaninglessness of life. They affirm human potential and the ability of human beings to act in a purposeful and meaningful way. Finally, specifically in the case of the *avot* and the *gevurot*, the language is gentle and comforting. The patriarchs and matriarchs are made personal not distant, human hopes are expressed in the *gevurot* using words like "garden," "blossom," "flower" and "love." The readings drawn from *GOP* are noteworthy because the sentiments that they express are at the heart of the key ideas of the creative liturgy movement and are found throughout the other source material used for creative services. Prayerbooks, however, are only one source that is used in compiling the services.

The variety of themes mentioned above (page 54) gives some indication of the wide range of sources utilized. Material is drawn from sources as different as the American Indians, Buddha, St. Francis of Assisi and Abraham Lincoln. In the years 1965-1975 the breadth of Jewish and

¹⁹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Prayer*, (New York, 1975), 249-256.

non-Jewish sources is almost equally wide. Among the non-Jews some of the most frequently included are poets (e.e. cummings and Walt Whitman in particular), readings from Kahlil Gibran, and Jacques Brel's "If we only have love."²⁰ Among the Jewish authors the most common sources are Abraham Joshua Heschel (variations on his idea of Shabbat as a day devoted to the consecration of time rather than space), Martin Buber (anything related to I-Thou), selections from Eric Fromm's *The Art of Loving* quotes from Elie Wiesel, Mordecai Kaplan's writing about living as an art ("An artist cannot be continually wielding his brush . . . The Sabbath represents those moments when we pause in our brushwork. . . ." ²¹) and selections from *Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp*. Following *GOP* the main difference in sources drawn upon is a significant decrease in the use of non-Jewish sources. This reflects the renewed emphasis on tradition and the more particularist focus that was seen during these years. Much of the same material remained popular although other readings became prominent during this period as well, such as Jack Riemer's "We cannot merely pray to you..."²² Services after 1975 in general contained less diverse material, while services before 1975 were often a series of varied readings from different time periods, cultures and personalities.

It might be helpful to look at three readings that have remained fairly widely used throughout most of the twenty year period as a way of beginning to see which ideas and values were most commonly expressed in

²⁰ Jacques Brel, "If We Only Have Love," in Anonymous, "The Spirit of Friendship - A Special Service Prepared for Sisterhood Sabbath" (creative service, Temple Beth Torah, Upper Nyack, NY, 1975), 2-3.

²¹ Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, "Living is an Art," in Anonymous, "Jewish Clothes--What Are They?" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA, 1971), 1.

²² Rabbi Jack Riemer, "We Cannot Merely Pray to You," in Anonymous, "The Joy of Shabbat" (creative service, Woodlands Community Temple, Woodlands, NY, n.d.), 25.

the creative services. The first reading is "If You Look at the Stars and Yawn" by Aaron Zeitlin, translated by Emanuel Goldsmith.²³

Praise Me, says God, I will know that you love Me.
 Curse Me, I will know that you love Me.
 Praise Me or Curse Me,
 I will know that you love Me.
 Sing out My graces, says God.
 Raise your fist against Me and revile, says God.
 Sing out My graces or revile,
 Reviling is also praise, says God.
 But if you sit fenced off in your apathy,
 Entrenched in "I don't give a damn", says God.
 If you look at the stars and yawn, says God,
 If you see suffering and don't cry out,
 If you don't praise and don't revile,
 Then I created you in vain, says God.

There are a number of key ideas expressed in this reading. It acknowledges and validates anger against God. More than validating this anger, it actually gives it a positive purpose by declaring reviling to be a form of praise. It also seeks to motivate human action by declaring apathy to be the worst form of behavior. The message of the reading is that humans need to be stirred by natural beauty, moved by human anguish and willing to struggle with their relationship with God in order to be fully human. While chaotic events may make apathy appear to be the only possible response to both God and other people, this reading attempts to discourage this reaction.

A second reading, for the blessing of the candles, is adapted from the *UPB* by Rabbi Henry Cohen.²⁴

R: Come, let us welcome the Sabbath.

²³ Aaron Zeitlin, "Praise Me . . .", in Anonymous, "The Joy of Shabbat," 31.

²⁴ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Shabbat Mitzvah," (creative service, Beth David Reform Congregation, Gladwyne, PA, n.d.), 1.

C: May its radiance illumine our hearts as we light these candles.

R: Somewhere in the world there is conflict.

C: Let us kindle the light of peace.

R: Somewhere in our nation there is violence and hate.

C: Let us kindle the light of understanding and love.

R: Somewhere in our community there is deprivation and despair.

C: Let us kindle the light of opportunity and freedom.

R: Somewhere in this congregation there are those who live in doubt and despondency, unable to find their way.

C: May we kindle the light that illumines the path, that the days ahead may be bright with wisdom and warm with happiness.

This prayer effectively sums up the call to action that permeates so many of the creative services of this period. The human potential to fight violence and hate was an idea that was repeatedly stressed during these years. What perhaps gave this particular reading an enduring quality was the fact that it addresses not only the needs of the world at large but the anguish of the the individual. This focus on individual problems as well as on societal turmoil became increasingly common and the combination of these two arenas of concern in this reading may account for some of its appeal. In addition, the language used is the language of warmth and comfort that becomes the centerpiece of creative liturgy. Words like "peace," "warmth," "understanding" and "love" become the key words of prayer.

This is even more clearly evident in the third and most widely used reading, E. Grindell's "The Shabbat." 25

This is the great warmth, the great at homeness;
This is the knowledge of belonging;

25 E. Grindell, "The Shabbat," in Rabbi Fred Neulander, "The Totality of Living is a Religious Act" (creative service, Congregation M'kor Shalom, Mt. Laurel, NJ, n.d.), 21.

The loneliness merging into a strong oneness,
The lost drop of water finding its way into the sea.

The Torah gleams white and silver, and we stand
Singing and praying,
Our hearts warm with peace
Our spirits quiet in the quietness of Shabbat.

This is the end of the week and its beginning.
This is the moment of pause,
The refilling of the empty vessel,
The renewing of the spirit.

This is the remembering;
The shared memory of two thousand years
And the shared embarking upon two thousand more.

This is the hearth, the gathering together;
The pain and the joy.
The tears and the gentle laughter.
This is the benign wisdom in an old man's eyes
And the hope in a boy's fresh voice,
The roots into the past
And the arms stretched forward into the future.

This reading expresses the essence of community, in this case specifically equated with Shabbat. This is another example of the value placed on Shabbat as an opportunity to feel the warmth of community. The language and the imagery of the reading are gentle and consoling, evocative of love, family and peace. "Singing and praying . . . the quietness of Shabbat" is equated with "warmth," "at homeness" and "belonging." Phrases such as this speak to what people desire: community, a "loneness merging into oneness." This is a theme that will be dealt with again because understanding the centrality of community is imperative for a complete understanding of these services.

It is interesting to note that Grindell speaks of "praying and singing" because music also figures prominently in these services. It is not the

majestic singing of "All the World" that is common but rather a more folk, intimate use of melody. From 1965-1975 rabbis drew widely on non-Jewish music, especially American folk music, although even Indian chants and modern day pop music were used. Songs such as Bialik's "Sun on the Tree Top," ("Hachama Meirosh") "Shalom Aleichem" and "Lecha Dodi" were not eliminated by any means, but other songs were added to this basic repertoire: "Day Is Done," "Dona Dona," "To Dream the Impossible Dream," "Sabbath Prayer," and especially, "Last Night I had the Strangest Dream" and "Blowin' in the Wind." These last two songs, which were widely used, address prominent themes: the potential for change in the world ("Last night I had the strangest dream I never dreamed before. I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war"²⁶) and the need to struggle for equality and the unity of humanity ("How many years can some people exist before they're allowed to be free? How many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?"²⁷) In addition, music is integrated into the themes of many services. A service on peace thus might utilize "Sim Shalom," "Lo Yisa Goy," "Hiney Ma Tov" and "To Dream the Impossible Dream."²⁸ In the years after 1975, less American music is used, but more Israeli music and music from the youth movement is drawn upon. Songs such as "Ma Yafeh Hayom," "Eli Eli" and "Hiney Ma Tov"--all of which are simple, easily sung by a group, and evocative of an intimate feeling of togetherness--are increasingly included.

²⁶ Anonymous, "Last Night I had the Strangest Dream," in Rabbi Seymour Prystowsky, "Jewish Worship" (creative service, Congregation Or Ami, Lafayette Hill, PA, 1985), 2-4.

²⁷ Bob Dylan, "Blowin' in the Wind," in Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Erev Shabbat" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1977), 2.

²⁸ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, Untitled (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1968).

While readings and music form the core of most services, there are various other sources and techniques to be found: dance, slides, films, discussions, sharing, hand holding, introducing oneself to a neighbor, and even a jazz rock service. The reasons for these techniques are varied, and certainly in some cases the attractiveness of new technology is the motivating force. Variety and novelty may be seen as a way to bring people into the synagogue. Some of the new elements (hand holding, discussions) seem inspired by the desire to be more inclusive. Sometimes performance oriented elements are introduced such as dancing or showing slides. This perhaps reflects the idea that inspiration to pray is to be found not only in language and music. In many cases there seems to be a striving for new and different ways to create a community in the synagogue. On the record jacket of *Sim Shalom: A Jazz Rock Service*, Rabbi Fredric Pomerantz writes:

"Sim Shalom" is no mere show utilizing the gimmick of nice clean-cut Jewish kids singing Jewish prayer; no concert, capitalizing on the popularity of the jazz-rock mode; no recital where creative prayers are only lamentations of the new world's woes. Here is a service that created an environment and molded the worshipers into a community. God-centered while aware of men, the service uses the rubric of the Reform Jewish Prayer Book but adds a little more. The trumpets and drums, reeds and trombones, organ and guitar, choir and cantor, reader and congregation merge so that in the end they heed the call to "Worship the Lord in Gladness" and "Come before Him with Song."²⁹

While many liturgists utilized new techniques as a way of reaching for fuller, more meaningful prayer experiences, other novel methods employed (such as films) seem to be directed to educational rather than worship ends.

²⁹ Rabbi Fredric S. Pomerantz, *Sim Shalom: Jazz Rock Service* (recording, Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, PA, 1970).

In these cases conveying a certain message would seem to be more important than prayer.

Morning Services, Dinner Rituals, Havdalah and Printed Prayerbooks

Most of the services discussed to this point have been Friday evening services, because they comprise an overwhelmingly number of the services that I have collected. Before going on to discuss the themes of the services and the questions raised by Hoffman, however, services for other forms of Shabbat celebration are worth mentioning. I studied a few creative Shabbat morning services, but they are largely unimaginative. They are very similar to most of the Friday evening services, with appropriate changes in the liturgy for a morning service. If they include any part of the traditional morning liturgy, it is usually brief. As early as 1969, a few home Shabbat services can be found. These usually contain songs, readings, the basic Shabbat table blessings, and sometimes additional material on tzedakah or family. Many of them provide explanations of the ritual and attempt to guide the family step by step through the Friday evening Shabbat ritual.³⁰

Havdalah services have been produced throughout this period as well, often for retreats, installations or other special occasions. The eleven services that I studied all contain the basic blessings, although not necessarily in the traditional order. The interpretive readings are varied, with the havdalah objects symbolizing a wide diversity of things. In one

³⁰ Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf, "Solel Sabbath Service for the Home" (creative service, Temple Solel, Chicago, IL, 1969); Rabbi Fred Davidow, "Remember the Sabbath Day by Setting It Apart" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, Plattsburgh, NY, 1973); Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "A Guide to the Celebration of Shabbat" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, 1983).

service the wicks of the candle represent love, justice and peace,³¹ in another God, Torah, Israel and the Jew,³² and in a third the intertwining of sacred and profane.³³ The spices represent the uniqueness of each person (or in one case, the different types of Jews) who come together as a beautiful whole.³⁴ Several services emphasize that the holiness of the wine depends on how we use it.³⁵ Havdalah most often symbolizes distinction in the moral realm: "Havdalah teaches us that we must differentiate between the holy and the profane, between what is right and what is wrong and what is true and what is false."³⁶ The services utilize the language of joy and fellowship, as do the Shabbat evening services, and speak of the ability to turn what is profane into something holy. The havdalah services, like the morning services and home rituals, are thus similar in perspective and emphasis to the Friday evening services.

Creative liturgy is not restricted to mimeographed services. Various synagogues have published their own prayerbooks, reflecting their particular communities and needs. While published prayerbooks are not the major focus of this thesis, a few brief comments are in order. In some instances these prayerbooks appear to be a magnified version of the

³¹ Jerry Nodiff, "Havdalah Ceremony," (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1969), 2.

³² Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Havdalah" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1969), 2.

³³ Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Havdalah Service" (creative service, Temple Israel Boston, MA, n.d.), 5.

³⁴ Rabbi Philip M. Posner, "A Decade of Rabbi-Congregational Relationship--Havdalah" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, Riverside, CA, 1980, 2; Rabbi Lewis Littman, "Havdalah" (creative service, Central Synagogue of Nassau County, Rockville Center, NY, 1980), 2.

³⁵ See for example, Rabbi William Sajowitz, "Havdalah Service" (creative service, Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.), 2.

³⁶ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Havdalah" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1969), 1.

individual services, representing an anthology of readings and prayers.³⁷ In other instances, the prayerbooks are a conscious and deliberate attempt to represent the philosophy and ideology of the community. A notable example of this is the *Vetaher Libenu* by Congregation Beth-El of the Sudbury River Valley, which was published originally in 1975, and then revised in 1980. This prayerbook is unique in both the process of its creation and in the final result:

Vetaher Libenu was composed by a congregation searching for its spiritual sources. Every member was invited to join in the composition of the new siddur which would restore much of the traditional Hebrew materials removed by earlier reformers. . . . Although we made some modest changes (adding the matriarchs to the *tefilah*, for example), we have retained traditional Hebrew liturgy for those accustomed to its cadence and beauty. We have, however, reinterpreted all of the Hebrew in contemporary English to reflect what we believe to be the liturgical orientation of our Congregation: We have emended many of the feudal epithets that crowd God's name; we have tried to remove references to our God as one among many, and we have tried to dismantle the ancient metaphor. . . of the Creator as a hoary old king. . . . In most cases, however, we have chosen to address the Holy One as You rather than He or She.³⁸

Vetaher Libenu is unique in many ways--it contains liturgy that is more traditional than that of the *GOP*; it is egalitarian in all respects, and does not fail to include original compositions and readings (although not directly accompanying any prayers). The prayerbook has a clear philosophy and direction, derived from years of study and work, and this sets it apart from many creative services which are not always thematically or structurally

³⁷ Rabbi Fred Neulander, "The Totality of Living is a Religious Act."

³⁸ Congregation Beth-El of the Sudbury River Valley, *Vetaher Libenu* (Sudbury, MA, 1980), 3-4.

integrated. Works like *Vetaher Libenu* are not commonly found, however, nor are creative Shabbat services for occasions other than Friday evening. This clearly reflects the overwhelming emphasis in Reform synagogues on Friday evening as the primary time for Shabbat celebration, an emphasis that was constant throughout the twenty year period.

Change Over Time

The question of change over the course of the twenty years will be dealt with in the rest of the chapter as it applies to the topics being discussed. Although some comments about the differences between the earlier and later years have already been made, a few summary comments about change as it relates to the use of traditional liturgical texts, structure and sources might be helpful before moving to the other questions that we will consider. If new worship patterns arise out of a desire to be dependent on the past on one hand and independent on the other (see page 6, note 14) then this twenty year period can be seen as one of shifting balance. The frequent quoting of the Baal Shem Tov (as retold by Buber)³⁹ in reference to the phrase "Our God and God of our fathers" in the *avot* ("We say 'our God' in reference to our studies, and 'God of our fathers' with an eye to tradition") reflects an awareness of this tension. In the earlier years the "independence" was reflected much more strongly than the relation to a community of the past. In more recent times, the liturgy has reflected less alienation from tradition, using an increasingly greater quantity of traditional texts and Jewish sources. Over the years the weight between

³⁹ Martin Buber, "Why do we say? . . ." in Albert A. Goldman, "Order of Service" (creative service, The Isaac M. Wise Temple, K.K. B'nai Yeshurun, Cincinnati, OH, 1973-76), 12.

Independence and continuity has become more evenly distributed, even at times shifting to the opposite side. Services are less free form, more like each other and more like *GOP* in form and content. They have become less related to the ideas and thoughts in vogue at a particular time and thus they seem to possess a more timeless quality.

Hoffman reminds us of the importance in a holistic study of liturgy of noticing changes in the worship styles because they may well reflect changes in the worshippers self-perception. Greater use of Hebrew and traditional liturgical texts reflects a greater desire to be connected to tradition, to affirm one's place in Jewish tradition. It would appear that continuity and community grew to be more highly valued than independence over the course of the twenty years. While creative services have multiple purposes, prayer and Shabbat celebration have become more central as time goes on, also reflecting a greater connection to tradition. All in all, creative services are less radical in the 1980's than in the 1960's. They are more likely to express traditional themes in modern ways, or with a different emphasis, than to strike out in wholly new directions. This suggests that worshippers increasingly desire stability, growing more likely to see themselves as connected to tradition than as innovators. This question of the worshipper's self-definition as it emerges from the creative services is the next important question to consider.

How do Worshippers Order the World and Define Themselves in Relationship to It?

By looking at the common themes of these services, it will be possible to gain insight into how communities define themselves and their relationship to the world at large. The disorder of society in general is a

frequently found theme throughout the services of this twenty year period, although most particularly in the first ten years. This is not at all surprising given the revolutionary changes that took place during these years. Societal problems are acknowledged in the context of worship, usually boldly and harshly. Occasionally the response that is given to these problems is despair, or at least acceptance and tolerance of the world in spite of the existence of turmoil. A more frequent tendency is to acknowledge the role of humanity in creating the evils that plague society:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and earth, the land, and all the creatures therein, it was good. And God gave man dominion over the earth and entrusted the earth into man's care. And man has misused that trust. Oh, Lord, You created the genius in man, and man has made that very genius his potential source of self-destruction. ⁴⁰

Similarly: "Save us, Our Father, from ourselves; You made the world for peace, and we have made it an armed camp."⁴¹ The ability to question and search for answers is praised. "The quest for a meaningful Jewish life is grounded in freedom, change, study, struggle, resolution, commitment and re-evaluation."⁴² Searching and questioning is defined as part of what it means to be a Jew. The role and responsibility of the individual is regarded very highly throughout these services, even when it necessitates pointing out the harsh truth that people are responsible for the very chaos they seek to escape.

⁴⁰ Rabbi Louis J. Sigel, "A Respect for Nature is Reverence for God: A Creative Sabbath Eve Service for Sisterhood of Temple Emeth" (creative service, Temple Emeth, Teaneck, NJ, 1970), 5-6.

⁴¹ Rabbis Sidney Greenberg and Allen Sugarman, "Save Us, Our Father," in Rabbi Robert Kahn, ed., "Variations on the Amidah for Sabbath Eve" (creative service, n.d.), 13.

⁴² Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Independence: God and the Jew, the Jew and His Judaism" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, 1973), 7.

Most often, however, the notion of human responsibility is used to highlight not just the guilt of humanity, but the ability of humanity to repair the world. This is one of the most common messages of the creative services throughout the entire period; it appears in almost every service in some form or another. The centrality of this idea and the complete faith in human ability to change the world is reflected in "We Cannot Merely Pray to You" by Jack Riemer:

... We cannot merely pray to you, O God,
to end starvation;
for You have already given us the resources
With which to feed the entire world
If only we would use them wisely ... 43

The potential of the individual is sometimes pointed and direct: [The Messiah] ... will come from the family of King David. A man. A man. A man, yet inspired. And are we all not descendants of David? Indeed we are!" 44 Biblical texts are commonly used to emphasize the belief in a future of peace and unity. Prophetic texts are common (Isaiah 2:1-4), as are texts which can be understood as emphasizing human ability to make the choices needed to create this future (Deut. 30:11-14, Deut. 30:19). It is also interesting that the theme of human potential is sometimes carried so far that it is used as an explanation for world evils: war and poverty exist *so that humans can use their potential and abilities to eliminate them*.

O Lord, I often wonder where you are. So many things bother me. War and bloodshed, hunger and unhappiness. We wish you would change these things. But, perhaps these things are Your

43 Rabbi Jack Riemer, "We Cannot Merely Pray to You," in Anonymous, "The Joy of Shabbat," 25.

44 Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Messiah: the Idea, the Man, and his Days" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, 1974), 4.

way of helping us to become better people, by leaving us things to change. By leaving us with a world that still needs improvement, you let us share with you the shaping of our world.⁴⁵

The chaos and turmoil that seem to overwhelm and render humanity helpless are made manageable by emphasizing the human capability to rid the world of such ills.

Many services thus define the worshippers as a community dedicated to using their potential to solve the world's problems. As Hoffman has pointed out, articulating these ideas through worship can bring them into being, making them real (see page 3). Ritual can enable worshippers to leave the synagogue believing in something that they did not believe in before, seeing the world in a way that was not visible before they entered the synagogue. In the process of worship, the community worshipping from these services defines itself as a group that has the ability and responsibility to change and better the world. This enables the members of the community to see themselves in a new relationship to a troubled world upon leaving the synagogue.

While societal turmoil is one conflict that presents itself to worshippers and liturgists, the pains and trials in the life of the individual are of equal concern. The increasing concern with one's own needs and troubles, resulting from the disillusionment with society and America that occurred in the tumultuous sixties, affected the entire national religious culture and is very much reflected in the creative services of this time period. The sense of loneliness and isolation that people often experience is countered by assertions in the liturgy of the unity of all humankind. This

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Sisterhood Sabbath" (creative service, Temple Isaiah, Forest Hills, NY, 1984), 5-6.

helps to explain the popularity of readings such as "May the time not be distant . . ."

Over the years, however, the vision of the unity of humanity is dominated by a more limited vision--the assertion of the unity of the worshippers of a particular place. While the theme of community was certainly stressed from 1965-1975, its importance grew in the following years, as has been repeatedly pointed out. The difference in the attitudes of these two decades can be seen by comparison of two readings on holiness. An early version of a prayer on holiness (found in a 1969 service) states, "There is holiness when nations meet to beat their swords into plowshares. . . . There is holiness in a laboratory when a vaccine is discovered to destroy disease. . . ." ⁴⁶ Rabbi Sidney Greenberg's "Where is Holiness?" focuses on community rather than lofty achievement: ". . . There is holiness when we love--truly, honestly and unselfishly. . . . There is holiness when we share--our bread, our ideas, our enthusiasms. . . ." ⁴⁷ This latter reading is commonly found from 1975-1985, indicating that the most significant and holiest moments were found in intimate, communal events, rather than in grand and lofty occasions. The activism of the sixties did not revolutionize the world in the way that many had hoped for; skepticism about the possibility of a unified and improved world grew and perhaps gave way to the more limited, attainable goal of a small and unified community.

The cure for loneliness is thus increasingly presented as available in the smaller community of worshippers. As was discussed above, this is one

⁴⁶ Rabbi Harry Essrig, "A Hasidic Creative Service," (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA), 4.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Sidney Greenberg, "Where is Holiness," in Rabbi Fred Neulander, "The Totality of Living is a Creative Act," 2.

way in which Shabbat is valued, for Shabbat worship provides a means for the creation of the community. The community is depicted as the source of warmth, love, friendship and caring--words and images that were shown to be common in some of the most frequently mentioned readings (such as the E. Grindell's "The Shabbat.") The number of services devoted to love, friendship and family reflect the centrality of community. Phrases such as "Please help us to strengthen one another as true friends do, with gentle words and acts of kindness"⁴⁸ or,

May our words of prayer bring us closer together, helping us to enjoy all the more the closeness of family and the love of young and old that is so much a part of our people and our faith⁴⁹

form the core of a majority of the creative services.

Interestingly, community is related to another commonly found theme: challenging and questioning Judaism. The challenge to religion and the role of religion in the life of the individual was typical of this period. It is thus perhaps not surprising that questions concerning the relevance of Judaism and doubts about God and the Jewish heritage were plentiful, particularly in the earlier years. The questions raised reveal a degree of alienation from Judaism, and again the creative services suggest that the creation of a community is a way to alleviate this estrangement. If the answer to the quest for community in a world of isolation is to be found in the synagogue, then being a Jew becomes more meaningful and relevant. The congregation is often equated to a family ("We rejoice this evening, together as a

⁴⁸ Anonymous, "The Spirit of Friendship: A Special Service Prepared for Sisterhood Sabbath" (creative service, Temple Beth Torah, Upper Nyack, NY, 1975), 1.

⁴⁹ Rabbi Howard Simon, "A Service of Love" (creative service, K.K. Bene Israel Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH, 1983), 1.

congregation, as a family"⁵⁰) and the synagogue is the place where one comes to feel companionship:

People look for peace the world over.
 Strife in the Middle East
 Turmoil in Poland
 Economic problems everywhere.
 Then I join these, my friends.
 Everyone seems to be at peace
 with themselves
 and others.
 I feel better for having their companionship.⁵¹

While emphasizing the role of the synagogue as a community does not provide answers to the doubts that people face, it does make the synagogue a place where people feel comfortable, thus lessening the general feeling of alienation felt by so many. The increased use of traditional liturgical texts and Jewish sources in later years indicates that this alienation from tradition lessened over time. This did not, however, alleviate the need to reinforce the feeling of connection to the synagogue and Judaism. The use of traditional Jewish material does reinforce a feeling of belonging by emphasizing the connection to the Jewish people as a whole, in addition to the togetherness and sense of connection that is felt by a particular community of worshippers.

Another way of dealing with unhappiness and discontent over one's current Jewish life is to evoke a past Jewish life that might have been better. There is a fair amount of nostalgia for years past in the multitude of family and hasidic services which recall parents and grandparents who

⁵⁰ Alfred Ronald, "A Shabbat Service in Celebration of the Jewish Family Experience" (creative service, Westchester Reform Temple, Westchester, NY, 1977), 1.

⁵¹ Anonymous, "Emanu Elders Shabbat" (creative service, Congregation Emanu-El, Houston, TX, 1983), 10.

"truly" celebrated Shabbat and rabbis and Jews who knew the "true" wisdom of prayer and study. Services such as a "Yiddish Musical Sabbath"⁵² stimulate a positive feeling and a warmth about the richness of Jewish life, even though the words of the songs certainly do not provide the religious answers or insight that people desire. Doubts are temporarily eliminated as one feels a sense of comfort and belonging. Occasionally this hearkening to ages past is used in an attempt to motivate people to change their behavior as Jews, reflecting the doubts of the rabbi if not of the congregants. Services sometimes contain direct challenges to assimilation by speaking of a return to old ways: "We must re-establish the Jewish parent in the traditional role as a symbol and transmitter of Jewishness and renew in the Jewish home the character and influence with which it was once endowed."⁵³

In summarizing the question of how the world is ordered for those who worship from these services, several patterns of making meaning emerge. While the world is chaotic, people have some responsibility for the problems that exist, and more importantly, the responsibility to use their God-given potential to repair them. Worshippers gain a renewed sense of their relationship to the world, for only through wise human choices and actions will the chaos ultimately be reduced. They are also able to see themselves in a new light by worshipping together. Individuals feel alone in the world except in the community formed by the worshippers; they feel unceasingly busy except in the pause that is Shabbat. While they may enter

⁵² Rabbi Lewis Littman, "A Yiddish Musical Sabbath" (creative service, Anshe Hesed, Erie, PA, 1974).

⁵³ Rabbi Morley Feinstein, "Temple Beth-El Family Service" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, South Bend, IN, 1985), 3.

the synagogue feeling isolated in a hopelessly out-of-control world, they can leave feeling more in control, warmed by the embrace of a community that shares some of their needs, their doubts and their history.

Sacred Myth

The sacred myth that is related in the course of ritualizing during these years centers on the survival of the Jewish people in spite of (or perhaps even because of) oppression and persecution. The significance of survival is often stated by liturgists in clear and unequivocal language. The following reading is the opening prayer in a service and is followed by the *shehecheyanu*:

Gather close. Come--family, friends--gather close. We have a story to tell.

Our story is a story without end. Survival is its name.
The world asks--the world always asks: How is it that you are here? How is it that you are still here?

And we draw in our breath, lest our words and ideas
just tumble out. That is how it is when mind and heart
merge into one.

So we contain our emotions--and what do we say?

We say simply, certainly: Yes. Yes, we are here.
And Eternity is implicit in our tone, in our knowing smile, in
the light in our eyes.

We will always be here. ⁵⁴

In this reading it is the simple fact of survival in and of itself that is celebrated. By participating in the reading the worshipper expresses gratitude that the Jewish people has continued to exist and confidence that it will continue to exist in the future. Similarly, in a service devoted to the idea that Jewish wit and the ability to laugh in the face of pain have enabled

⁵⁴ Phyllis Harris, "Make Me A Sanctuary" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX, 1979), 1.

the people to endure, survival is made into a an occasion for rejoicing by the use of jokes and stories about oppressors.⁵⁵

Survival is important not only in and of itself, but because it becomes the purpose and goal to which other symbols and values are directed. In many of the family services the Jewish family is praised not for its own sake only, but because it has enabled the Jewish people to survive. Praise of God is based on an appreciation of survival throughout time, for "... It is the story of the travail and the courage of our people that allows us to sing Thy praises."⁵⁶ The survival of the Jewish people through the ages becomes the *raison d'être* of many other Jewish activities and behaviors.

Since survival is a value that resonates with Jews during this period, history is often depicted in a fashion that is intended to focus on the survival of the Jewish people in spite of persecution. Abba Hillel Silver's "I was with Abraham," which emphasizes the pain and triumphs of the Jews throughout the ages, is often quoted. In this reading the years from Akiva to Ellis Island are filled only with suffering, madness and brutality for the Jews, but "like a Phoenix . . . [they] rise again in the old land." At the end of the reading the question appears: "Shall I leave them now? Can I part company with this immortal band whom I love? They have become too dear and precious to me."⁵⁷ The seeming immortality of the people against all odds is the greatest factor contributing to the feeling that one is intimately bound to the Jewish people. A similar view of history is portrayed in a service in 1977 at Temple Akiva, where the victories of Massada and the

⁵⁵ Rabbi K. Baker, "Laughter--the Best Medicine."

⁵⁶ Rabbi Amiel Wohl, "A Sabbath Service Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the 'Night of the Murdered Poets'" (creative service, UAHC Biennial, San Francisco, CA, 1977), 1.

⁵⁷ Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, "I was with Abraham," in Rabbi Seymour Prystowsky, "Jewish Worship," 8-11.

Maccabees are among the historical events chosen for inclusion; Spain is mentioned only in the context of the Inquisition and not in reference to the Golden Age. At the end of the same reading, the reason or purpose of Jewish survival is given: in order to receive a special responsibility, to accept the role given to the Jewish people to proclaim the unity of all humanity.⁵⁸

This is one of many reasons given to explain Jewish survival against overwhelming odds. More often, survival in the face of persecution is the reason why Jews today are obligated to fight persecution.

On this Shabbat we remember the Holocaust and we say: Never again! Never again will it happen in Israel, in Russia, in Syria, in Ethiopia. Never again, because we Jews who are free will not allow the wanton slaughter of our people.⁵⁹

It is not uncommon to find that Shabbat itself is overshadowed by the memory of Jewish survival. Shabbat is an occasion to remember the Jewish history of suffering, in particular the Holocaust which is often described as the epitome of persecution. The meaning of persecution and oppression, especially in reference to the Holocaust, is most often found in the State of Israel. One brotherhood service (a narrative of the history of the Jewish people with no liturgical text) focuses on the Holocaust and the State of Israel and voices a common sentiment:

We are a nation--the enemy has made us one without our desiring it, as has always happened in history. In oppression we stand together and we suddenly discover our strength. For we do have the strength to create a state. . . .⁶⁰

⁵⁸ John Gropper, "Erev Shabbat" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1977), 3-5.

⁵⁹ Rabbi Sally Priesand, "Shabbat Service in Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" (creative service, Monmouth Reform Temple, Tinton Falls, NJ, 1982), 4.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, "Brotherhood Service" (creative service, 1973), 6.

Other services relate the same message subtly by beginning with readings on the Holocaust and moving toward Israeli pictures, songs and readings.⁶¹ The founding of the State of Israel is sometimes used as proof that God has not abandoned the Jewish people in spite of the horrors of the Holocaust,⁶² but more often it is attributed to human resilience and the natural ability of the Jewish people to survive.

Interestingly enough, survival and persecution are so intertwined that in an age of plenty such as this one fears are expressed about the future of the Jewish people.

Jews who wandered in deserts beneath the stars knew their hearts were hungry for God. Jews who studied in candle-lit ghetto room thirsted longingly after God. But we who are smothered with comfort sometimes forget to listen to God.⁶³

This is also part of the tendency toward nostalgia that was mentioned above. Jews of ages past are to be admired for their ability to survive adverse circumstances--something that worshippers doubt about themselves. While worshippers may not feel confident of their own future, they do feel confident about their past. Celebration of the fact that they have survived to this point subsumes lessens doubts about the future that may exist due to insecurity about one's own Jewish identity.

The most visible symbol of the survival of the Jewish people is the Torah. Torah serves as a multivalent symbol, encompassing a variety of

⁶¹ Rabbi Morley Feinstein, "From Destruction to Dignity" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, South Bend, IN, 1983).

⁶² Anonymous, "Service on the Theme of Freedom and the Holocaust" (creative service, Temple Adath Israel, Lexington, KY, 1975), 1.

⁶³ Ruth Brin, "A Sense of Thy Presence," in "Sabbath Service" (creative service, Contemporaries of Temple Beth Am, n.p., 1981), 6. See also: Rabbi Albert Goldman, "Order of Service," 2; Anonymous, "Sabbath Eve Service created by Emeth Sisterhood and Brotherhood" (creative service, Temple Emeth, n.p., 1973), 4.

meanings depending on the needs of the liturgist. It is rarely attributed to God; often it is mentioned with no reference to God at all. Torah service liturgy is generally unimaginative, utilizing some combination of the *UPB* or *GOP*, beginning with an introductory paragraph on the meaning of Torah. Through these paragraphs the varieties of meaning associated with Torah become evident. A few of the metaphors and descriptions used for Torah from 1976-1980 are: "fountain of life," "what makes us perfect," "that which denies victory to defilers of man," "the life of the people," "freedom," "that which has been through desert and fire," "our guide," "what gives us faith in existence," "the vision of America," "source of peace." (This five year period is used as an example--the range of metaphors is equally wide in other years.) Moreover, Torah is usually described in a fashion that fits the theme of a particular service. In a service on the Holocaust, the Torah is "the Jewish answer to a world without law. . . a world wherein men smite one another."⁶⁴ In a service devoted to peace, the Torah enables us to "see how brilliantly man creates peace and how foolishly he squanders it away."⁶⁵ In services of love the Torah represents love, in services devoted to families it shows the history of Jewish families. Torah is commonly valued for the lessons it teaches the Jews and the world at large--a utilitarian viewpoint similar to the utilitarian attitude about Shabbat. The word "Torah" is often used in the broadest sense, as in the following reading, which is also found in *GOP*:

⁶⁴ Alfred Ronald, "Sabbath Service of Responsibility (on the Holocaust)" (creative service, Westchester Reform Temple, Westchester, NY, 1972), 20.

⁶⁵ Rabbi Howard A. Simon, "A Sabbath Service of Peace for the New Year" (K.K. Bene Israel-Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH, 1983), 6.

What is Torah? It is what God has revealed to us, and what we have come to understand about God. It is the ideas and ideals, the laws and commandments, that make up our religious heritage. It is the experience of Abraham and Sarah, the legislation of Moses, the vision of the prophets, the commentary of the Rabbis, the insight of the Mystics. It is the questions we ask and the answers we receive, when we seek to understand God, the world, and ourselves. ⁶⁶

Most frequently, however, Torah is used as a symbol of the survival of the Jewish people and the Jewish heritage.

This, our Torah, as seen through the binoculars of time, has not always been dressed in fine cloth and silver. She has been torn and defiled by the barbarian as well as cherished and defended as a child, by those so charged; mocked and reviled as well as admired and revered. She has survived hell itself, to be again held, as a beloved, with tenderness. ⁶⁷

It represents the survival of ancient generations, and because they survived in order to keep it alive, Jews today are required to do the same:

These words have outlived monuments and empires;
We want them to live through us, until the end of time.
We owe it to our ancestors to keep Torah alive;
They struggled and suffered to preserve our way of life;
They knew this to be their most precious gift to us.
We owe it to our children to keep Torah alive;
For why should they be spiritual paupers
When the riches of this heritage can be theirs? ⁶⁸

If survival is the core of the sacred myth depicted in these services, then Torah is the symbol of that survival and the endurance of Torah throughout generations of persecution obligates Jews today to keep Torah alive.

⁶⁶ Rabbi John D. Rayner, in Rabbi Peter Rubenstein, "Prayers for Shabbat" (creative service, Woodlands Community Temple, Woodlands, New York, n.d.), 34.

⁶⁷ Rabbi Fred Joel Witkoff, "A New Flask" (creative service, Temple Judea, Coral Gables, FL, 1973), 15.

⁶⁸ Rabbis Jack Riemer and Harold Kushner, in Anonymous, "Sabbath Service" (creative service, Contemporaries of Temple Beth Am, n.p., 1981), 5.

Before summarizing the subject of sacred myth, a word about the role of women is necessary. For the most part women are excluded from the sacred myth portrayed, or at least they are not specifically included. (It is interesting to note that in the creative services of these twenty years there were only scattered attempts at utilizing gender-free language. It was not by any means used frequently or consistently.) Some services, mostly for sisterhood Sabbaths, attempt to articulate a specific and significant history for women. There is tremendous variation in the nature of the history portrayed and how it is applied, and thus no clear sacred myth emerges. Most strive to depict a history in which women have made valuable contributions as leaders, although this history is not necessarily utilized to encourage modern women to pursue leadership roles. In one service (undated, but probably before 1975), the contributions of Ruth, Deborah and Esther are celebrated; they are represented as leaders whose strength and determination helped the Jewish people. Yet, they are not portrayed as role models for women in leadership positions. While their personal characteristics may be worthy of emulation, the implications of their roles are not connected to the potential and abilities possessed by modern women. In the silent prayer women are still praised for their contributions to the house and family and for their "cuisine extraordinaire."⁶⁹

In another service, based on Sally Priesand's *Judaism and the New Woman*,⁷⁰ the contributions of women--ancient and modern--are celebrated

⁶⁹ Rabbi Howard Simon, "Ruth and Esther and Deborah" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, n.p., n.d.), 5.

⁷⁰ Rabbi Fred M. Raskind, "Sisterhood Shabbat: A Creative Service Based on *Judaism and the New Woman*, by Rabbi Sally Priesand."

and the expanding boundaries of women's rights are explored. The service appears to be more about women than addressed to women, focusing on the history of discrimination against women and the history of fighting for women's rights in Judaism. In examining the contemporary situation, Reform congregations are criticized for the dearth of women in leadership positions. The history portrayed is a history of discrimination, and the focus of the service is on the need to abandon this history by integrating women into the general flow of Jewish life. A sisterhood service from 1983 is different from either of these, for it includes a variety of role models, and specifically points out how these women can serve as role models for modern women, praising God for the "creative spirit" imbued in women.⁷¹ This service speaks to women, creating a broad heritage to which women are heirs.

From these and other services, it is clear that the role of women in Jewish history is still ambiguous; there is no sense of any specific, agreed upon history that is articulated liturgically as it pertains to women, thus constituting a sacred myth. Although depicted favorably as individuals, women are not integrated into the general myth, nor has a sacred myth of their own been fully developed. A clear definition of the role of women throughout the two thousand years of the Jewish people has not emerged in creative liturgy of these years, although a few individuals seem to be struggling in that direction.

Summarizing the sacred myth of these services, it is necessary to recognize the importance of survival. Jewish history is depicted as a

⁷¹ Rabbi Sally Priesand, "Sisterhood Sabbath" (creative service, Monmouth Reform Temple, Tinton Falls, NJ, 1983), 3.

celebration of survival. This is true throughout the twenty year period, but like the centrality of community, it seems to be more strongly emphasized after 1975, perhaps connected to events in the State of Israel and a renewed focus on particularism. The emphasis on survival may also help explain certain liturgical changes that occurred during these years, such as the inclusion of more Hebrew and a more structured liturgy. As Jewish survival and history were more valued, the language and tradition of the Jewish people became more important as well. Furthermore, it became clear during this time period that the emphasis on survival was not limited to creative liturgy, but rather that it had a broader place in American Reform Judaism as seen in the Centenary Perspective.⁷² As expressed liturgically, the Jewish heritage has survived both in spite of and because of persecution, and because it has survived to this point Jews today are obligated to assure its continuance. Shabbat is a time for worshippers to celebrate the endurance of their people, Torah is a visible symbol of Jewish tradition and of survival against all odds. The reasons for the importance of the survival myth are unclear, but it may well have something to do with contemporary uncertainty about the future. The continual assertion of past survival may in fact help worshippers to believe in the future.

The Divine-Human Relationship

The final question to explore is the nature of the Divine-human relationship that exists in these services. Hoffman uses three terms that help to structure the questions that need to be asked in determining how

⁷² Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (New York, 1988), 384.

worshippers perceive the Divine.⁷³ The first is the *cultural backdrop*, the context against which images of God are developed. The second is the *master image*, the central image of God that is portrayed, congruent with the cultural backdrop. The final term is *synecdochal vocabulary*, which means not only words, but gestures and actions that point to something beyond themselves, in this case the master image of the Divine. Hoffman proposes a master image and synecdochal vocabulary for the cultural backdrop of modern day America that is very much supported by the creative services of the past twenty years. He says:

[The] cultural backdrop of America . . . was founded on the notion of eradicating the very class distinctiveness on which Europe was based. . . . As we live now in a cultural backdrop of theoretical equality, our *master image* can hardly feature a God of transcendence. For us God will not be imaged as distant, therefore, but as immanently present among us. And our *synecdochal vocabulary* will be words, gestures, actions, and objects that deny the distance driving God from our midst. Synecdochal vocabulary for American worship, therefore, must point to intimacy, not distance. That is the point of "community." . . . Far from destroying community, we need more than anything else to build it up, because that is where God will be present among us.⁷⁴

Phrases such as "God is present in the unity of man" or "We find God through the love of family and friends," are used repeatedly throughout this period. The use of Buber is also part of the same philosophy since Buber emphasizes the relationship, the meeting, in which God becomes present. This theme is repeated with such frequency that one wonders if in fact the worshippers needed to be convinced of its veracity, and indeed this might be the case.

⁷³ Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer -- Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C., 1988), 166-172.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 173.

Hoffman points out that people may often experience God without recognizing the experience as an encounter with the Divine, for there is a tendency to think of God as existing in the mighty and awesome while being unaware of the presence of God in other contexts, such as the warmth of community.

Whether our faith stops at faith in general or goes on to become faith in God depends largely on what we mean by God, what evidence of God we expect to find, and whether we would recognize God sufficiently "to let God in." If God is seen by us exactly as we imagined in our childhood, we may not find in our prayers clear and ample demonstration of God's reality. Similarly if we look only for the grand triumphant fingerprints that a mighty transcendent God must surely leave behind, we may be making the error of looking for God in today's world through the lenses of eyeglasses that became blurred with age almost a century ago.⁷⁵

Indeed, the whole tendency toward nostalgia supports this attitude. It is easy to believe that generations past met God in awesome and fearful times; it is not so easy to believe that God is clearly accessible in this comfortable age. Many of the readings about God in these services attempt to show worshippers that indeed they are meeting God, perhaps where they least expect the meeting to occur.

This image of God holds true throughout the twenty year period, but it becomes more clearly stated with each passing year. Mentioning God in any fashion becomes more and more frequent in the later years. From 1965-1975 it often seems as if prayers are addressed internally--to the worshipper-- and are not necessarily directed to God at all. In the past ten years, God--described in warm and intimate language--has become a more

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 175.

central part of the liturgy. There are several ways in which this intimacy between God and humanity is expressed. The notion of partnership is common: God has given humanity certain abilities and raw materials that people should use for divine ends, by acting in the divine image. "What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God."⁷⁶ This idea relates to the importance of human responsibility that was discussed before. Often, the idea of partnership is expressed differently, however, as a form of reciprocal searching. On the one hand God is lonely,⁷⁷ and is waiting for humanity to turn and let the Divine Presence enter.⁷⁸ On the other hand humanity has an irresistible craving for God, a desire to meet God. "Distant One, come closer. Reach for me as I do for you."⁷⁹ It is as if an elastic rope connects God and humanity, with each side continually trying to pull the other closer.

The language (synecdochal vocabulary) used to describe God is also very intimate, especially in more recent years.

To a God unknown . . .
 The waves, gently praying--
 the white foam of a kiss
 still on their lips--
 to a God of love, so
 infinitely distant in his nearness. . . .
 Do you hear me, whispering

⁷⁶ Rabbi Sally Priesand "Sabbath Eve Worship Service" (creative service, Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, New York, NY, 1973), 4.

⁷⁷ Anonymous, "Sabbath Service" (creative service, Temple Beth Am, Bayonne, NJ, 1975), 6. Beth Am is a deaf congregation and this interpretation is based on the fact that in sign language, "God is One" can also mean "God is alone."

⁷⁸ Rabbi Howard A. Simon, "A Service Devoted to Love of God and of Faith," 3.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Gerald Goldman, "Judaic Studies Group Creative Sabbath Service" (creative service, Temple Shalom, Plainfield, NJ, 1975), 4.

your name voicelessly,
tenderly?⁸⁰

Or this translation of *ma'ariv aravim*:

You create each day and each night afresh,
Roll light in front of darkness
And darkness in front of light.
You do this so gently
That no moment is quite like the one which
precedes it.⁸¹

God is referred to as gentle, warm, comforting, and loving; words that frequently appear such as "love," "friendship" and "community" are often connected to God's name. One would have to add non-verbal behavior to the synecdochal vocabulary as well. The attempts to create community--holding hands, sharing, introducing oneself to a neighbor--are not only attempts to combat loneliness and isolation, but to feel the presence of God through the warmth that results. "Family, friends--all who are here, hold hands. When we are truly together, we feel God in our midst."⁸²

Of course, there is also some questioning, doubting and anger toward God, especially prior to 1975. But interestingly, it does not lead to rejection and hostility, or even to permanent distancing. As revealed in the Zeitlin reading, this anger is validated and the struggle to understand God and the world is acknowledged as legitimate. The most common question asked in reference to the Holocaust or evils in modern time is "God, where are you?" The anger over the presence of evil in the world is typically answered with the claim that humans, not God, have created evil. The

⁸⁰ Rabbi Roy Walter, "Shabbat Morning Service" (creative service, UAHC General Assembly, Boston, MA, 1981), 11.

⁸¹ Anonymous, "The Joy of Shabbat," 9.

⁸² Phyllis Harris, "Make Me a Sanctuary" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, Houston TX, 1979), 19.

feeling that God is absent serves as a call to human action and responsibility: "If God will not hear our prayer, perhaps then we must pray to one another reaching out in the deepest contrition and humility."⁸³ Another service directly states that God is not all powerful, and that "Between the goodness of God and God's inability to prevent evil stands the fellowship of humankind. We are challenged to fight evil ourselves. . . ."⁸⁴ Sometimes it is claimed that God is not really absent; rather people do not let God in or search for the presence of God. "You dwell wherever we let You in. When we flee from You, we flee from ourselves."⁸⁵ Frank doubts about the nature and behavior of God are acknowledged. These questions are rarely answered, nor do they lead to distancing from the Divine. They result in a struggle to understand the true nature of God, in increased introspection and in acknowledgment of the need and desire for closeness to God, even amidst growing doubts.

In spite of all of the questions about God that have resulted from the modern world, worshippers are still seeking to find the Divine Presence. Hoffman's description of the master image and synecdochal vocabulary that the American cultural backdrop have helped create is strongly corroborated by these services. God is an intimate God, present in relationships and community. The vocabulary and actions that work toward the creation of community also are part of the effort to meet God. Thus we have come a full circle. Community was an important part of the way that worshippers encoded the world for themselves, and made sense out of chaos. Yet the

⁸³ Rabbi Marc Raphael, "Shalom . . . a Liturgy for Peace" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA, n.d.), 13.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, "Sabbath Eve Service II" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 6.

⁸⁵ Rabbi Peter Rubenstein & Nina Samuels, "Prayers for Shabbat" (creative service, Peninsula Temple Beth-El, San Mateo, CA, 1983), 24.

existence of community goes beyond that, to being an important part of how people perceive themselves in relation to the Divine.

Conclusion

The creative Shabbat services reveal a strong desire for community and togetherness. The importance of this idea is clearly reflected in the fact that God is found in the presence of community and in relationships. Shabbat celebration is a time for people to feel connected to other worshippers and to emphasize their ability to make a difference in a turbulent world. This becomes more and more true over time. The importance of this theme appears to be directly tied to the events of these years, especially the last ten years. People feel isolated and disconnected and they are thus looking for community, a place to belong. Moreover, while in the earlier years people may have believed that they could affect major change in the world, this belief has become more and more subject to doubt. The creative services try to help individual worshippers feel as if they do have a measure of control in the world. Feeling the support and strength of community further reassures people, making them feel needed and important.

The existence of community also makes people feel as if the synagogue is important and relevant in their lives. While some challenge and alienation from Judaism and tradition appear in these services, they lessen over the years. The return to tradition seen in these services is typical of the Reform movement as a whole in recent times. Shabbat is a time to affirm one's connection to the Jewish people by celebrating the survival of the Jewish people in spite of a troubled and painful history of

persecution. Key symbols associated with Shabbat, such as Torah, are utilized to emphasize this theme.

The focus on themes such as community and survival transform the nature of the Shabbat celebration. Shabbat does not directly focus on God; it is not a celebration of the seventh day of creation or a "day of rest" in the traditional sense. Instead, it serves a very human purpose. It helps worshippers feel and affirm certain things that they do not usually feel or may have difficulty believing. It can reinforce their identity as part of the Jewish people, and help fashion them into a community of unique and responsible people (which in fact helps them feel God's presence). The fact that it is Shabbat worship that serves these purposes is almost incidental. Theoretically, any other occasion could fulfill a similar function for these goals are not traditionally or intrinsically connected to Shabbat in any way. Rather, Shabbat is somewhat transformed. It becomes an opportunity to stress those ideas, concerns and longings that are uppermost in the minds of the worshippers--the search for community, the need for pause and reflection, the desire for control in a chaotic world, and the survival and future of the Jewish people.

Chapter Three: Creative High Holiday Liturgies

The 192 mimeographed creative High Holiday liturgies are quite different in structure and orientation from the Shabbat liturgies of the same period. High Holiday services appear to present a unique dilemma to the liturgist. The traditional themes and prayers of the High Holidays seem to run counter to the world view and philosophy that those writing services often express. The struggle between the philosophy of the High Holiday liturgy and that of the liturgist marks these services. While attempting to resolve this conflict, the High Holiday services also try to indicate the individual and collective resources that worshippers possess to deal with their complex lives and a tumultuous world.

There are five categories of services that will be separately examined in this chapter: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Selichot, children's and youth services and published prayerbooks. Within each category, the use of the traditional liturgical texts, the modern sources and the development of the themes and ideas of the holiday will be studied. In summarizing the material and making some general observations about High Holiday creative liturgy, the criteria developed by Lawrence Hoffman will be utilized.

Rosh Hashanah

The following chart indicates the number and type of services in each five year period during the twenty years from 1965-1985:

ROSH HASHANAH SERVICES					
	1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
Evening	0	2	2	1	6
Morning	0	6	2	1	4
Day 2	1	5	5	2	0
Torah & Shofar	0	1	0	0	1
Supplements	0	0	3	0	0
Tashlich	0	0	1	1	0

There are two things worth mentioning about the different categories and distribution of the 44 services during these years. First of all, most of the services for the second day of Rosh Hashanah were developed at one synagogue. The relatively high numbers of second day services should not be taken as an indication of a widespread practice of having second day services. Secondly, it would appear from the material in my possession that the largest numbers of services were written in the years leading up to the publication of *Gates of Repentance* in 1978, while in the years after *GOR* there was a decline in the development of creative services. Whether this is only reflective of the material that I have collected, or is indicative of a general trend is difficult to say. It is certainly plausible, however, that *GOR* had a significant impact on the development of creative liturgy, as did *GOR*.

Traditional Liturgical Texts and Themes

Most of the services deal with the themes of Rosh Hashanah outside of the framework provided by traditional liturgical texts. One almost gets the sense that some of the traditional texts are included because their inclusion is expected, not because they contribute to the worship experience that the author is trying to construct. Almost all services have some kind of shofar service, which will be dealt with below. Most also have *avinu malkenu* although it is abbreviated in some cases. Very few do anything particularly creative or different with the *avinu malkenu*; it simply appears around the Torah service as standard part of Rosh Hashanah services. Other elements of the traditional Rosh Hashanah liturgy appear only sporadically. Occasionally services also utilize *hineni*, *ki anu amecha*, or *shema kolenu*. Interestingly, there appears to be greater use of of the standard liturgical rubrics than is true in the Shabbat services of the corresponding years. It is as if the need to stress Rosh Hashanah as a unique day in the Jewish calendar is met through an increased amount of traditional text overall, not necessarily by the inclusion of the traditional texts of the Holiday. The particular conflicts presented by the many of the traditional High Holiday texts, as well as the fact that they might be thought to exclude worshippers because they are largely unfamiliar, could account for this characteristic. Among the High Holiday texts that occasionally appear, one or two services in every year contain *unetaneh tokef*, and this text provides a good example of the ambivalence that exists in regard to the traditional High Holiday themes.

Sometimes *unetaneh tokef* is translated literally. In other cases, an interpretive translation that also appears in *GOP* is used:

On Rosh HaShana we reflect, on Yom Kippur we consider: Who shall live for the sake of others, Who, dying, shall leave a heritage of life. Who shall burn with the fires of greed, who shall drown in the waters of despair. Whose hunger shall be for good, Who shall thirst for justice and right. . . .¹

There is clear discomfort with the idea, present in the traditional texts, that God decrees the fate of each individual. (Perhaps for this reason, *UPB II* leaves it out altogether.) The alternative interpretation asks worshippers to reflect on emotions and actions that are presumed to be in human control. The ambivalence in regard to the imagery of *unetaneh tokaf* is made clear in the introduction to the text just quoted. In one paragraph we read, "You, indeed, judge and admonish, discerning our motives, and witnessing our actions. You record and seal, count and measure. . . ." In the next paragraph we read " *We* stand in judgment of ourselves. Before the tribunal of *reason and honesty* the roster of our deeds stands exposed. . . (italics added)."² The traditional image of a God who judges and seals our fate appears in this service, yet it appears alongside of a contradictory image that depicts humanity and not God as the judge. This is not uncommon. The idea of God as judge who records human deeds in the Book of Life is often treated with skepticism; indeed, it is often not mentioned at all, or is mentioned side by side with competing notions.

As is seen in the *unetaneh tokaf*, when the traditional imagery is utilized it is frequently invested with a different meaning. For example, in one service the Torah is called the Book of Life, ". . . an eternal call to sanctify our lives. Help us to inscribe ourselves in the Book of Life."³ Here,

¹ Rabbi Chaim Stern, in Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Rosh HaShana Morning Service" (creative service, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, CA, n.d.), 18.

² Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Rosh HaShanah Morning Service," 17.

³ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Erev Rosh Hashanah" (creative service, Congregation Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1985), 7.

as in the case of the reading that introduces *unetaneh tokef*, humanity, not God is engaged in the act of inscription. It is not uncommon to find God's actions replaced by human actions, emphasizing for instance, that humanity rather than God is the judge of the world. "We call the world to Judgment: for the slaughter and corruption that drag on in Vietnam. . . . For the poverty which festers unattended in the shadow of others' growing wealth."⁴ There is an emphasis throughout these services on calling humanity to account for a troubled world, and God often plays no role in the judgment.

Sometimes the alienation from the traditional High Holiday imagery is dealt with directly. This reading acknowledges theological differences and questions about the traditional themes in a way not found in *UPB* or *GOR*

When previous generations celebrated Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, they did so with fear and trepidation. They perceived that during this period of time an all-powerful Deity judged their past deeds and decided their destinies. . . . For our ancestors then Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur were the 'Days of Judgment.'

Some in our community find comfort and truth in the beliefs of our predecessors. . . . For others the High Holiday season is one of introspection and self-evaluation. For others our destiny rests in our own hands, and the future quality of life is written in a book of our own authorship.

For all in our community we present now the *avenu malchenu* and *usaneh tochef* [sic] "prayers," the two keynote prayers of former generations. For those who find the words of these prayers meaningful, let them be inspired by this recitation. For others we present these prayers as part of the hallowed tradition from which all of us, no matter what our perspective, have come.⁵

⁴ Anonymous, "Evening Service for Rosh Hashanah" (creative service, n.p., 1972), 19.

⁵ Anonymous, "Rosh HaShana Morning" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 6.

The traditional Rosh Hashanah texts are thus included, but they are not intended to be understood in the traditional way. They are either reinterpreted or exist in the service as a connection to the past, to those who *did* understand them in the traditional fashion. As will become clear, the themes of Rosh Hashanah are not developed through use of traditional liturgical texts, but through modern sources and material written by service authors.

Modern Sources

There is a certain body of material (largely Jewish) that rabbis consistently draw upon when compiling High Holiday services. Many of the observations about the use of sources in Rosh Hashanah services apply to creative High Holiday liturgy in general. Some of the material that was frequently used in Shabbat liturgy remains popular. Jack Reimer's "We Cannot Merely Pray to You," Aaron Zeitlin's "Praise Me..." and Abba Hillel Silver's, "I was with Abraham" are three notable examples. Heschel and Buber also continue to be utilized. Among non-Jewish sources, Eugene O'Neill's "Why am I afraid to dance?" figures prominently. Readings from the Holocaust (*Children's Poems from Terezin*, and selections from *The Diary of Anne Frank* in particular) are frequently found. Use of the Holocaust will be dealt with separately and some specific sources will be mentioned at that time.

Musical sources are also worth noting. Overall, there is less use of popular or folk music than in the Shabbat services, although it is not absent. ("Day Is Done," "'Tis a Gift to be Simple" and various selections from the Beatles appear occasionally.) There is a combination of NFTY music and traditional music in the services, and there seems to be greater use of

cantor and/or choir than in the Shabbat services. It appears as if the music was slightly more formal although this is difficult to ascertain with assurance.

In terms of sources that deal with the High Holidays in particular, the Reconstructionist High Holiday Prayerbook, *New Prayers for the High Holy Days* edited by Jack Reimer and Harold Kushner, and various writings of Sidney Greenberg dominate. Certain readings from these sources are particularly popular. Selections such as "If our lives have become shallow deepen them...",⁶ "Judaism begins with the commandment, 'Hear O Israel.' But what does it really mean to hear?"⁷ "Now is the time for turning"⁸ and "Each year should be the best year we have yet lived"⁹ are consistently found throughout all of the High Holiday services, not just the Rosh Hashanah services. All of these prayers deal with common themes: the need for self-examination and change, as well as our ability to bring about this change. Most of them focus on interpersonal values and relationships between people. Reaching our highest potential as individuals and striving to relate to others in an honest and caring way is depicted as the goal toward which we strive.

Several readings that highlight these themes as well as other common High Holiday themes are worth examining in closer detail. These readings are fairly typical, both contentfully and stylistically, of many readings

⁶ Rabbi Sidney Greenberg, "If our lives . . ." in Rabbi James Lee Kaufman and Rabbi Allen S. Maller, *Tikun Nefashot* (Temple Beth Hillel, Temple Akiva, Los Angeles, CA, 1979), 14.

⁷ Rabbi Harold Kushner and Jack Reimer, "Hear O Israel," in Rabbi Michael Sternfield, "Evening Service for Rosh Hashana" (Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA, n.d.), 8-10.

⁸ Rabbi Jack Reimer, "Now is the time for turning," in Rabbi Seymour Prystowsky, *A Jewish Prayerbook for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* (Congregation Or Ami, Lafayette Hill, PA, 1979), 23.

⁹ Kenneth Patton, "Each year should be the best year," in Anonymous, *A Contemporary Vehicle for Constant Values* (M'kor Shalom, Mt. Laurel, NJ 1979), 130.

found in the creative services. None of the readings is intended to echo a specific text or theme that is part of the traditional liturgical structure. All three attempt to direct the worshippers inward to self-examination of various aspects of their lives. While this is well within the parameters of the goals and themes of the High Holidays, by no means does the standard liturgy lead the worshipper in such specific and clear-cut directions as do these readings. Each of these readings addresses specific themes related to certain areas of stress and conflict in the modern age--themes that are not a specific part of the traditional liturgy or the standard Reform liturgy. As in the case of Shabbat services, the traditional liturgical structure and the themes that emerge out of the traditional liturgical texts are secondary to other concerns.

The structure of the readings and the language utilized are completely modern, in no way corresponding to traditional prayer formulations. The language utilized is by and large prosaic as opposed to poetic. They mention God briefly, if at all, and they do not particularly utilize High Holiday imagery. Readings such as these are completely absent from *UPB II* which is much loftier in tone.¹⁰ While there are a few prayers in *GOR* with a similar feel (both thematically and linguistically), they are not nearly as common as they are in the creative services and they are usually introductory readings as opposed to readings in the heart of the service. The readings in *GOR* tend to be more poetic and draw upon traditional themes and imagery to a much larger extent than do those in the creative services.

¹⁰ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Repentance* (New York, 1978), 165-6. This is an example of a reading that is similar in content and style to some of the readings in the creative services.

The style and content of "Let us ask ourselves hard questions for now is the time for truth" is characteristic of many of the readings in these services. Its simple straightforward style is typical and the stress on interpersonal relationships reveals one particular theme that dominates these services:

Let us ask ourselves hard questions
 For this is the time for truth.
 How much time did we waste
 In the year that is now gone?
 Did we fill our days with life,
 Or were they dull and empty?
 Was there love inside our home,
 Or was the affectionate word left unsaid?
 Was there real companionship within our family,
 Or was there a living together and a growing apart?
 Were we a help to our mates,
 Or did we take them for granted?
 How was it with our friends:
 Were we there when they needed us or not?
 The kind deed: did we perform it or postpone it?
 The unnecessary gibe: did we say it or hold it back?
 Did we live by false values?
 Did we deceive others?
 Did we deceive ourselves?
 Were we sensitive to the rights and feelings
 Of those who worked for us?
 Did we acquire only possessions
 Or did we acquire new insights as well?
 Did we fear what the crowd would say
 And keep quiet when we should have spoken out?
 Did we mind only our own business
 Or did we feel the heartbreak of others?
 Did we live right,
 And if not,
 Then have we learned and will we change? ¹¹

¹¹ Rabbi Jack Reimer, "Let us ask ourselves hard questions," in Rabbi Michael Sternfield, "Evening Service for Rosh Hashana," 10.

Most of the questions pertain to the way that we treat others and interact with those closest to us. The emphasis on our relationship with family and friends is typical, for honest, caring relationships are defined as a central part of "living right." Living right in this fashion is the objective that we are aiming for in the New Year.

As well as focusing on those closest to us, this reading moves toward asking about our relationship with society at large. This too is an important concern of High Holiday services.

Disturb us, O Lord, ruffle us from our complacency.

Make us dissatisfied, dissatisfied with the peace of ignorance, the quietude which arises from a shunning of the defeat, the bitterness, and the poverty, physical and spiritual, of men and women.

Shock us, O Lord, deny to us the false Holy Days which give us the delusions of satisfaction amid a world of war and hatred.

Wake us, O Lord, and shake us from the sweet and sad poignancies rendered by half forgotten melodies and rubric prayers of yesteryears.

Make us know that the border of the sanctuary is not the border of living, and the walls of Thy temples are not shelters from the winds of truth, justice and reality.

Disturb us, O Lord, and vex us, let not Thy holy day be a day of slumber; Let it be a time to be stirred and spurred to action.¹²

This is one of many popular readings that deal with the question of human responsibility to the world at large. Rosh Hashanah (indeed the High Holidays as a whole) is a time to be awakened to the ills of the world and galvanized to action. Oftentimes instances of social injustice are spoken of generally, as in this reading. In other sources, specific wars, political oppression, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, and hunger are directly

¹² Anonymous, "Prayer for a Disturbed Day," in Anonymous, "Rosh Hashanah" (creative service, Temple Solel, Scottsdale, AZ, 1973), 20.

mentioned. The High Holidays are seen as a vehicle of achieving change in our personal lives and in the world as a whole because they provide a time for reflection. The importance of time for personal introspection is expressed in the following reading. Not only is it modern in terms of content, but its prosaic style is an example of a style commonly found in the creative services, although quite atypical of the usual liturgical tradition.

Thinking is our special talent. Man does it better than any other creature. But how we abuse this unique power. Annoying trivia clutter our minds and fill our hearts with wasted worry. Little frustrations interrupt the pattern of our thoughts and redirect them to the pursuit of foolishness. The energies of the brain exhaust themselves in satisfying momentary desires and find no time for the crises of living. We run to secure what we want before we full know what we are.

Simplicity is not a human fault. We are much too complex for comfort. Our personalities are layers of tender experience laid skin to skin and probing is painful. It is frightening to be profound; but then all of us are, even against our will. Hidden under the façade of our conscious contentment lurk unknown desires and untried talents. Meaningful reflection is more than veneer deep; it is the hard and heavy search into the reality of our soul. Before we plunge into the busyness of doing, we must expose the hero or villain that prods us to activity.¹³

High Holiday services stress that we too rarely have time for reflection. People need time for meaningful thinking and introspection in order to act effectively. The High Holidays provide that time. The importance placed upon the notion of taking time to gain self-awareness will be seen even more clearly when the definition and purpose of the New Year, as stated in the services themselves, is examined.

¹³ Anonymous, in *Untitled* (creative service, Temple Solel, Scottsdale, AZ, 1970), 8.

Definition and Purpose of Rosh Hashanah

The psychological necessity of Rosh Hashanah is a central emphasis of these services. Rosh Hashanah is portrayed as essential for our mental well being, and thus it assumes an almost utilitarian function. Most of the readings about the meaning of Rosh Hashanah are explanatory. Like the sources mentioned earlier, they do not fall into any of the traditional categories of thanks, petition and praise, nor do they particularly speak of God. Furthermore, they in no way correspond to any part of the traditional liturgical structure. In the traditional prayerbook (and even in *UPB II* and *GOR* to a large extent), the celebration of Rosh Hashanah and the significance of its themes are conveyed through the traditional liturgy of the holiday, without explicit explanation. This is not so in the creative services where readings that teach in a very direct fashion are often found. Readings about the holiday (such as the ones that follow) explain and explore the meaning of the holiday, conveying to the worshipper the significance and potential of the New Year. Worshipers come to understand the holiday through readings such as these, rather than through the traditional liturgy. For the most part, the value of the holiday is personal; what Rosh Hashanah can do for us as individuals is stressed.

This day therefore we look into ourselves, to develop our own consciousness, and to examine our conscience for all we have been; to determine what we might have done and to decide what we wish to become. ¹⁴

Introspection is valued because it allows individuals to assess their capabilities and plan their futures. One example can be seen in the

¹⁴ Rabbi Bob Blinder, "Rosh Hashonah" (creative service, *Genesis: A Synagogue for Our Time*, St. Louis, MO, n.d.), 1.

continuation of the reading cited above as the introduction to the *unetaneh tokef* (footnote 2):

On Rosh Hashanah we sit in judgment of ourselves. Before the tribunal of reason and honesty the roster of our deeds stands exposed. The reality of our daily lives meets the sharp scrutiny of our ideals. We want to be so much more than we are. We want to be wiser, kinder, more vital, and more confident in the act of living. We want to seize the world zestfully and turn it to some urgent purpose. . . . Time passes far too quickly and the boredom of routine is the terrifying symptom of wasted opportunity. . . . Each of us is capable of an unimagined greatness. Each of us is a treasure house of vital potential. Yet apprehensive love and inhibited talent pervade the expression of our being. . . . *While this day of meditation awakens us to the truth of what we are, it must also quicken within us the reality of what we can be* (emphasis added). ¹⁵

Through meditation (as opposed to prayer) our awareness of what we are and how we can grow will become evident to us. The idea of taking time to determine our potential and the way to reach that potential is paramount in these services. The result is that in many services human strengths and capabilities are emphasized more than weaknesses and failures, or at least in equal measure. As in the last reading, understanding what we can be is at least as important as realizing what we are. This will be discussed further when looking at the concept of sin as expressed in Yom Kippur services.

Rosh Hashanah is important for the value that it gives not only to the individual, but to the community as a whole. It is described as a time of coming together with one's particular community and especially with the entire Jewish people.

We meet in celebration and in search, in judgment and embrace.
At this hour when we feel the presence of one another, we seek

¹⁵ Anonymous, *Untitled* (Temple Solel, 1970), 2.

also to feel the presence of our people. Though we come from a single people, each of us has met that people in a different house. From the house in which our spirits grew there was fashioned in us a common recognition that we were related intimately and personally to the Jewish people. . . .¹⁶

In another fairly common reading the unity of the Jewish people is stressed and is tied to the theme of using the New Year to work toward justice:

Jews of every nation, every race, every belief, have a relationship with each other that makes of complete strangers men of love. These bonds are not just of today or yesterday. They did not begin because of a Nazi Germany or Arab acts of terror. The bonds that unite us are four thousand years old. This span of years, the longest for any one group of people, has sensitized the Jewish individual to the needs of the group. . . . The ideas are of God. We are a people with a memory—a memory that gives each one of us strength to face the future and faith to bring to the New Year our hopes and ambitions.¹⁷

The New Year is a time when we celebrate the unity that we feel with Jews around the world. The concept of peoplehood is stressed much more in these services than in Shabbat services. This unity not only gives the individual a sense of belonging, it also serves as a reminder of the mission of the Jews and a call to action.

It is ultimately this call to action that forms the key purpose and definition of Rosh Hashanah. Whether it is in our own lives or the lives of the larger community, the self-reflection that occurs on Rosh Hashanah and the bond that is felt with the larger community is only beneficial if it leads to action and change. In the reading quoted above, "Hard Questions," the final line makes it clear that the ultimate goal is to alter our relationships

¹⁶ Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Rosh Hashana Service" (creative service, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1975), 3.

¹⁷ Anonymous, "Evening Service for Rosh Hashanah" (1972), 15.

to others and to the world at large: "... have we learned and will we change?" In the reading "Disturb us," the point is not only to be aware, but to be shocked into action.

The importance of change and growth is usually applied to the personal lives of the worshippers and universally to society at large. Occasionally, however, it is applied to the participation and involvement of worshippers in the Jewish community. As part of a final affirmation, these commitments to the Jewish community are voiced:

I accept my Jewishness and I will strive to live as an intelligent and educated Jew aware of my past and prepared for my future.

I empathize with world Jewry and will acknowledge my responsibilities to see all Jews as part of one entity.

I pray for the success of Eretz Yisrael and will make every effort to help our brethren who reside in our Holy Land.

I will maintain my full identity with the American Jewish community accepting the fact of democracy in Jewish life. ¹⁸

Not only the content, but the form of this reading is interesting. Neither this type of affirmation, nor readings in the first person singular, are part of the traditional liturgy. The specificity of this and other High Holidays readings represents a departure from the traditional liturgical texts, but is very typical of creative liturgy which strives to emphasize certain key ideas such as those in the above reading. While our obligations to Jewish tradition and the Jewish community are stressed much less often than our obligations to ourselves, our loved ones and society, they are not completely absent. The services are universalist in tone, but particularist concerns are not ignored.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 28-29.

An identical underlying premise can be found in the discussion of our personal lives, the situation in the world and our involvement in the Jewish community. People can improve and change their behavior in any of these areas. Coming together at Rosh Hashanah for reflection and meditation can help chart the necessary course and strengthen one's resolve to grow. This is clearly expressed through the readings and prayers of these services. The traditional liturgical texts and images of Rosh Hashanah are either adapted to support this premise, or are included anyway even though they may be unrelated or contradictory.

The Shofar Service

The shofar is blown in almost every morning service, and some evening services. It has a wide-ranging and flexible symbolism associated with it. For example, in a service related to Soviet Jewry, each call is related to the cry of Soviet Jews and our mandate to help them.¹⁹ The creative shofar services are very different from the shofar service in the traditional liturgy or in *GOP* which does not radically depart from the traditional liturgy. Service authors feel free to use the shofar as a symbol of the particular idea or philosophy that they are presenting and thus it usually reflects the themes of Rosh Hashanah that were described above. Given the emphasis placed on change and responsibility, it is not surprising that the shofar is usually explained as call to action. Of the multiple readings and explanations surrounding the shofar most are variations on this basic theme that is so central in Rosh Hashanah creative services. One

¹⁹ Naomi Patz, "Your Silence Is Killing Me" (creative service, Temple Shalom of West Essex, Cedar Grove, NJ, 1970), 15-22.

reading that is frequently found seems to utilize the image of the shofar as a cry to battle: "Rebel O Jewsl The shofar summons not God but men to march. The voice of Isaiah was not intended to reach only the rim of our outer ears. . . ."20 The shofar is described as a instrument that calls out to the conscience of the worshipper, rousing the individual to action against injustice:

Listen to the sound of the shofar
 Shrill and harsh and piercing;
 Like the cry of a soldier who has fallen,
 Cut down in the bright dawn of youth.
 Or is it the moaning of a shriveled child,
 Pinched by hunger and pain?
 Or is it the victim of violence,
 Screaming surprised in the dark?
 Or is it the Jew in Auschwitz,
 Choking out his last Sh'ma?
 The shofar sounds the alarm,
 It asks us to care.
 It calls for an end to cruelty, and man's inhumanity to man.
 That is why we sound the shofar today--to remind us that our
 world and its people, you and I, need desperately to be made
 whole. 21

Sometimes the shofar calls to mind specifically Jewish events, "the epic struggle of Jewry,"22 although, as in the case of themes found in the services, particularist images are used less frequently than universalist images.

These readings clearly reveal that the shofar services found in creative services are quite different from the service in the standard

20 Anonymous, "Evening Service for Rosh Hashanah" (creative service, Temple Emanu-El, Wichita, KS, n.d.), 17.

21 Glendale Temple & Rabbi Leonard Beerman, in "A Time to Pray" (creative service, Congregation Emanu-El, Houston, TX, 1984), 29.

22 Anonymous, "Torah and Shofar Service" (creative service, Congregation Bene Israel Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH, 1974) 6.

liturgy which uses biblical texts to focus on God in relation to the themes of creation, revelation and redemption. While abbreviated, the shofar services in *UPB II* and *GOR* have similar goals, and follow the basic traditional structure (especially in the case of *GOR*). In *UPB II*, the traditional structure is somewhat altered and some interpretations of these themes that are not part of the traditional liturgy are added. Yet in this prayerbook, and even more so in *GOR*, the goal and the focus of the shofar service remain unchanged from the traditional liturgy.²³ Even in the second service in *GOR*, which is more creative and farther removed from the traditional language than is the first service, the central themes and structure of *malchuyot*, *zichronot* and *shofarot* are the basis of the interpretive readings and the way that the services are structured.²⁴ The themes of kingship, revelation, and redemption remain at the heart of the shofar services in Reform prayerbooks; they are also God-centered and filled with High Holiday language and imagery.

The creative services depart from both the traditional and the Reform liturgy in almost every way. The themes indicated above are those that are uppermost in the minds of the liturgists, as has been consistently seen to this point. They are questions and concerns related to modernity and the relationship between the individual and the world at large; they in no way grow out of the themes of the traditional shofar service. There is rarely any effort to connect these themes to the themes of kingship, revelation

²³ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *The Union Prayerbook II, Newly Revised* (New York, 1945), 77-84.

²⁴ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Gates of Understanding 2* (New York, 1984), 100-102. This discussion clearly reveals the degree to which the traditional shofar service is the basis of the interpretive readings and structure in service two.

and redemption, or to God. Moreover, the specific style and structure of the shofar service is largely abandoned.

Usually the creative shofar services are divided into three sections. Sometimes each section corresponds to the traditional themes of *malchuyot*, *zichronot* and *shofarot*. Rarely however is the traditional structure, utilizing verses from each part of the Bible, used in any way, as it is in *GOR*. More often, the three sections are divided according to an assigned meaning given to each call: *tekiah*, *shevarim*, *teruah*. The theme of calling to action is related in a specific way to the unique sound made by each call. Typical of many services is the second day service at Temple Albert. *Tekiah* is a call to rouse ourselves from our dull routine. *Shevarim* is the crying of humanity and *teruah* is a call to specific action.²⁵ Another service that is frequently used is that of Leo Baeck Temple. The shofar, once a call to war and a cry of terror, is now a symbol of hope. *Malchuyot* is a reflection on the "mystery of creation." *Zichronot* recalls "times now gone and dreams betrayed," human potential lost and the need to make the world whole. And *shofarot* expresses a "yearning for messianic fulfillment," using the words of Paul Kornfield who died in Lodz concentration camp.²⁶ (It is not uncommon to find the Holocaust related to part of the shofar service, although it is more typically related to *zichronot*.) Thus, sometimes adhering more closely to the traditional themes of the shofar service and sometimes less closely, the shofar becomes a symbol of the key theme of the Rosh Hashanah services: humanity can use its potential and ability to achieve a better world.

²⁵ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Service for the Second Morning of Rosh Hashanah" (creative service, Temple Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1984), 17-18.

²⁶ Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Rosh HaShanah Morning Service," 30-34.

Yom Kippur

Many of the conclusions formed about Rosh Hashanah services are equally applicable to the 43 Yom Kippur services. Looking at the chart below which indicates the number and type of service in each five year period, it will again be noted that there are fewer services following the publication of *GOR*.

YOM KIPPUR SERVICES					
	1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
Kol Nidre	0	5	0	1	2
Morning	0	2	0	1	2
Afternoon	4	1	0	0	2
Neilah	0	0	0	0	1
Yizkor	0	5	3	1	3
Supplements	0	2	2	0	3
Other	0	2	0	0	1

Yom Kippur services also reflect a tremendous diversity. In these twenty years one finds a multi-media service, a service based on congregational sharing, rabbi-congregational dialogues, and a Yom Kippur Sheni in November (after the 1973 war interrupted Yom Kippur services).²⁷ Just as there is

²⁷ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Yom Kippur Midrash" (creative service, n.p., n.d.); Anonymous, "Agony and Ecstasy of the Faith of a Jew--A Yom Kippur Experience" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach CA, 1970); Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Between Us--A Dialogue for Rabbi and Congregation from the Writings of Martin Buber" (creative service, Temple Micah, Washington D.C., 1971); Rabbi Paul Dubin, Cantor Joseph Gole, Rabbi Hillel Silverman, Rabbi Zvi Dershowitz, "Yom Kippur Sheni" (creative service, Sinai Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1973).

some discomfort in regard to the traditional themes of the New Year in Rosh Hashanah services, so too in the Yom Kippur services this discomfort is evident. "Sin," as it is traditionally understood in relation to God is an uncomfortable concept, especially in connection to the idea of sinning against God and God wiping the slate clean. Sin and human error are thus often dealt with in ways other than through the traditional language and imagery.

The source material for Yom Kippur is similar to the source material used in Rosh Hashanah services; traditional texts are also used in a very similar fashion. Most of the Yom Kippur services contain *avinu malkenu* and some contain various other High Holiday texts. As with Rosh Hashanah services, however, nothing appears consistently. Almost all services contain a confessional of some kind although the form varies greatly and is not always in the same form as the traditional confessional. (Some common sources used for confessionals will be dealt with below in the discussion of sin and repentance.) Kol Nidre is also prominent, but it too warrants separate treatment.

Kol Nidre

Most of the evening services include the recitation of *kol nidre*, although its placement in the service varies. *UPB II* provides no text for *kol nidre*, merely indicating that it is to be sung by a choir after an introductory reading praying for strength to keep the resolutions that we make.²⁸ Its almost universal inclusion in creative services (and in *GOR*) indicates the degree to which worshippers have remained attached to *kol*

²⁸ Central Conference of American Rabbi, *The Union Prayerbook II*, 130.

nidre in spite of efforts to lessen its significance. Many services provide introductions to *kol nidre*, investing it with a meaning and significance that will speak to congregants more strongly than the idea of a legal annulment of vows. Harvey Fields describes the range of meanings often associated with *kol nidre*:

Kol Nidre is radical disclosure. It evokes images. Patriarchs, a majestic moment at Sinai, Prophets pleading for justice . . . Desperate days of degradation--exile, long lines of Holocaust helpless. The triumph of *ha-tikva*--Israel. . . . Kol Nidre opens the eyes of the Jew. It permits us no hiding. We recall all our vows, our promises, our commitments piously made and then forgotten. . . . Kol Nidre signals new beginnings for the Jew. It is potent with the future. We stir with the chance to redeem the errors of yesterday with visions and promises for tomorrow. Kol Nidre sings of hope. . . . It unmask us as we are and ought to be. 29

The themes of introspection, potential and hope for the future which figured so prominently in Rosh Hashanah are thus also tied into this central part of the Yom Kippur liturgy.

The nature of *kol nidre* and the meaning of vows is explored in other sources that are frequently utilized before the recitation of *kol nidre*. One is more humanist in nature, while the other reaches out more traditionally to God. "All Vows" by Harold Kushner further emphasizes the common themes that have already been pointed out. It speaks of vows of love, vows to good health, to the Jewish community, to parents and friends and to charity (all made in the presence of God) and asks,

May You reach down to us as we reach up toward You, and give us strength and self-respect, fidelity and vision, to grow to be

29 Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "Meditation for Kol Nidre" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.).

the people we have sworn to you. All vows, commitments, obligations, promises we make from this Yom Kippur to the next--may we be strong enough to keep them.³⁰

Like the reading "Hard Questions" the worshipper is asked to engage in a moment of self-reflection and strive to rise to the best that is in him or her. In contrast, another popular reading (also entitled "All Vows") is more clearly directed to God. Speaking of our failure to change over the past year in spite of good intentions, it asks for forgiveness and pardon.

Will You open our prison, release us from shackles of habit?
Will You answer our prayers, forgive our wrongs, though we sin
again and again? In moments of weakness we do not remember
promises of Atonement Day. Look past forgetfulness, take only
from our hearts; forgive us, pardon us.³¹

The latter reading is similar in tone to the reading in *GOR* preceding *kol nidre*, which speaks of our failures in a rather general way, using traditional language of pardon and forgiveness.³² The use of the two readings quoted above is reflective of the mixed imagery of the High Holiday creative services. While one suggests that we look inward for strength to change, making mention of God as the source of strength, the other asks outright for pardon from the Divine. Most of the readings and sources mentioned to this point do not reflect a theology that centers around a God who pardons, who can "wipe the slate clean." In other readings, however, one can see the use of language that petitions a forgiving, pardoning supreme God, as in the source just quoted, and as is typical of *GOR* and *UPB* // . The image of a supreme, omnipotent God often exists in a service

³⁰ Rabbi Harold Kushner, "All Vows" in Anonymous, "Yom Kippur Evening" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 5.

³¹ Ze'ev Falk, "All Vows" in Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Yom Kippur" (creative service, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1985), 5.

³² Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Repentance*, 250.

alongside a God concept that centers more on human relationships and capabilities. The nature of the High Holiday liturgy and language makes a conflict of this sort almost inevitable, for it contradicts prevalent notions about God. While some resolve the conflict by abandoning or altering the traditional imagery, others choose to tolerate the contradictions.

Concepts of Sin and Repentance

To an even greater extent than is seen in the Rosh Hashanah services the influence of psychology is evident in the Yom Kippur services. Sin and repentance are dealt with in terms of the psychology of human error and the potential for changing one's life through increased self-awareness. Yom Kippur is considered psychologically beneficial primarily because it enables one to engage in self-reflection and analysis. This is expressed in terms a bit more extreme than is typical in the following reading:

As individuals and as a community we search for that wholeness which will insure us that we are one with ourselves and with our universe. We search the liturgy for signs and clues that will tell us how to achieve wholeness; from our rabbis and leaders we anticipate words of inspiration and encouragement. . . . *Our answers will not be found in prayers written by others, nor will they come from teachers of an inherited tradition.* If it is holiness we seek, it will come from within--deep from within ourselves--where it has always been. . . . [T]his is the human struggle, to reach wholeness of self and of community (emphasis added).³³

If the answers to the desire for wholeness and fulfillment are not to be found through prayer then indeed gathering for Yom Kippur is only the pretext for psychological soul searching that could conceivably occur at any

³³ Rabbi Albert Lewis, "Yom Kippur Eve Service" (creative service, Temple Emanuel, Grand Rapids, MI., n.d.), 6.

time or place. This particular formulation is stronger than most; a majority of the services stress that the inherent and true purpose of Yom Kippur is to help the worshipper achieve this wholeness by recognizing and gaining the strength to repair human errors in one's personal life and in the world at large.

Liturgically the confessional is part of this process of reflection, and the first step toward change. Not surprisingly, the confessional is a key part of most creative Yom Kippur services, as it is in the traditional liturgy. There are a number of formulations of the confessional, one of the most common attributed to Chaim Stern. The first part draws upon the traditional confessional, speaking of sins against God that we have committed openly or in secret, under duress or by choice. It then continues:

For the sin that we have sinned against Thee
 by pretending to emotions we do not feel
 by using the sins of others to excuse our own
 by condemning in our children the faults we tolerate in
 ourselves
 by condemning in our parents the faults we tolerate in
 ourselves
 by withholding love to control those we claim to love
 by treating with arrogance people weaker than ourselves.
 For the sin of keeping the poor in the chains of poverty
 for the sin of racism
 for the sin of denying its existence
 for the sin of using violence to maintain our power
 for the sin of war
 for the sin of silence and indifference.
 For all these sins, O God of forgiveness, bear with us, pardon
 us, forgive us.³⁴

³⁴ Rabbi Chaim Stern, in Anonymous, "Yom Kippur" (creative service, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1971), 11.

Stern has taken modern "sins"--both world tragedies and common forms of interpersonal manipulating and mistreatment--and substituted them for the traditional formulations. The style and feel of this confessional is similar to the traditional confessional, unlike many new prayers which completely ignore the traditional liturgical style and structure. In general, creative confessionals mirror the traditional format and language more closely than do other creative prayers. This particular service introduces and interprets these words in an interesting fashion:

Yom Kippur is the day of confession...the conventional crimes are fairly easy to admit and most of us do not mind revealing them they are so publicly shared. Selfishness, prejudice, and dishonesty are run of the mill diseases and somehow we bear them. But Yom Kippur is also the day of honesty. The probing of reason digs deep, and when it does, the image of our immaculate soul is shattered and we grope to accept the reality of ourselves.³⁵

In other words, Stern's confessional is viewed as bypassing "run of the mill" sins and probing more deeply into the modern psyche, getting to the heart of the social and personal ways in which modern individuals go astray. This indeed may account for its widespread popularity. Furthermore, although the confessional begins and ends by mentioning that these are sins against God, God does not figure as prominently in the text as it does in the traditional confessional. The same characteristic is found in certain confessionals in *GOR* which begin or end with reference to God but do not depict each sin in relation to God as does the traditional liturgy. These confessionals are quite similar to some of the confessionals in creative services.³⁶ The fact that some of the sins are simply mentioned in and of

³⁵ *Ibid.* 11.

³⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Repentance*, 327-329, 404.

themselves, with no reference against what or whom they are directed, may reflect the discomfort felt by worshippers with the idea of a God who judges them for their errors. The notion of who or what people sin against is thus left rather ambiguous in the creative services.

Another very common confessional is the one found in the Reconstructionist prayerbook. It is farther removed from the traditional structure than is Stern's, but it still echoes the basic style of the confessional. It is quite humanist in tone, making little mention of God.

We resort to many rites and forms to signalize our desire to return to Thee.

But outward form alone does not suffice; a change of heart is needed.

Help us, O our God, on this solemn day, to utilize our rites and forms for achieving a deeper insight.

Help us to discern our errors as Thou wouldst have us discern them.

Show us that we sin against Thee when we make the lives of others unhappy.

When our actions give needless pain and grief.

We sin when we domineer, and compel others to do only our will. . . .

We sin when we respect the wealthy without character, or despise the poor because they are poor.

When we set ourselves up as exemplars of virtue, though we be blameworthy. . . .

We sin when we are indifferent to the plight of our neighbors and seek only our own welfare.

When we make our cities a jungle and make violence the law.

We sin when we scoff at goodness and deride hope. . . .

When we cast into the waste-heap the precious heritage of our people.

We sin when we act in a way to bring shame upon the household of Israel.

When we bring down contempt upon all Jews by our dishonest or vulgarity. . . .

Give us the moral strength, O God, to break through the vicious circle of meaningless resolutions.

Help us this time to root out degrading habits.
 May this day leave us better for its having been spent by us in
 common worship. ³⁷

As has been true in the other readings, the purpose of this confessional is to gain insight and discernment into our actions, in order to change our behavior. Sins against other people, the world at large and Judaism are all included, blending the personal, the universal and the particular. Even more than in Chaim Stern's confessional (which begins with a very traditional formulation), God's role is ambiguous. "We sin against Thee" is only mentioned once, leaving the exact nature of the sin rather vague. Do we sin against God, the world, other people or ourselves? The answer to this question is never given, and thus sin is mostly used as a synonym for human error without any additional or more weighty connotations.

A final confessional that appears fairly often, although less frequently than either of the previous two, addresses specific Jewish concerns as well as issues of social justice.

For the sin of playing it safe when moral issues flame up too hot in our communities and in the world. . . .

The sin of smirking at others, whether Jews who worship differently or Christians who believe differently.

The sin of elevating fund-raising and budget-balancing into ends rather than means; the sin of forgetting the purposes for which Judaism lives. . . .

The sin of abdicating our social responsibilities and thrusting upon the rabbi our proxy as witness of God and light to the nations. . . .

³⁷ Yom Kippur Prayerbook of the Reconstructionist Foundation, in Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Afternoon Service for the Day of Atonement" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, 1969), 9-10.

And the sin of mouthing the words of Covenant and mission and brotherhood and justice while failing to make these the pillars of our programs and the works of our hands. . . .³⁸

The sins here (equally ambiguous in terms of their relationship to God) all relate to questions of equality and harmony between people, focusing on the broader community more than on interpersonal relationships. Like Chaim Stern's confessional, they directly reflect modern reality, in this case, as it pertains to the Jewish community.

Sin is seen as our failure to treat other people properly both in our small circle of family and friends and in the wider community. The tendency to treat others as objects, to think only of ourselves, to be indifferent, and to have misplaced priorities are the general ills that are addressed. They reflect a society in which people are becoming more insulated from each other and more concerned with getting ahead than with giving time and energy to the things that really matter. They are the sins of the "me generation"—an expression of the seventies but still largely applicable in the eighties. It is not clear in these services to what degree these sins relate to God. What is quite clear, however, is that sin is something that we can overcome. For although they are described as very real and serious errors, most of the services focus on the ability to overcome these human weakness through repentance at least as much as they focus on the errors themselves.

Stressed in equal measure to human weakness is human strength. Sometimes the latter is even stressed to a greater degree.

The source behind our faults is often our failure to admit our worth, to rely on our inner sense of what is right, lest others

³⁸ Rabbi Albert Vorspan, in Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Afternoon Service for the Day of Atonement," 16.

laugh at us, mistreat us or profess a higher standard than we can ever reach. . . . We shall say many things about ourselves this Atonement Day, confessing error, thoughtlessness, misdeed and wrong. But before we do so, before we honestly confront our failings, we must first confront our virtue, and know that whatever wrongs we have committed, we could not recognize our wrongs were not our basic nature fundamentally, irrevocably right.³⁹

Acknowledging one's strengths is placed above admitting one's weaknesses, in reverse of the traditional emphasis on Yom Kippur. The themes of choice, responsibility and humanity's potential for good is strongly stressed, often in connection to partnership with the Divine. The commonly quoted Jack Reimer reading emphasizes this very idea: we have the ability to eradicate hunger, war and sickness if we would only use our divinely given capabilities. As in Rosh Hashanah services, our ability to respond to the call for action is paramount. This is a very positive quality and adds an almost upbeat note to many Yom Kippur services.

As we begin this Yom Kippur, this day which solemnly celebrates our infinite capabilities for change and rebirth, may we find ourselves capable of renewing our devotion to the sacred task which God has given to us--to seek and find, to hear and heed the still small voice. Before us, if we are equal to the divine challenges of true humanity, is the promise of lives rich in fulfillment, and in meaning--and the promise of a glorious age when truth and justice shall be in every house and all people shall dwell in peace.⁴⁰

The ability to choose and make decisions is elevated to the position of being the quintessential characteristic of our lives as humans and the essential focus of Yom Kippur. The emphasis is thus toward humanity and not toward

³⁹ Anonymous, "Yom Kippur Eve Service" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA, 1972), 1.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Kol Nidre" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Worcester, MA, n.d.), 2.

the Divine; Yom Kippur becomes almost uplifting and inspirational, rather than disheartening in any way.

No one ever stays the same. Everyone changes. . . .
 And there is no choice, except for what we *choose* to become.
 The question is not *will* you change, but *how* will you change.
Today is a day for change, today is a day for growth.
*Am I here to change? Am I here to grow?*⁴¹

This is a theme that is also common in *yizkor* services. The ability to construct meaningful lives based on choices, and the potential to live the time we are given to its fullest is commonly stressed. Death and life even become metaphors for the quality of life that one chooses to lead. "We live when we realize our human potential; we die when we stifle or pervert our capacities."⁴²

In summary, in the view of the creative liturgists sins are the errors that we make in our relations to other individuals and groups, mostly due to our inability to truly realize who we are and what we are capable of. Since sin is often not connected to God, repentance does not usually involve asking for forgiveness or pardon from the Holy One. Rather, it is a commitment to change, a willingness to make the choices that will enable us to reach our potential as humans and live to our utmost. Yom Kippur provides the opportunity to gain the insight needed to make the necessary commitments in our lives. Sin and repentance are thus very personal, human processes, and are more psychological than theological in nature.

⁴¹ Rabbi Roy Walter, "A Confession for our Time" (creative service, Temple Emanu El, Houston, TX), 2.

⁴² Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "Yizkor Service" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 1.

The Avodah Service

The *avodah* service is the centerpiece of the traditional liturgy and occupies a prominent place in *GOR* as well. Based on the small sampling of afternoon services that I have, creative liturgists have virtually ignored it. (It is not part of any mimeographed morning service; *GOR* places its interpretive service in the afternoon, as do most of those creative services that include it, contrary to traditional practice.) Some rabbis have chosen to do something completely different for the afternoon service, such as a prepared congregational-rabbi dialogue based on Martin Buber⁴³ or a service based on a selection of readings and prayers.⁴⁴ Great diversity exists among those who have attempted to construct some kind of *avodah* service. Sometimes the *avodah* is completely transformed, making only vague mention of the High Priest or the Temple ritual, as in a service that aims to recall not the Temple but the "spiritual peaks and ethical triumphs of our ancestors." It would appear that this is seen as a modern equivalent of the priestly worship of God, since "we no longer find reassurance or comfort in the words of priest or prophet or rabbi speaking as if he were the mouthpiece of a cosmic God."⁴⁵

There are other services that deal with the *avodah* themes more directly, although they are brief in each case. In one service, the *avodah* is considered a link to the past and we today fulfill the role of the High Priest. "Even as the High Priest first confessed his own sins and prayed for himself and his household, so let us first consider our own individual conduct during

⁴³ Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Between Us--A Dialogue for Rabbi and Congregation from the Writings of Martin Buber" (creative service, Temple Micah, Washington D.C., 1971).

⁴⁴ Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Afternoon Service for the Day of Atonement."

⁴⁵ Rabbi Joseph D. Herzog, "The Avoda Service" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Amherst, NY, 1969), 1.

the past year."⁴⁶ A similar attempt is made in a service that also mentions the *avodah* as a bridge between past and future. As the High Priest assumed responsibility for his sins, so we assume responsibility for ours.⁴⁷ *UPB II* uses this basic approach, comparing the High Priest of old to the teacher today.⁴⁸ Another important element of the *avodah* service worth considering is the martyrology. Because the *avodah* service (and the afternoon service in general) appears to be less commonly used as a basis for creative services, the martyrology is more frequently found in the *yizkor* service. It too is wholly transformed, dealing much more with the Holocaust than with the traditional ten martyrs. Although I am using a fairly small sample it seems fair to say that the *avodah* service has greatly lessened in importance, probably both because it is in the afternoon (when fewer people attend) and because of the themes it contains. The *avodah* services in published prayerbooks are as different as they are in mimeographed services. Prayerbooks published by congregations will be dealt with separately, but it is worth mentioning at this point how they treat the *avodah*. It is completely absent in some prayerbooks.⁴⁹ Some relate it to contemporary themes, pointing out the transferring of the priesthood to teachers or ordinary people, or using it to draw lessons about

⁴⁶ Rabbi Sidney Steiman, "Yom Kippur Service for the Avodah and Martyrology" (creative service, Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis, IN, 1965), 4.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Charles Kroloff, "A Service for Yom Kippur Afternoon" (creative service, Temple Emanu-El, Westfield, NJ, n.d.), 11-14.

⁴⁸ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *The Union Prayerbook II*, 267.

⁴⁹ Rabbi Isalah Zeldin, Leslie E. Aisenman, Cantor Richard B. Silverman, *A High Holy Days Prayer Book* (Stephen S. Wise Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1973) contains no afternoon service at all, but indicates that a special forum takes place. Rabbi Allen S. Maller and James Lee Kaufman, *Tikun Hanefesh--Renewal of the Soul* (Los Angeles, CA, 1979) does have an afternoon service, but there is no mention of anything resembling an *avodah* service. The same is true of the 1983 edition, *Tikun Nefesh--Renewal of the Spirit*.

modern Jewish life.⁵⁰ Still others simply present it in straightforward, descriptive detail.⁵¹ In general, those liturgists who do deal with the *avodah* service struggle in a variety of diverse ways to make its themes relevant.

SELICHOT

The 51 services in this category reflect the greatest degree of variety and diversity. Because of the quantity of undated material, the influence of *Gates of Forgiveness* (published in 1980) is unclear.

SELICHOT SERVICES				
1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
8	7	6	3	27

The variety of the Selichot services is reflected in the many different ceremonies and types of material that they include. Some include havdalah, some involve changing the Torah mantles to white. Some are fairly traditional, others include very little traditional Selichot material. Since having a Selichot service at all is an innovation at many synagogues, rabbis may feel greater freedom in developing the service and establishing the

⁵⁰ Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, *Therefore Choose Life* (San Francisco, CA, 1983), 126-131. In addition to describing the priestly ritual, this service (which takes place in the morning) speaks of the presence of the Shechina residing with the people now that there is no Temple. Rabbis Allen S. Maller and James Lee Kaufman, *Tikun Hanefesh--Renewal of the Soul* (Los Angeles, CA, 1980), 99-101 draws lessons about our relationship to Israel, the synagogue and Jewish life in America from the *avodah* service. This is the only one of their three prayerbooks with an *avodah* service.

⁵¹ Rabbi Herbert Morris, *Hear Our Prayer* (Congregation Beth Israel Judea, San Francisco, CA, 1971), 271-278. This congregation is a merger of a Reform and Conservative synagogue which may explain the more traditional *avodah* service.

congregational custom. They may feel more comfortable compiling a service that is reflective of their own preferences and less bound by tradition or congregational expectations. Creativity is even justified as an integral part of the Selichot tradition:

When one thinks of a traditional liturgy, a prayer service, one thinks of prayers that have been unchanged since their introduction hundreds or even thousands of years ago. An interesting contrast is provided by the Selichot service in which it has been customary since the Medieval period to write special prayers and poems. Selichot services have long been an outlet for creative liturgical expressions.⁵²

Traditional Liturgical Texts

There is a much greater use of traditional liturgical texts in Selichot services than in either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur services. Among the frequently included texts are *avinu malkenu*, *shomer yisrael*, *shema koleinu* and Exodus 34: 6-7. Less common, although not infrequently found are *yigdal* (especially in the early years), *v'al kulam*, *hashivenu* and *kaddish*. Some services include large portions of the daily liturgy (*shema*, *amidah*) as well.

In addition to traditional liturgical texts, other material is commonly included in the creative services. Many Biblical passages are found, especially psalms, although this lessens slightly in the later years. Music is also a part of these services. A number of the texts mentioned above appear to be sung. Thus, much of the music in Selichot services is based on the traditional liturgical text. However, many other songs such as "Eli Eli," "Esa Eina," "Or Zarua" and "Adon Olam" are used as well. Some hymns such

⁵² Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Selichot Service" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, n.d.), 2.

as "All the World" are also present. Very few popular or folk songs are included, however, providing another indication of the more traditional orientation of the Selichot services.

Many of these texts mentioned above are also found in *Gates of Forgiveness*. In general, *Gates of Forgiveness* departs from the traditional concept and structure of Selichot, as the introduction to the book acknowledges.⁵³ Although incorporating traditional elements, the service includes a broad range of themes and explores the ideas of sin, repentance and our relationship to God in a completely original way. Diverse ideas and images are incorporated in relation to God and sin and repentance are dealt with in the context of human error, potential and change. These themes are more typical of creative services than the traditional liturgy and are mingled with elements from the traditional Selichot service in *Gates of Forgiveness*. So too, those writing creative services use traditional texts such as those listed above and modern themes (to be discussed below) to create Selichot observances that are unique blends of traditional and contemporary elements

In general, traditional liturgical texts more frequently form the basis, or at least a central part of creative Selichot services, than of either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur creative services. Perhaps this is not surprising since have a Selichot service represents a return to tradition. However, it is not fully clear why Selichot services should be more traditional than other High Holiday services, since many of the same themes are present in both rituals. It is possible that synagogues that have been inclined to hold Selichot services have a more traditional orientation than

⁵³ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Forgiveness* (New York, 1980), vii.

synagogues involved in other areas of creative liturgy. While this may have been the case at one point, as Selichot has become more widespread I assume that this is less true. Furthermore, the rabbis and congregations holding Selichot services do not appear to be different from those writing creative liturgy in general, although many new names certainly appear on Selichot services (as they do in each category of services). While this is hard to determine with any assurance, it is certainly the case that many of the same names appear on the creative Selichot services as on other services which are less traditional in orientation.

Another possible explanation for the greater use of traditional texts may relate to the very nature of Selichot. Because holding Selichot services represents a reaching back to tradition, rabbis may feel more inclined to include traditional texts and themes. The dynamics of creating a Selichot service are different than those present in creating an alternative High Holiday service. A creative High Holiday service represents a specific move away from a set tradition. A creative Selichot service is a move to reinstate and formulate a certain ritual. Without predisposed biases about the traditional texts or the nature of the ceremony on the part of the worshippers, rabbis may feel more willing to include traditional elements.

Sources

Many of the same sources that dominate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgy can be found in these services as well. The same confessionals often appear here, as do certain selections like Eugene O'Neill's "Why am I afraid to dance?" and Aaron Zeitlin's "Praise Me." There are a few sources particularly relating to Selichot that are often found. One is clearly popular because of its reference to the midnight hour.

Midnight belongs neither to yesterday nor to tomorrow. It stands alone in time, between the worlds that were and the worlds that shall be. It is the link that binds the days and the nights, a pause in the rotation of the hours. Now we are at the threshold of another day, another month, another year. Behind us is memory. Before us is the unknown future. History has stopped for the moment to permit us to gather our thoughts. Soon a new year will be ushered in. What will it bring us? How shall we prepare to meet its challenges and its testings? ⁵⁴

Not only is this reading appropriate because of its use of the midnight imagery, but it presents the idea that we have reached a moment of choice and challenge. Like the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services, this idea is prominent in Selichot services as well. This same theme is found in another common Selichot reading, by David Polish. Humanist in nature, the reading emphasizes the need for introspection and reflection:

Ribbono shel Olam, Master of the Universe--the Universe beyond me and the Universe within me--I want to learn how to cease punishing myself and torturing myself with unhappy memories that torment me when I wake and when I sleep; with self-accusation that comes back to me brazenly or in disguise. . . . I want to learn who I am, at least as much as I know and understand the processes by which I earn my bread. . . . If I could learn to forgive myself, I might learn, and others might learn to forgive each other. . . . I know that the quest for inner peace is agonizing, but all that is precious is bought with anguish. Help me unlock the gates of self-forgiveness, the gates of salvation, even as the prisoner goes forth when the time of punishment is past. Amen. ⁵⁵

There are other sources that are commonly found; they will be dealt with below as they relate to specific Selichot themes.

⁵⁴ Jacob Rudin, in Rabbi Harry Essrig, "Selichot Service" (creative service, University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1968), 1.

⁵⁵ Rabbi David Polish, *At the Threshold* (New York, New York, 1973), 19.

Purpose and Themes of Selichot

Selichot is not always presented in the context of a service of preparation for the High Holidays. Often it is presented as a completely separate holiday in its own right. In explaining and justifying this holiday (which may be new to many people) Selichot is not infrequently related to the martyrs of the Jewish people.

The traditional petitions reveal the saintly character of our people. Amid the most barbaric sort of humiliation they clung to their faith in God and their hope for man. An extraordinary people ours and their witness to God's presence is unparalleled in history. Notwithstanding the pain and debasement to which they were subjected, they continued to express--through their selichot prayers--their wish to repent and merit God's forgiveness.⁵⁶

The deep faith of ancient martyrs is used as an example for us, and is linked to the need to renew ourselves as Jews by reviving ancient customs, namely Selichot.

A people who were plundered and prosecuted [sic] with pitiless passion believed from the depth of being that God was their only refuge. In the days of judgement . . . when they believed the book of life was to be inscribed for each one by God's prodigious hand--they employed every kind of penitential prayer to avert a stern decree for the New Year. . . . In full awareness that you are modern Jews of a modern age, yet do I ask you to help breathe new life and spirit into the eternal truth of an ancient custom. . . . I ask you to fill the void of the obsolete expression of centuries gone by with the soulful response of the Jew who lives in the Age of the Conquest of Space. . . . [O]ur thoughts are not theirs, our needs are not their

⁵⁶ Rabbi Stephen Welsberg, "Services for Selichot" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, San Pedro, CA, 1967), 2.

needs. Still did they pave the way on which their children and children's children would walk.⁵⁷

In this particular reading the ancient martyrs are praised for their faith, yet slightly patronized for their particular mode of expressing that faith. By putting their faith into our language in the Selichot service, Selichot is depicted as a part of a process of modernizing Judaism. Interestingly, while Selichot is described as part of the modernization process, it is also identified as part of the process of returning to tradition: "As part of our reawakening to the deep emotional value of many traditional practices and liturgies, an increasing number of our congregations conduct this Selichot service each year."⁵⁸

Like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Selichot is usually considered a time of reflection and introspection.

We are here to stir that still small voice within us into speaking openly the truth that we failed to live and to act at our best this past year...On this night we join with our fellow Jews throughout the world in prayer and self-examination.⁵⁹

Often these seemingly psychological goals of Selichot--increased self-awareness leading to change in our personal relationships and connection to the world at large--are related to God. In general, there is more frequent reference to God than in either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur services, using both traditional and more modern language. In one service, returning to God forms one of the major themes of the service.

Constantly You call to us, but too often we fail to hear. We remember now how we have exiled ourselves from Your spirit.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, "Selichos Service at Midnight" (creative service, Village Temple, New York, New York, n.d.), 1.

⁵⁸ Rabbi Merle Singer, "A Service for Selichot" (creative service, Temple Beth-El of Boca Raton, Boca Raton, FL, n.d.), 1.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, "Selichot Service" (creative service, The Temple, Atlanta, GA, 1976), 1-2.

Recalling the path we have taken, we seek to return to You in renewed faith.⁶⁰

The quest for God is at times viewed as the purpose of the Selichot service:

We have come together to seek God in prayer, hoping that, in this house dedicated to His worship, we shall feel His presence, and that the bond of human fellowship may help us to experience His love.⁶¹

This is certainly the view expressed in *Gates of Forgiveness*:

Selichot itself is understood by us as the service in which the House of Israel, individually and collectively, struggles to return to God as we prepare for the Days of Awe. For that reason, our service follows a clearly delineated pattern. We begin with a call to return. . . . [T]he second section of the service speaks of and to the House of Israel, the people called by God again and again to return. . . . Our third section concerns the God to whom we turn, and the nature--so far as we can describe it--of the relationship between Israel as God's people and the Holy One as Israel's God. Having come this far, we are able to confront God in a different way. Sinners ourselves, and ready to acknowledge it, we invoke the divine compassion as a prelude to our acknowledgment of sin.⁶²

It is not unusual in the creative services to find the idea that God's love is felt through the presence of community. God is usually described as present in the relationships that we are striving to achieve (as in the Shabbat liturgies), and in our ability to hope and work toward a better world.

God is the Oneness . . . God is the sameness . . . God is the unity . . . God is the mystery of life . . . God is the creative flame . . . God is in the faith by which we overcome the fear of loneliness, of helplessness, of failure and of death. God is in

⁶⁰ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Return from Exile" (creative service, Congregation Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1984), 3.

⁶¹ Rabbi Michael Sternfield, "Selichot" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA, 1974), 1.

⁶² Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Forgiveness*, viii.

the hope which, like a shaft of light, cleaves the dark abysses of sin, of suffering and of despair. God is in the love which creates, protects, forgives. His is the spirit which broods upon the chaos men have wrought, disturbing its static wrongs, and stirring into life the formless beginnings of the new and better world.⁶³

Selichot aims to help the individual conquer sin, work toward change, and overcome isolation. The reading makes these goals not only psychologically beneficial, but theologically relevant because in striving to reach them one encounters the essence of the Divine. Similarly, in Berdichevsky's "It is not we alone that pray" the quest for God is depicted as a central part of the life of the individual and of all creation. "The flashes of the human mind and the storm of the human heart . . . [are] the outpouring of boundless longing for God."⁶⁴ The very process of introspection and self-examination (which can perhaps be seen as "the flashes of the human mind and the storm of the human heart") that is such an integral part of the Selichot service are defined as part of the search for God. A final source, which is also frequently found in other High Holiday services, is "Lord, where shall I find you?" by Rabindranath Tagore. God is found

where the ploughman breaks the hard soil . . . in the mind free to sail by its own star . . . when the poet makes beauty out of words . . . in a mother's lullaby . . . in the dawn and the current of life.⁶⁵

In the very things that people are striving for and being encouraged to value and appreciate, they will find God.

⁶³ Joshua Loth Liebman, in Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Service of Selichot" (creative service, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, n.d.), 4-5.

⁶⁴ Micah Joseph Berdichevsky, in Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Service of Selichot," 4.

⁶⁵ Rabindranath Tagore, in Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Selichot Service," 33-4.

Interestingly, however, although the intimate nature of God, present in humanity and in relationships is stressed, Selichot services also have plenty of traditional God language with God pictured as the source and strength of all. "Through our Selichot prayers we petition our God of Forgiveness to grant mercy to a repentant Israel at the beginning of a New Year."⁶⁶ Two additional readings commonly used emphasize the use of traditional imagery. One speaks of humanity as God's creation:

We are clay, You are the potter. . . . We are glass, You are the craftsman, We are threads, You are the weaver. . . . And do not throw us in a heap if we should not be perfect. Remember, we are only threads.⁶⁷

This theme of creation is picked up in another frequent reading as well:

Father of all humanity, at every instant You create the world anew. The universe is Your child! If, for even a moment, You withdrew Your love from us, all would revert to nothingness! . . . Morning stars appear again and sing their song of love for You. . . . One reminder of Your eternal Presence and my thirst is quenched; I am renewed and young again. Lord, You daily create everything anew. Father, create me--Your child--anew as well...⁶⁸

In both of these readings humanity is depicted as wholly dependent on God. God can renew us and form us; God supports and pardons. This is markedly different from the idea, also found in these services, that we encounter God in the world and in ourselves as we seek renewal. These varied ideas are also seen in *Gates of Forgiveness*, as was mentioned above (page 134). While traditional God language and imagery is present, a wide range of ideas about God are explored, ranging from recognition of an

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 3.

⁶⁷ Michael Quoist, in Rabbi Lawrence Forman, "A Pre-High Holiday Service of Worship" (creative service, Ohel Shalom Temple, n.d.), 2.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, "Selichot Services" (creative service, Central synagogue, n.p., n.d.), 10.

unshakable connection to the Divine to the fact that some may feel a degree of alienation from God. Intimate, gentle language is used in addition to more formal, lofty language.⁶⁹

The use of mixed or seemingly contradictory imagery has been mentioned several times and is worthy of a few more in-depth comments. It can be explained in several ways. As has been suggested before, the High Holidays invite this contradiction to a certain degree. High Holiday imagery is lofty, with God depicted as both judge and merciful creator who forgives human error and provides strength and support to a weak and fallible humanity. It is difficult to avoid this imagery in any High Holiday service in spite of the fact that modern day liturgists tend to depict God in a more intimate way, as dwelling within rather than separate from and above humanity. Although creative liturgy is often about the very process of interpreting traditional liturgical concepts, High Holiday liturgy appears to possess uniquely difficulty for creative liturgists. The interpretive *unetaneh tokef* (footnote 1) and the Yom Kippur confessional are two of the few modern interpretations of a traditional High Holiday prayer that retain some of the feel and power of the original. Rather than abandoning the traditional imagery, and because it is so difficult to reinterpret, new readings with modern imagery are often simply placed alongside of more traditional imagery. Perhaps liturgists hope that worshippers will interpret the traditional liturgy in a fashion that is comfortable for them, or that the emotional attachment to the words and the melodies will dissolve any problems one may have due to intellectual inconsistency.

⁶⁹ For the range of God imagery in the service, see for example, Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Forgiveness*, 29-33.

One should seriously consider this last point. The traditional imagery may possess an element of comfort and security for worshippers that accounts for its inclusion. Since worshippers may connect the words and melodies of traditional texts with past High Holidays, they may feel a certain comfort on account of their familiarity. Furthermore, although it may not be intellectually meaningful for them, on an emotional level the idea of a God who can create and renew individuals at every moment, upon who humanity is wholly dependent, may be appealing while contemplating one's weaknesses and sins. None of these possibilities, however, accounts for the fact that there is a stronger emphasis placed upon God in Selichot services than in Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services unless this characteristic reflects the type of congregation that would have a Selichot service, or the traditional nature of the Selichot observance as was suggested before (page 134-135).

While God is prominent in these services, sin and repentance are still the dominant themes of Selichot services. Sometimes they are connected to God, and sometimes more in relation to the human being. Again one sees the emphasis on human potential and the possibility of change in equal measure to human weakness. One unique characteristic of the discussion of sin and repentance in Selichot services is that a number of services deal with the theme in the context of a candle-lighting service. The earliest use of this ceremony, which is frequently utilized, has three candles representing envy, hatred and greed. Each candle is extinguished following a reading emphasizing the way that these emotions harm us. This leaves the ner tamid burning and it becomes, metaphorically, the source for lighting

the three lights of repentance, prayer and charity.⁷⁰ There are two other variations of this service. One has the three lights representing our relationships to our family, our community and our world, relationships which failed to live up to their potential. The ner tamid provides the light that can rekindle these damaged relationships.⁷¹ There is nothing particularly novel in the language or ideas used to describe the sins. Yet the use of a visual image to describe our need to "snuff out" the sins is unique and it is interesting that in each service a symbol representing Judaism and tradition provides the element needed to illumine our twisted road. In a third example, the candles represent sacred love, the divine voice and justice. They are extinguished and kindled again accompanying readings that explore the nature of the sins in each category and how these sins can be conquered.⁷²

In many ways Selichot services are similar to the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Many similar sources are utilized and many of the same themes are explored. However, they are unique in certain critical ways. They contain greater use and diversity of traditional texts. God figures more centrally in the services, and there is some creativity in terms of symbols and imagery. The orientation of the synagogues that have Selichot services, the nature of the Selichot service itself, its unique time and the lack of strong binding traditions associated with it, may account for some of these particular features.

⁷⁰ Rabbi Julius Nodel, "Selichos" (creative service, Temple Shaare Emeth, St. Louis, MO, n.d.), 7-8.

⁷¹ Rabbi Howard Shapiro, "A Service for Selichot" (creative service, Temple Sha'arey Shalom, Springfield, NJ, n.d.), 7-8.

⁷² Rabbi William Sajowitz, "Pre-High Holiday Meditation Service of Selichot" (creative service, Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1978), 3-9.

Children's, Youth and Family Services

Creative High Holiday services for children and youth have remained consistently popular in spite of the publication of *Gates of Heaven* in 1979 as the chart indicates. (*Gates of Heaven* is a revised version of a 1970 High Holiday prayerbook for children entitled *Gates of Prayer*.)

HIGH HOLIDAY CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES					
	1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
Rosh Hashanah	1	3	5	4	12
Yom Kippur	1	7	5	4	12

These services are designed for a variety of ages from very young children (early readers) to elementary aged children and high school youth groups. Most are quite sparing in the use of traditional liturgical texts. Rosh Hashanah services are likely to contain *avinu malkenu* and a shofar service of some kind. Yom Kippur services, in addition to the *avinu malkenu*, usually have some kind of confessional, and often *kol nidre* even though most services appear to take place in the afternoon. *Gates of Heaven* contains much more traditional liturgical text than most of the creative services. The sources that appear frequently will be mentioned as they apply to certain themes.

Themes of High Holiday Children's Services

Many of the readings in these services are explanatory in nature. Teaching, rather than prayer, appears to be the dominant goal. Thematically, they are very similar to readings in *Gates of Heaven*. Rosh Hashanah and

Yom Kippur are generally portrayed as days for children to consider their behavior.

There's yet another reason Rosh Hashanah is so very special for us and for Jews all over the world: starting today, and for the next ten days, we are to think about the things we don't usually take the time to think about. Things like how we behaved during the year, how we treated our friends, our family, our teachers, and our neighbors. We remember times we weren't as good as we should have been. And we plan to make the coming year a better one.⁷³

Sometimes this theme is related to creation and to the fact that Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world--a beginning. Usually an attempt is made on both holidays to encourage children to examine their own deeds. This is done in an upbeat, positive manner so that the services have a celebratory mood.

A New Year--why new? Why is today different?
The sun keeps rising in the morning, and goes down every night.
The flowers bloom in the spring, and fade in the fall.
We study and we play; we wake and we sleep.
Every day seems different, yet somehow the same.
Then what is new about today? It must be something we cannot see. It must have something to do with things inside ourselves.
How we think. How we feel about ourselves. How we feel about others. And how we want to act.
If we can change what is inside, if we can make our thinking and our feeling like new--then we will have a different day, a special year. Then today will truly be ROSH HASHANAH--the beginning of a new year.⁷⁴

The type of behavior that the services try to encourage mostly pertains to treatment of others as in this commonly used reading.

⁷³ Anonymous, "Rosh Hashana Children's Service" (creative service, Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK, n.d.), 3.

⁷⁴ Rabbi Elliot Strom, "Days of Joy, Days of Awe" (creative service, Bucks County Jewish Congregation, Newton, PA, 1979), 3-4.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. Once a student asked:
 "Rabbi, which is the best way to love God?" Said the rabbi:
 "The best way to love God is to love your fellow men. Then you
 will also love God and God will love you." What is it then that
 is asked of us today?

More love and understanding--

For our parents . . . for our friends . . . for our teachers . . . for
 all those who are in need of our love . . . The Bible says to you
 and to me: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . How can
 we do this? Long ago our teacher Hillel told us how: What is
 hateful to yourself, do not do to your fellow man.

If we do not want others to speak harshly to us, then let us not
 speak harshly to them.

If we want others to treat us fairly and kindly, let us treat
 them fairly and kindly.

If we want others to understand us, let us try to understand
 them.

If we want others to be our friends, let us be friends to them.

This is the way to friendship and fellowship; This is the way to
 our fellow men and to God. ⁷⁵

This emphasis on treating others fairly and compassionately is clearly
 reflected in the confessionals that are used in the Yom Kippur services. In a
 commonly used confessional children apologize for lying, being thoughtless,
 hurting other's feelings, playing unfairly, making fun of others, not helping,
 and not showing respect for parents and teachers. ⁷⁶ Many confessionals
 present variations on this theme, focusing on common ways that children
 misbehave in family, school and with friends.

One way that the theme of treating others with respect is carried out
 is by emphasis on the unity of all people. Universalist messages are as
 frequently found in these services as in adult services. Differences

⁷⁵ Rabbi David Polish, in Anonymous, "Family Service for Rosh Hashonah" (creative service,
 Temple Shaar' Emeth, Englishtown, NJ, 1975), 2-3.

⁷⁶ Rabbi Elliot Strom, "Days of Awe, Days of Joy," 15. This is an adaptation from Rabbi David
 Polish's, *Children's Service for Rosh Hashanah* (New York, New York, 1975), 35.

between people are praised; people are part of one family in spite of their differences.

It is most important to remember that every person is dear. Just as a rainbow is beautiful because it has many colors, there must be people of many kinds to make a beautiful world. So, we like being different, and we are glad others are different too. Alike and special, the same and different--that is what all of us are. To celebrate about ourselves and about the people around us we sing the *shema*. The words tell us that there is only one God. The song reminds us that there must be only one family on earth. A family made of all people in the world. ⁷⁷

In this reading, and in many others, human unity is celebrated, and is connected to the oneness of God.

Not only in relation to the theme of unity, but in many other ways, God is strongly emphasized in children's services. The emphasis is stronger and much less equivocal than in adult High Holiday services. Very often the God language is traditional and simplistic.

God is great; for this reason we praise Him. His greatness is without end. God is good to all. His love is seen in the good things in our world. God is kind and considerate. He is fair and just. God helps those who look to Him for help. . . . He gives strength to the weak. He protects all who love Him. . . . Let us praise God for His goodness. ⁷⁸

Similarly:

All goodness comes from God. We cannot be right and good without Him. But God can be good without us, because He is holy. . . . God is not like a man. He is better, and all of His betterness fills up the world. All the goodness of man cannot add up to the greatness of the one God. The one God is the

⁷⁷ Anonymous, "Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur--A Children's Service" (creative service, Temple Albert, Albuquerque, NM, n.d.), 3-4.

⁷⁸ Anonymous, "Children's Service for Rosh Hashonah" (creative service, Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.), 2-3.

Source of love, like a father. He is the foundation of justice and right, like a kindly king. Like a teacher, we turn to him for help. It's wonderful to have such a terrific God and it makes us feel good to know that some day, when we have children, they'll have the same great God.⁷⁹

Much of the God language used in these services expresses very traditional God concepts. Children are told that God wants them to change their behavior, that God is the omnibenevolent supreme ruler and always protects those who love the Holy One. This is particularly interesting because it is exactly these traditional concepts that are often disavowed in adult services.

Some authors however, do attempt to express the same God concepts frequently found in adult services in language appropriate for children. God is spoken of in very intimate language in *Gates of Heaven*: "Tender hearts, gentle hands: then our God is near, close as touch, near as love."⁸⁰ This is a similar feature of some of the creative services. God is described as present in loving relationships and as that aspect in humans which leads to goodness. "We feel God's presence when we try do do what's right . . . when we're lonely . . . in the clouds . . . when our lives are full of love . . . when we're glad with who we are."⁸¹ "Prayer is our way of knowing that God is in the love we feel for others and that others feel for us."⁸² While it is present, however, the idea of an intimate God is found less frequently in children's services than in adult services. This may reflect the idea that children should learn the traditional God concepts associated with the High

⁷⁹ Rabbi David Powers, "Young People's Service for Yom Kippur" (creative service, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA), 8-9.

⁸⁰ Rabbi Chaim Stern, *Gates of Heaven* (New York, 1979), 30.

⁸¹ Rabbi Elliot Strom, "Days of Joy, Days of Awe," 14.

⁸² Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "Children's Service for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur" (creative service, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, n.d.), 10.

Holidays through the service. It may also reveal a failure on the part of liturgists to adequately address important questions such how do children perceive God and what sort of God concept do we wish to introduce to children? Perhaps because the worshippers are children, theological questions pertaining to God are attended to with less care.

The Shofar Service and Akedat Yitzhak

The shofar is used in a fashion very similar to the way it is used in adult services. It serves as a symbol of the common themes of the services, primarily functioning as a call to change one's behavior and a reminder of the presence of God. Perhaps the most common shofar reading is the following:

The first call-- *Tekiah*! Loud and strong it says: Listen! Listen to the voice of God on this Rosh Hashanah!

The second call-- *Shevarim*! A low note and a high note-- whether we are little or big our voices are heard by God.

The third call-- *Teruah*! Little broken notes, they say: Pay attention to the little things in life.

And now the fourth and last call-- *Tekiah Gedolah*--the greatest of them all! One single blast, it tells us to listen to the voice of the One God, now and forever.⁸³

In other services the shofar is related more directly to personal behavior and one's relationship to others.

The *tekiah* is a proud and good note. It calls us to remember that each of us is full of goodness.

The broken sounds of *shevarim* remind us that we cannot do our best every minute of our lives. We try to do what is right, but sometimes we fail. Yet one good deed often gives us strength to do another before much time has passed.

⁸³ Rabbi David Polish, in Anonymous, "High Holy Day Services and Songs" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 18-19.

The sobbing note, *teruah* reminds us of our own tears and of the tears of others. Sometimes we feel sorry for ourselves though we have many reasons to be thankful. *Teruah* tells us to listen to the cries of those who do not share what we have. It is a call to help the helpless.

The great *Tekiah* is the sound of a promise to us. It is God's promise that we can do well if we try. It is as though God is telling us that people are more important than ever as helpers in building up the world.⁸⁴

While occasionally the shofar is described as a call to strengthen one's Judaism ("... the shofar sounds remind us...of all of our responsibilities as Jews."⁸⁵) It is most commonly used as a call to good behavior and concern for others.

The shofar is also related to the near sacrifice of Isaac. Akedat yitzhak appears to be the most common reading for Rosh Hashanah children's services, although most services attempt to glide over the many difficulties presented by the text. One service, entirely in rhyme, explains the Torah reading in rhyme also:

We all know the word called "test"
When we are called to do our best;
And if we pass, then we are strong,
We can overcome the wrong.
Our Torah tells us of such a plight,
When God spoke to Abraham in a dream one night
And ordered him to place his son upon an altar,
And in his devotion he must not falter. . . .
You have passed the test, the greatest one,
You have been faithful, you and your son;
May all your children remain true,
When on Rosh Ha-Shanah they read about you.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Anonymous, "Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur--A Children's Service" (Temple Albert), 7-8.

⁸⁵ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "Children's Services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur," 23.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Richard Zions, "Children's Service for Rosh Hashanah (in rhyme)" (creative service, n.p. 1976), 3.

The very nature of rhyme, and glossing over the fact that Abraham was supposed to kill Isaac gives the event an almost light-hearted note. At the end children are instructed to have faith as Abraham did, and this is the most frequent message of the akedah in both creative services and *Gates of Heaven*. ("It was never intended that Abraham take his son's life--only that he learn to keep faith with God, and to understand that sometimes we can live only when we are willing to take great risks for what we believe in." ⁸⁷) David Polish's words are most commonly used in the creative services: "By trusting God as Abraham did, we may indeed be a true blessing to mankind."⁸⁸ Occasionally there is an attempt to soften the harsh message of the text. One service tries to accentuate God's love for Abraham in spite of the request that he sacrifice his son. Abraham's courage and faith is emphasized as an example for people today, but the Torah reading is followed by a reading for parents and children that underscores a different message: "Today we learned that parents do not abandon their children on some cold mountain, and children do not forget their parents in their old age."⁸⁹ For the most part, however, the akedah is dealt with in a simplistic way with relatively little attention given to its rather frightening themes and implications for children.

Children's services bear some important resemblances to adult services. They emphasize the need to assess and improve one's behavior, as well as the unity of all people. They utilize the symbols of the High Holidays to support these themes. There are, however, also important

⁸⁷ Rabbi Chaim Stern, *Gates of Heaven*, 17.

⁸⁸ Rabbi David Polish, *Children's Services for the High Holy Days*, 16.

⁸⁹ Rabbi Stephen S. Pearce, "The Sweetness of Honey" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Stamford, CT, 1981), 12-13.

differences. God is mentioned more frequently and in a more traditional manner, and as a whole the services utilize more traditional imagery and language. Not surprisingly, children's services are often simplistic in their use of language and ideas. It is difficult to determine whether this simplicity is age-appropriate because the age to which most of the children's services are geared is unclear. One of the struggles that authors of children's services face is the wide age-range that the services are supposed to encompass. What is appropriate for a first grader will not be appropriate for a fifth grader, and many services may represent an attempt to strive for a happy medium. Given that the type of community present for a children's service is hard to ascertain, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of creative liturgies for children.

High Holiday Prayerbooks

Several congregations have actually printed High Holiday prayerbooks, rather than utilizing mimeographed services. I have studied twelve prayerbooks, representing nine different congregations. They appear to be the regular prayerbooks used for High Holiday worship and not the basis for an alternative service within the congregation. The use of traditional texts, source material and music is fairly similar to that in the mimeographed services. (Most services appear to utilize a cantor and/or choir.) One prayerbook is a compilation of mimeographed services produced by the congregation, and the introduction sets forth a commitment to worship creativity and change.

You will note that this is a soft-covered book. It was decided that we need not feel shackled to any one book and therefore we may replace this volume with a new and even more

contemporary volume when necessary. In so doing I would hope that you and I would continue to respond to the challenges and needs of our times.⁹⁰

Several others do not seem to be markedly different from mimeographed services (although one contains a *musaf* for Rosh Hashanah).⁹¹ Still another prayerbook describes itself quite honestly as a compilation of other published works, among them *UPB*, *GOR* by the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (London) and *New Prayers for the High Holy Days*, edited by Jack Reimer and Harold Kushner. The compiler hopes that it can be viewed as a "representative expression of contemporary Jewry."⁹² There are several prayerbooks, however, that contain some rather original material and are worth mentioning in more detail.

Therefore Choose Life, Prayerbook for Yom Kippur--Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

Therefore Choose Life, written by the ritual committee of Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco, is quite original and seems to represent the particular needs of the Sha'ar Zahav community, which is largely homosexual. The fact that most of the worshippers are gay or lesbian is incorporated into the services quite directly, as in this introductory reading:

⁹⁰ Rabbi Albert M. Lewis, ed., *Temple Emanuel High Holy Day Prayer Book* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1979), 6.

⁹¹ Congregation M'kor Shalom, *A Contemporary Vehicle for Our Constant Values* (Mt. Laurel, NJ, 1979.) This prayerbook appears to be intended for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur although the structure of the prayerbook is rather unclear because the services are not clearly delineated. For other examples of prayerbooks that are quite similar to mimeographed services, see also: Rabbi Steve Jacobs, *Untitled* (Temple Judea, Encino, CA, 1973); New Reform Congregation, *Untitled* (Encino, CA, 1984).

⁹² Rabbi Seymour Prystowsky, ed., *A Jewish Prayerbook for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* (Congregation Or Ami, Lafayette Hill, PA, 1979), preface.

Hinei Mah Tov! How good it is to gather, in a rainbow of affections and sexualities, in the house of a God who loves each of us as we are created. How sweet it is to gather, women and men together, in the house of a God who transcends human limits and categories. How pleasant it is to gather, Jews and non-Jews together, in the house of a God who hears the prayers of all peoples. How fine it is to gather, people with firm beliefs together with people with questions in our hearts, in the house of a God who values deeds of caring and justice far above the recitation of creeds.⁹³

This one paragraph acknowledges several realities about the community. It is made up of both heterosexual and homosexual individuals. This reality is not only acknowledged, it is celebrated. There must also be a number of non-Jews present in order for them to be specifically mentioned as members of the community. Indeed, many of the homosexual relationships in the congregation do not consist of two Jewish partners. The nature of the congregation is dealt with in a direct fashion ensuring that the service will speak to the particular needs of the worshipping community.

Other elements of the service make it clear that the needs of this community are prominent in the minds of the authors. The reading prior to the Kaddish, for example, remembers gay individuals who were persecuted and martyred in past ages, those who committed suicide due to personal torment, and those who "wasted their lives by suppressing their true natures."⁹⁴ There is also a deliberate attempt to affirm the worth and the identity of gay individuals, emphasizing that God does not spurn someone because he or she is homosexual.

At this moment, we reject the lie that a portion of Your handiwork is degenerate or cast out from Your love.
At this moment, let our trust in You bring us to trust ourselves.

⁹³ Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, *Therefore Choose Life*, 10.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 60.

At this moment, let us truly believe that our essence is goodness, that our destiny, like Yours, is to bring blessing and peace, and that Your love and help are never far from us. And from this moment, we will not fail to bring our own lives toward caring and brave and righteous deeds.⁹⁵

This reading (and much of the service) not only stresses the fact that God does not reject gay people, but that God loves them, thus enabling them to love and believe in themselves.

Another unique feature of this service is that it is completely egalitarian, although not gender neutral. The words "*avinu malkenu*" are used interchangeably with "*imeinu malkateinu*."⁹⁶ God is called both mother and father. These more liberal characteristics are particularly interesting because in many ways the service is quite traditional. There is a *musaf* service on Rosh Hashanah morning. God language and imagery connected to the High Holidays is utilized. For example, people are described as helpless before the power of God; God's forgiveness and pardon is sought. There is an *avodah* service on Yom Kippur that explains the entire Temple ritual, concluding with the idea that the *shechina* is now with us and not in the Temple (see footnote 50). Traditional Jewish ideas exist alongside very liberal concepts. One has a picture of a congregation committed to a more traditional Judaism, although the individuals within it are in many ways committed to ideas that are not traditional at all. While *Therefore Choose Life* consistently and honestly reflects the ideology of the congregation, it does so within a fairly traditional framework, maintaining a connection to traditional liturgical texts and High Holiday

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 180.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 98.

themes. In this sense, it achieves something that few other services have done so clearly and directly.

A High Holy Days Prayer Book--Stephen S. Wise Temple

The prayerbook written by the staff of Stephen S. Wise Temple is unique in that the themes of pain, suffering and doubt figure prominently in all of the services. They are woven into almost every part of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgy. In the Rosh Hashanah morning service, for example, the themes of God and the Holocaust, the diminishing of God due to human rebellion, the joint suffering of God and humanity and the ultimate need that God and humanity have for each other in spite of doubt are all raised between the *michamocha* and the *avot* and again between the *avot* and *sim shalom*.⁹⁷ The sins and crimes of humanity are dealt with in a brutal and graphic fashion in a reading between the *michamocha* and the *avot* on Kol Nidre:

And I was wearied of seeing the smiting and the smitten
 Bespattered, dipped in life's blood
 And warriors stricken, pierced,
 And cast aside . . .
 And they were like filth on the face of the earth.
 And their heads in the dust like dung.
 How long, O Lord, how long
 Shall the curse of Cain haunt
 The gifted but unhappy race of Man? ⁹⁸

If other services focused on introspection and self-reflection to the extreme, this prayerbook seems directed in the opposite direction. It struggles with theological, philosophical and communal challenges while

⁹⁷ Rabbi Isaiah Zeldin, Leslie E. Aisenman, Cantor Richard B. Silverman, *A High Holy Days Prayer Book*, 26-31.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 58-9.

paying relatively little attention to the inner psychological turmoil of the individual.

There are positive notes, but hope is mostly expressed as existing in spite of the terror of the world. Humanity will survive, ever struggling forward in spite of the doubts and conflicts that are continuously present in the world. Goodness exists at some basic level in spite of evidence of inhumanity. The language used is the language of survival, as in the *neilah* service which contains a long reading interspersed with the words, "Blessed are You, Lord, God of the Universe, Who has kept us alive."⁹⁹ This service is thus markedly different from most others in both tone and content.

Hear Our Prayer--A Prayerbook for the High Holy Days--Congregation Beth Israel Judea.

Hear Our Prayer has several interesting features, mostly related to its structure. This prayerbook is actually the second prayerbook written by Beth Israel Judea. An earlier prayerbook was designed solely for Rosh Hashanah.¹⁰⁰ The Rosh Hashanah services in that prayerbook (which are incorporated into *Hear Our Prayer*) are very upbeat and celebratory in tone. The introduction states as much. "I have presented what I believe to be the underlying principle of Rosh Hashanah--a celebration of life--with all of its hope, joy, excitement and promise."¹⁰¹ And indeed, this theme is woven into much of the Rosh Hashanah service.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 113-117.

¹⁰⁰ Rabbi Herbert Morris, *Inscribe Us For Life* (Congregation Beth Israel Judea, San Francisco, CA, 1971).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, introduction.

The Rosh Hashanah service contains some unusual elements in terms of its composition. It contains a *musaf* service, followed by an original section entitled *derech erez l'chaim* which is composed of biblical and rabbinic statements related to reverence for life and God's creatures. The Yom Kippur service ¹⁰² is also unique. It contains no *yizkor*; *yizkor* is replaced entirely with a section on Holocaust remembrance. The *avodah* service is intended to help people "remember forever their attachment to and love for the land of Israel."¹⁰³ As was mentioned above (page 132), the ritual of the High Priest is described in detail, without even an attempt to indicate that today each individual is like the High Priest, or draw any modern significance beyond the brief introductory comment quoted above. *Hear our Prayer* is original in some of the themes that it presents, but even more so in the structural changes and additions that it uses to emphasize these themes.

Tikun Hanefesh--Renewal of the Soul--Temple Akiva

In many ways *Tikun Nefashot* is similar to mimeographed services in terms of the themes and sources it presents. It stands out partially because it is a prayerbook that is used by several other congregations in California, (not only by those who compiled it). Furthermore, several editions have been compiled, indicating an ongoing attempt to struggle with and define a High Holiday prayer ritual.

¹⁰² Rabbi Herbert Morris, *Hear Our Prayer*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 252.

Editions were compiled in 1979, 1980 and 1983.¹⁰⁴ The differences between them are interesting to note. Although they are not major, they seem to represent an attempt to find the language and the structure that work most effectively for the congregation. In each year certain readings are eliminated and others are included. The biggest changes from year to year are structural. In 1979 the prayerbook included several choices for Erev Rosh Hashanah, for the shofar service and for Kol Nidre. In 1980 no choices were presented, while the choices were returned to the 1983 edition with a choice for *yizkor* included. Similarly, there is no *avodah* service in 1979. A brief service that describes the *avodah* ritual is included in 1980 (as mentioned in footnote 50) with the following meaning attached to it:

May the Avodah service in the Temple of old remind us of our duty to rebuild the Holy Land so that "Out of Zion shall go forth the Torah and the word of God from Jerusalem." May the Avodah service inspire us to strengthen Jewish life in America. Grant that our worship in the Synagogue today lead us to sincere and noble living. . . . May the memories of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem help us to understand that not only the Synagogue but the home, the school, the community and the nation--each is a Sanctuary--a holy place, where we may learn to know You, O God, and in which we may serve you.¹⁰⁵

In 1983 however, the *avodah* service was again removed. The editors have also made some interesting choices in terms of content. For instance Genesis 3 is the afternoon reading for Yom Kippur. Overall, however, the

¹⁰⁴ Rabbis Allen S. Maller and James Lee Kaufman, ed., *Tikun Hanefesh--Renewal of the Soul* (Los Angeles, CA, 1979, 1980, 1983). The 1983 edition was arranged only by Maller for his synagogue and for Temple Isaiah, and was entitled *Tikun Nefeshot--Renewal of the Spirit*. Personal correspondence indicates that Kaufman has not used the prayerbook in five years and is in the process of revising it for his congregation.

¹⁰⁵ Rabbi Allen S. Maller and Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, ed. *Tikun Hanefesh* (1980), 99.

content is very much in consonance with that found in mimeographed services. Thus a summary of the philosophy of *Tikun Hanefesh* will also help to summarize High Holiday services in general over the course of these twenty years.

A unifying theme . . . is the contradictory aspects of the human condition. On the one hand, we have human weakness, failure and sin; on the other hand we have the striving to act responsively, and with God's help to improve both our personal attitudes and relationships, as well as the collective condition of the society around us. While Judaism has always taught that redemption is the result of a partnership between mankind and God, the strong emphasis on personal self-improvement and human social responsibility is primarily found in Reform Judaism. In the last two decades, the personal themes have become as important as the social themes in many prayer-books. The introspective approach this entails is the result of recent developments in popular psychology which indicate a convergence of religious, psychological and mystical concepts into a new spiritual approach and openness. To this modern "New Age" thinking is added for Jews, the impact of the Holocaust, and the rebirth of the State of Israel, as messianic events that foreshadow the universal threat and redemption which has long been awaited by messianic thinkers.¹⁰⁶

The Questions that Are Necessary to Ask as Part of a Holistic Study of Liturgy

Looking at the questions that Lawrence Hoffman has raised will help to summarize creative High Holiday liturgy as a whole. By indicating the way in which these services order the world into meaningful categories, delineate sacred myth and portray God, it will hopefully be possible to gain a better understanding of the nature of the community that worships using

¹⁰⁶ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Prayer-Book and Self-Revelation to God in Judaism," Journal of Dharma, Vol.9, no.3 (1984): 228.

creative High Holiday services. While Hoffman raises four questions, the question of change over time will not be dealt with in regard to this material. No major changes in these services are evident over the course of the twenty years. The services become somewhat less lofty in tone, with fewer English hymns, but overall the later services are quite similar to the earlier services. This observation in and of itself can certainly be analyzed, however, I am not certain that it is an accurate reflection of the twenty year period. The large number of undated services, as well as the lack of significant material in each category during each time period makes it very difficult to draw conclusions about change with any degree of certainty.

How Does Creative High Holiday Liturgy Order the World for Those Who Worship?

If ritual functions to "establish the categories with which we order experience,"¹⁰⁷ then creative High Holiday liturgy places the worshipping community itself in a separate category as a community with a special mission and unique abilities. The services indicate that the worshipping community possesses the ability to create goodness out of inhumanity. The individual Jew is described as a unique and talented person. The services attempt to define a seemingly unmanageable world as manageable. They seek to make worshippers feel as if they have an element of control, even though they may feel helpless and out of control. The nature of the problems, the conflicts that people feel are quite universal in nature. By emphasizing that the worshipper can gain a measure of control, the Jewish community defines itself as a group of individuals who can make a

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* (Bloomington, IN, 1987), 173.

difference to a troubled world. "... [T]hrough their ritual and its implicit categories of meaning, Jews demarcate themselves from non-Jews, choosing, as it were, an alternative social universe to inhabit."¹⁰⁸ The social universe that we inhabit encourages us not to be satisfied with an imperfect world because it is in our power to perfect it.

It is not surprising that so much stress is placed on this message, given the nature of the world during these twenty years. As has been pointed out before, the sixties, seventies and eighties were periods of tremendous change. The sixties saw the beginning of challenges and protests against previously held assumptions about the nation, religion and family among other things. While this continued in the seventies, active protest diminished as people felt increasingly powerless. Organized religion became more voluntary as it was seen as less relevant to life. This disenchantment led to an emphasis on self-fulfillment and the experiential. Personal gain grew to be increasingly important. While organized religion saw a resurgence in the eighties, the emphasis on the needs and desires of the individual has not abated. Family life has become increasingly more complicated during this time. Moreover, disillusionment and apathy has grown even stronger as people feel that problems such as war, drugs and the deteriorating environment are beyond their control to solve and they even lack confidence in the ability of the national leadership to find solutions. As will be seen, the creative services are very cognizant of these characteristics of modernity and they strongly affect the focus and perspective of the services. This sets these services apart from the standard liturgy in a significant way for both *UPB II* and *GOR* reflect

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 174.

broader, more universal and traditional themes. After examining in greater detail the way that these services define the relationship between the worshipper and the world at large, these differences will be described more fully.

The creative High Holiday services attempt to help individuals reach for the personal self-fulfillment that is craved by so many in this age. They strive to empower people to take the action necessary to reach fulfillment in their personal lives. A similar emphasis is placed on the relationship between the individual and the world. (Interestingly while both themes are strongly present, the stress in the High Holiday services appears to be on the worshipper's relationship to the world at large, while the focus in creative Shabbat services is more centered on personal fulfillment and relationships with other people.) Although it may seem that the world situation is hopeless, High Holiday liturgy attempts to help worshippers see that sin is not the dominant characteristic in the world. Humanity and society are both defined as intrinsically good in spite of surface appearances; although it may seem impossible to uncover this goodness, tikun olam is not an impossible task. Finally, although religion may seem irrelevant, the very purpose of the High Holidays is to give worshippers the perspective that they need to make the changes that they so desire in their personal lives and the life of society at large.

The emphasis on change and potential as much as on weakness is part of this very attempt to empower individuals. Everyone knows the problems; the fact that people are capable of working toward solutions is not felt with such certainty.

It is not too late. It's not too late to look back at all we planned to do during the past year to ask ourselves the

question: what happened to the plans, why didn't some become reality?

It's not too early. It's not too early to plan again. Planning and dreaming are related. We need the dreams for quiet moments and future times. From them, plans are made. Dreams only need dreamers, but plans need workers.

It's not too late. It's not too late to say I love you to a child, a husband, a wife, a parent, grandparent or friend. And if the words are too difficult, a touch, a kiss, a note will do. . . .

It's not too late to realize that we are all one. We are all part of a world that is greater than our dreams and more vast than our imaginations. It's not too late to bring harmony into our world, to make peace a permanent possession. It's not too late to stand hand in hand with peoples of all colors, ages and beliefs to search for an understanding of the Oneness we call Adonai. ¹⁰⁹

If people think that taking action is pointless, that too much time has passed for themselves and society at large, the liturgy tries to help people believe that all is not hopeless, that it is "not too late." Some of the strength that people draw upon in order to make these change is gained from community. The reason that the world can be seen as meaningful, that change is viewed as possible, is partially *because* people have worshipped together. Worshipping together is taking the first step, a step that can lead the worshipper to actively seek change.

We have shared many words together. *That we could speak them, and hear them spoken, means that there is a place in the world for them*, that our songs of praise and prayers of hope have not gone empty from our mouths, but remain in the air, waiting for other words to join them. Too often they are not joined, but lost in hopeless words, rhetoric propounded but not meant, accents without acts. If the hopes that we have shared today are not to have been shared in vain, we must not leave our words here in our seats, neatly folded in our books. Our words

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous, in Rabbi Albert Lewis, *Temple Emanuel High Holy Day Prayer Book*, 22.

must leave with us, go streaming out the doors with us. . . .¹¹⁰
(emphasis added).

There is a power, a potential for change in the very fact that the words have been spoken. This reading emphasizes the very point that Hoffman makes, that we can bring a certain reality into being simply by speaking the words, by worshipping together.¹¹¹ Hopefully, worshippers will leave the synagogue believing that they can better an inhumane world.

The emphasis on the need to respond to an uncertain and seemingly uncontrollable world may help explain why the services are more humanist than God-centered in tone. God is an enormous mystery, another element of uncertainty and unpredictability. People lack any assurance that God will help make the world more manageable; some believe that God has actually let the world reach its current state. What people can come to believe more readily, however, is that they possess the potential to restore order to their personal lives and to society at large. In a world that is out of control, worshippers can leave thinking that they have the inner resources to gain an element of control. The High Holidays help them reach this conclusion, and to chart the path to a better life.

This discussion reveals that the High Holiday themes of sin, repentance, change and growth are very much interpreted through the lens of the modern world and its problems in the creative services. Moreover, the guidance given to the worshipper is based on a sense of the needs and capabilities of the individual in today's world. *UPB* // (and certainly the traditional liturgy) are far removed from the specific frustrations and difficulties inherent in contemporary society, but so too is *GOR* to some

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, in Rabbi Steve Jacobs, *Untitled*, (1973), 41.

¹¹¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer--Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C. 1988), 231.

extent. First of all, the traditional liturgical themes form the basis of the services in *GOR* to a much greater extent than is found in the creative services, as has been pointed out. There is much more translation and interpretation of traditional texts, but even additional interpretive readings tend to be more general and universal in tone and less connected to specific characteristics of today's world. For example,

In the twilight of the vanishing year, we lift up our hearts in thanksgiving. . . .

We were sustained by love and kindness; comforted in times of sorrow; found happiness in our homes, and gladness with our friends. . . .

Some of our days were dark with grief. Many a tear furrowed our cheeks: alas for the tender ties that were broken! We look back with sorrow, as the new year begins. ¹¹²

While focusing on relationships, which is very much a reflection of contemporary concerns, the reading refers to the human condition in a very general way. It does not mention "standing hand in hand with peoples of all colors, ages and beliefs" (footnote 109) or the presence of "false satisfaction in a world of hate" (footnote 12) or the pressure to conform (footnote 11). This is not to say that the standard prayerbook does not address the specifics of contemporary reality, for in some cases it does. ¹¹³ However, there is less concern for the psychological and emotional state of the worshipper in today's troubled world and more concern with addressing broader themes relating to traditional High Holiday concerns. The creative services speak directly to the individual and his or her needs, fears and desires in modern America. The standard liturgy speaks about more general,

¹¹² Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Repentance*, 51-2.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 327-9.

age-old concerns that ~~are~~ arise out of the High Holiday liturgy and the traditional themes of the holiday.

A perfect example of this difference is found in regard to the section of additional prayers in *GOR*. The readings, on the themes of prayer, human nature, responsibility, the evil inclination, turning, forgiveness, seeking and finding and life and death, are explained in the following manner:

In their rush for modernity, Western minds have relegated many of these concepts to what they view as a trash-heap of outmoded religious ideological baggage. They may use some of the same vocabulary, to be sure, but if so, they have filled the word with new content, usually drawn from more familiar universes of meaning, typically psychology. Judaism still insists that Yom Kippur's message is not reducible to psychology--or sociology, or politics or any other modern discipline with which we feel comfortable. *We ask that worshipers think about these Additional Prayers in terms of their age-old religious meaning, not their modern definitions* (emphasis added).¹¹⁴

Yet it is exactly these modern definitions that the creative services seek to explore (although I am not sure that I would say that the creative services "reduce" the message of Yom Kippur to psychology or sociology.) Although neither age-old questions or modern concerns are absent from creative services or the standard liturgy, the emphasis in each is different. While the basic themes may not be radically different, the way that they are emphasized, articulated and related to the worshipper sets the creative services apart from the standard liturgy.

¹¹⁴ Hoffman, *Gates of Understanding*, 132.

Sacred Myth

In general, services are more focused on the present and the future than on the past. Furthermore, the forms of expression of the *avodah* service (and the frequent exclusion of this service altogether) indicate an element of confusion over this central historical event that is such a dominant part of the traditional Yom Kippur service. Despite these facts, there are several points about the sacred myth that is portrayed that are worth noting. The view of sacred history is connected to the way in which the world is defined. The world is defined as capable of improvement and growth through the efforts of individuals. History is the process of moving toward this better age despite the horrors and conflicts of the past and present. This is the sacred myth of the Reform movement today, according to Hoffman, and his claim is very much corroborated by the creative services:

... our liturgy arranges history into a pattern, with an existential message of hope not unlike the myth of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was condemned to roll a boulder up a hill, endlessly, knowing that near the top, it would inevitable roll down again, when he would begin again. So too, Jewish history appears in our texts as a continual return of the cycle of Jewish suffering and miraculous recovery. ... So we find our liturgy promising eventual deliverance from the cycle of suffering and rebirth, while at the same time actually glorying in the ongoing miracle of a Jewish people continually beset by historical tribulation but always rising anew to life and hope.¹¹⁵

The continual hope for a better world even with all of the suffering and persecution of our age is the sacred myth that is incorporated into our High Holiday services. The suffering makes the hope even more miraculous, for

¹¹⁵ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 138.

the ability to hope in spite of pain and suffering is especially praiseworthy and distinguishes the Jew. Hoffman suggests that it is the Holocaust in particular that accounts for the shift away from a view of sacred history that was dominated by a belief in inevitable progress toward a more cyclical vision of history.¹¹⁶ The Holocaust is certainly the predominant historical event mentioned in these services and it is mentioned quite frequently. The dominance of the Holocaust--the ultimate suffering and persecution--is certainly related to the stress placed on the hope for the future and potential for growth, for as indicated above (footnote 115) there is a connection between suffering and rebirth. The two themes are closely intertwined as will be seen upon closer examination of how the Holocaust is used in these services.

Sometimes the Holocaust is mentioned almost in passing, as in the reading found in many shofar services (see footnote 21) that relates the sound of the shofar to the scream of a Jew in Auschwitz. In this way the Holocaust is never far from the consciousness of the worshipper. Often however, it is used to express an element of hope or faith possessed by an individual even in the most inhumane of circumstances. In this respect, the Holocaust functions as a model or inspiration for people today. The use of Anne Frank and the poems of children from Terezin serve this function by showing the love of life expressed by children even in a barbaric situation. The statement by Paul Kornfield from within the Lodz ghetto (footnote 26) functions similarly.

Everything on this earth follows the age-old rules. When spring comes, the ice melts. . . . And when someone is enraged he does

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 130-2.

evil. Yet no rule or law can keep us from dreaming that one day all this travail will turn to ashes, and that You, oh my Lord, playful and senseless, great and powerful, will cause a new rule to blossom forth under your breath, and the miracle will spread across the earth. ¹¹⁷

If Paul Kornfield, in the worst of situations, could have an element of hope, how can we (who have survived and have the ability to act) give in to despair and apathy?

One of the most common readings on a Holocaust theme is "Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God," by Zvi Kolitz. It is the fictitious appeal of a religious Jew who died in the Warsaw ghetto. It tells of his agony and his anger, his challenge to God in light of the horror that he has endured. In his final words he says, "You have done everything to make me renounce You, to make me lose my faith in You, but I die exactly as I have lived, a *believer*!" Often the passage is used as a model for belief in God--he believed in spite of everything, but will we? ¹¹⁸ Another very interesting use of this passage is found in a service at Temple Israel in Long Beach, California. The lengthy passage was read in its entirety on Kol Nidre prior to the *shema*. Five individuals from the congregation were invited to share their reactions during Yom Kippur morning services. The responses differ, but they all express some element of faith and hope based on Rakover's words. Several speak of the need to remain faithful to Judaism and the moral message inherent in Judaism. Others relate the passage to the responsibility that we all have to speak out against inhumane acts and thus better the world. Some speak of God's love and the need to have hope in order to prevail against the

¹¹⁷ Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "Rosh Hashanah Morning Service," 32-3.

¹¹⁸ See, for example: Naomi Patz, "The Third Cry--A Second Day Rosh Hashanah Service" (creative service, Temple Shalom of West Essex, Cedar Grove, NJ, 1971).

chaos of the world.¹¹⁹ The Holocaust actually reinforces the need for hope, and raises the issue of human responsibility.

The question of responsibility does figure prominently when discussing the Holocaust. In this way, the Holocaust is yet one more motivation to act, to change the world so that such an event does not occur again. The view that humanity could have stopped the atrocities is strongly expressed in the following dialogue which occurs between a reader and congregation during the *yizkor* service.

Are you angry with me?
 Sometimes. A little.
 Because I didn't suffer like you?
 Because you were here and did nothing?
 What could we have done?
 Cry. Scream. Break the conspiracy of silence.
 We didn't know.
 Not true. Everybody knew. Nobody bothers to deny that anymore.
 All right, we knew. But we didn't believe.
 In spite of all the proof, the diagrams, the confidential reports?
 Because of them. Don't you see? They were so horrible, we couldn't believe them.
 You should have.¹²⁰

By being made to feel responsible at least to some degree for failing to halt the tremendous atrocities of the Holocaust, individuals will hopefully feel compelled to work toward stopping other modern atrocities. These ideas are also found in *yizkor* services. The Holocaust is mentioned almost universally during *yizkor* (including in *GDR*) and in addition to challenging God and remembering the martyrs the above themes are prominent.

¹¹⁹ Rabbi Wollf Kaeltter, "The Agony and the Ecstasy," (Temple Israel, Long Beach, California, 1970).

¹²⁰ Stephen S. Wise Temple, *A High Holy Days Prayer Book*, 95-6.

History is thus, as Hoffman points out, a series of high and lows, cycles of persecution and triumph. The Holocaust, as the most recent low point, is heavily emphasized as an impetus to action in today's world. Although one would be inclined to think that remembrance of these atrocities would counteract the message that humanity is good at heart and that the world can be made better, it actually serves to reinforce the message by focusing on the survival of the Jewish people and the hope and faith that were maintained in spite of the horror. While this bears some similarity to the emphasis on survival and continuance found in Shabbat liturgy, it is expressed differently in keeping with the themes and goals of the High Holiday liturgy. High Holiday liturgy portrays sacred history as slowly working toward a better time, moving first forward and then backward, but always guided by the hope of a better age. In this way, the sacred history is closely connected to and dependent on the reality that the creative High Holiday services emphasize, namely a view of a world that can be made better if people leave the synagogue feeling empowered to change themselves and society and willing to work toward this end.

The Image of God

The topic of God has been addressed throughout the chapter, so a few concluding comments are all that is called for at this point. As has been indicated throughout, the portrayal of God has not been free of conflict and contradiction. The idea of God as present in human potentiality and relationships remains the dominant theme as it was in Shabbat liturgy. As was mentioned above, this humanist perspective may also be more in keeping with the relationship between humanity and the world that the services are trying to present, a relationship that can be controlled and

influenced by people. Yet this idea is not particularly in keeping with High Holiday themes and images which are also present and which lead to more traditional God language. In describing this age Hoffman speaks of a master image of an Immanent God, and synecdochal vocabulary that denies the distance between God and humanity (see chapter one, footnote 66). While this is certainly found in creative Shabbat liturgy, it is a difficult image and vocabulary to integrate into traditional High Holiday imagery and language. The conflict is resolved by presenting seemingly contradictory images, reinterpreting the traditional images, or (in all cases except Selichot) reducing the quantity of God related sources and readings.

This human emphasis should not be taken as implying a denial of God. There is a fair amount of *challenging* of God in the services. But as in the case of the Holocaust (and to some extent in Shabbat liturgy) challenging does not lead to rejection of God but to affirmation. The following reading which occurs in several services demonstrates this process:

here I am again
 without much to offer by way of moral worth
 I've a rich collection of defeats
 maybe that's to your liking?
 I don't know,
 if I'm to be quite frank
 your likes and dislikes have never been
 all that clear to me . . .
 I've often wondered: did you yourself intend
 when you got it all going
 that to live would be so complicated
 to find a way in the world so hazardous?
 did you have any idea at all
 that living would involve such confusion
 and such heartbreak? . . .
 I can't even be sure that you exist
 as more than a figment of my own mysterious psyche
 it's a risk to open up to you . . . but what's not a risk? . . .

so hineni, here I am again
 praying for some modest bravery
 so that I can go on saying to you:
 here I am again.¹²¹

The questioning of God occurs because of the confusion and pain of the world that seems to be the dominant image in these services. Although God is not presented here as the answer to that chaos, God is not wholly abandoned either. The search for God and dialogue with God still possesses a measure of urgency and value. The challenge ends on a positive note, like most of the other challenges found in these services.

Conclusion

Indeed, challenge and affirmation are two hallmarks of these services. The world presents many obstacles to the individual, but they can be overcome. We are left with the image of a community struggling to make meaning and order of a chaotic world, and ultimately trying to believe that it can emerge triumphant from the struggle--a universal, human challenge. The services emphasize that we as Jews can rise to the demands presented by a chaotic world and ultimately repair the damage; the challenge of the Holocaust stirs us to continue to have faith in and work toward redemption, and an incomprehensible God calls us to struggle to understand the nature of the Divine. In regard to world view, history and God, the High Holiday services have an optimistic, positive undercurrent that aims to help worshippers resolve their conflicted relationships and repair a troubled world--the problems uppermost in their consciousness. Whether or not this is true of other holiday services will be the next topic considered.

¹²¹ Rabbi Stanley F. Chyet, in *Tikun Nefashot* (1979), 44.

Chapter Four: Creative Holiday Liturgies

Creative holiday liturgy provides insight into the overall identity of the community as it worships over the course of an entire year. In examining the variety of holidays and the differences and similarities between them as expressed by the creative liturgists, it is possible to see the emergence of a pattern that reflects the central concerns of the worshipping community. The 197 services represent ten holidays. They will be dealt with in three separate groups. The first section will be comprised of the pilgrimage festivals--Shavuot, Sukkot and Pesach. Simchat Torah will be discussed following Sukkot because of its proximity to that holiday. The minor festivals of Hanukah, Tu Bi-Shevat and Purim will be examined together. Yom ha-Sho'ah and Yom ha-Atzma'ut, as modern observances, will be treated together as a final discussion. Tish'ah Be-Av, although certainly not a modern holiday, will be discussed in this same section because of the similarity between themes of the Tish'ah Be-Av services and services for Yom ha-Sho'ah.

In addition to examining the music, sources (traditional and modern) and themes, the image of God and the portrayal of sacred myth will be studied for each holiday. As most of the Jewish holidays are rooted in historical events, these holiday services are particularly helpful in defining the sacred myths of the worshipping community. It is important, however, to remember that sacred myths are different from history because "sacred myths are true beyond the claims of empirical evidence. They are true in that they represent bases for action on the part of those who accept their

binding force." ¹ We will thus not look at how accurately certain events are portrayed but the specific incidents, emphases and interpretations derived from the history that is the basis of the holiday. In examining these questions, a sacred myth will emerge (see page 44 for further references to the nature of sacred myth). By gaining a sense of how worshippers view their past, their present identity and view of the future can be better ascertained. Understanding sacred myth can thus lead to a broader understanding of the worshipping community. In summarizing the totality of holiday worship, the question of communal self-identity will be raised in an attempt to understand how the worshipping community defines itself through the process of holiday celebration.

Pilgrimage Festivals

Shavuot

Because the focus of this chapter is holiday observance, I am only including Shavuot services not related to Confirmation. I have only four such liturgies, an indication of the degree to which the holiday of Shavuot has been associated with (and perhaps overshadowed by) Confirmation. One service is in the form of a wedding between God and the House of Israel. It takes place under a large canopy (chupah), includes a ketubah and *sheva brachot*. The vows exchanged consist of a dialogue between God and Israel (*GOR*, 75-76). A wedding ring is fashioned by having worshippers wrap gold string on their right hand as one wraps tefillin, and the worshippers say:

¹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, (Bloomington, IN, 1987), 80.

In accepting this ring,/I promise you, O God,/an ear to listen to
your word,/ an eye to look/ and to try to see you way,/ a heart
that is soft,/ and a spirit that warms,/ to love and respect
You,/ to love and respect other fellow humans,/ and to love and
respect all of Your creations.²

This service stands out from the others in that it takes the idea that God is the groom, Israel is the bride, and the Torah (given on Shavuot) is a symbol of that relationship, and enacts it literally. This focus is more on the relationship between God and Israel and less on Torah specifically. This service is completely different from the traditional Shavuot service and from the other creative services.

The other three services are on Shabbat; there are no particular songs or texts (modern or traditional) that seem to be associated with Shavuot. They do, however, contain some interesting comments about Torah and our relationship to Torah, and for this reason, it is worth briefly looking at these services. One service contains no traditional liturgical texts except for the *shema*. Its main goal appears to be to convince the worshipper of the relevance of Torah in the modern age. The service centers around the text, "It has been told you what is good and what the Lord demands of you: to do justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with your God." Torah is valued because it teaches us how to act, how to be good people. The congregation asks:

Our world demands our decision. We cannot delay forever. We must know how to act and when. . . . We must know why. Tell us now so we can understand: what is good? What does Israel's God require of us?

² Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "A service of Reconsecration of our Millennia Old Relationship between God and the House of Israel" (creative service, Temple Beth El, Bakersfield, CA, 1983), 4. This selection is adapted from Phillip Goodman, *Shavuot Anthology*.

The rabbi answers: "Whatever is hateful to you as an individual, do not do to any man. . . . Your belief is not required. Your deeds, your behavior are required."³ The congregation is later told that ethical behavior not only leads to the betterment of humanity, but brings God into the world.

The other two services proclaim similar messages. (They are actually quite similar; one seems to be an adaptation of the other.) The Torah provides the means for us to perfect the world:

We today, no less than those before us, share the burden and glory of our ancient covenant. We, too, are bound by its sacred design and solemn commitments. Ours is the prophetic task to teach that silence in the face of evil is itself an evil, and that the purpose of serving God is to promote human perfection. We have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of us; to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk modestly with our God.⁴

Beyond the message of ethical responsibility, it is interesting to note how these liturgists describe the giving of Torah. The service just quoted connects Torah to revelation at Sinai. "... [O]ur celebration now is an expression of our attachment to our tradition reaching back to the revelation of Torah at Mount Sinai."⁵ The other service, however, emphasizes that Torah grows with human knowledge.

Moses accepted the Torah for all generations. Yet, on this Shavuot, our generation, like our ancestors, once again stands at the foot of Sinai. We, too, are ready to affirm our belief in the demands of Torah. Sinai was only the beginning. The Torah must expand as human vision grows.⁶

³ Anonymous, "Untitled" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Amherst, NY, 1969), 2-3.

⁴ Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Shavuot" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Folk Celebration for Shavuot" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 3.

This idea is expressed more explicitly, in terms of continuous revelation, later on in the same service:

At Sinai the acceptance of Torah was not complete. It awaits each generation and every Jew. The decisive moment of loving Torah and living it must be grasped and fulfilled by each of us. The giving of Torah is completed in the doing of Torah. . . . The moment at Sinai still depends for its fulfillment upon this present moment and upon us. The day when Torah was given to Israel must never become past. That day must always be this day, every day--this moment and every moment of our lives. . . . (Sounding of the shofar). ⁷

Based on these very few examples, the meaning of Shavuot centers on the fact that it is an occasion for us to renew our commitment to Torah, and the ethical imperatives derived from Torah. Shavuot thus provides an opportunity for the worshipper to affirm his or her commitment to a life of Torah and to the creation of justice in the world at large.

Sukkot

The eight Sukkot services that I have all date from the years 1977-1980. In addition to these services I have one supplemental reading, and the text of a cantata composed for Sukkot. Six of the services are clearly for Shabbat. Most would appear to be family services, although they are not all labeled as such.

There are no musical selections that are overwhelmingly common. "Lama Sukkah Zu," "Ufaratzta," "Artza Alinu," "Sisu v'Simchu" and "Ufros Aleinu" are some of the songs that appear. In terms of traditional liturgical texts, some selection of *hallel* psalms can be found in several services. Otherwise the traditional liturgy utilized is similar to the liturgy of the

⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

Shabbat services. There are a few common English readings which will be mentioned as they pertain to the themes and imagery of the service.

The sukkah itself is depicted through varied images connected to the desert and to harvest. One service, stating that the sukkah reflects the joy and pride of the farmers in their harvest, emphasizes that it reflects the partnership between God and people for it is built so as to let God's light shine through.

They knew that God was their partner, that His goodness blessed the work of their hands. . . . They built the succah. . . . But never were the branches so closely interlaced as to shut out the sky. . . . For unless God's light shines through the overarching roof, the design is imperfect...We thank thee, O Lord, for this Succah, which reminds us that Thou art our partner in all we do, that thy goodness and Thy wisdom are in every harvest we reap.⁸

Other services emphasize that the sukkah, in reminding us of the desert, reminds us of those less fortunate.

Today we Jews still build Sukkot to remind ourselves of the hard years in the desert. When we think of those times, we are grateful for everything we have. We know that there are many people who have much less than we. Unless we promise to help them, something is missing from our thanks on Sukkot.⁹

The two themes of God and helping others are joined in this prayer:

Before us now stands our Sukkah. It speaks to us of the artistry of the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and it speaks to us of human labor and creativity. As the earth yields fruit abundantly for all, above all the Sukkah speaks to us of the

⁸ Anonymous, "Service for Succos" (creative service, Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, New York, NY, 1980), 1.

⁹ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Sukkot Family Worship" (creative service, Temple Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1980), 3.

image of God within us, the ability within to give to others, freely, and selflessly for the benefit of all. ¹⁰

As one might expect, the sukkah is described as a way for us to regain our connection with nature and the land, a connection that we "who live among bricks and mortar" have lost. ¹¹ The sukkah itself is also used as a metaphor, as in the following reading that summarizes many of the themes mentioned above:

Many are the meanings of the sukka. Once it was a simple shelter where farmers paused to rest between the gleanings of the harvest.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for the seed that grows and for the man who knows the secrets of the earth.

Then the sukka became a reminder of the booths in which the Israelites found protection from the burning sun and the swirling sands of the wilderness.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, for the love that shields us from loneliness as we go through the wilderness of life toward our Promised Land.

The sukka should be covered, but not completely, so that when one stands within, he can see the stars.

Praised by Thou, O Lord, for hope in a better tomorrow, for the vision that in the darkest night we can see a light from heaven.

The sukka is a fragile dwelling, buffeted by wind and rain. May it remind us of the nameless millions who live in homes unfit for habitation. ¹²

In spite of the emphasis on harvest, nature and letting God's light shine through the top of the sukkah, it would appear that at least two of the synagogues have a sukkah on the *bimah*. One service has children bring fruit offerings up to the sukkah and then says, "although many of us no longer

¹⁰ Anonymous, "Prayer in the Sukkah" (creative reading, North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL, n.d.), 12.

¹¹ Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "Folk Service for Sukkot" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 9.

¹² Rabbi Henry Cohen, "A Sukkos Service for All Ages" (creative service, Beth David Reform Congregation, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 4.

build a Succah, as in ancient times, nor gather the harvest ourselves, we continue to celebrate this holiday as a reminder of its eternal truths."¹³ Thus, one of the central symbols of the holiday has been turned into something remote and removed, although the meaning it contains is still considered relevant. The significance of the sukkah is talked about, however this significance is not actually experienced or made tangibly real for the individual.

The lulav and etrog are also described in a number of ways. The most common metaphors are to parts of the body and different kinds of Jews, based on traditional explanations. Emphasizing that we praise God with our total selves, the lulav is said to represent the spine, the myrtle our eyes, the willow our lips and the etrog our hearts.¹⁴ Pointing out that different parts of the lulav and etrog have different combinations of taste and smell, each is compared to Jews who may study but not do good deeds, do good deeds but not study, or do neither. The goal is to be like the etrog which has both taste and smell, like Jews who both study and do good deeds.¹⁵ Although these are the most common associations with the lulav and etrog they are not the only ones. Another service, in addition to the above meanings, compares the lulav and etrog to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And in shaking the lulav in all directions, we express the hope that Jews everywhere will live in freedom.¹⁶ It is usually emphasized that these symbols remind us of the bounty of the land, and we wave them in all

¹³ Anonymous, "Evening Service for Succos" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, Great Neck, NY, n.d.), 9.

¹⁴ Anonymous, "Untitled" (Stephen Wise Free Synagogue), 4.

¹⁵ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Sukkot Family Worship," 5.

¹⁶ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Sukkos Service for All Ages," 5.

directions to thank God for the blessings that come upon us from all directions.

In looking at how these central symbols of Sukkot are described, the basic themes of Sukkot can be seen. At the most basic level, Sukkot is described as a holiday of thanksgiving.

Sukkot is the time when Jews give thanks. We thank God for earth, sun and rain: for growing things, for life's colors smells, and tastes. This is the season of juicy red apples, of heavy bunches of purple grapes. . . . Harvest has come. . . . We are happy to share the blessings of farm and field, and so we give praise to God. ¹⁷

The end of this reading points out another central theme. We express not only general thanksgiving, but thanks to God for the many blessings in our life. (This was also clear in several descriptions of the sukkah.) And finally, the need to share these blessings with those less fortunate is emphasized. A folk/rock cantata for Sukkot emphasizes this very point:

And so we stand oh Lord,
Blessing you for our lives,
Your hand has touched the earth
and now we must provide. . . .
Oh Sukkot, festival of plenty.
O Sukkot, food to feed us all.
Oh Sukkot, set the world a table.
Oh Sukkot, answer to its call. ¹⁸

While thanksgiving and sharing are emphasized, it is interesting that Israel is rarely mentioned in relation to Sukkot. While the Land of Israel will be seen to play a central role in the Tu B'Shevat services (which also emphasize nature and the physical world), it is virtually absent from these

¹⁷ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Sukkot Family Worship," 1.

¹⁸ Anselm Rothschild and Simon Walzer, "There is Enough for All--A Succoth folk/rock cantata on the theme of world hunger" (performed in University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1980).

services. It appears that the desert theme outweighs the pilgrimage theme of the holiday. The one reading about Israel, which is found in several services, emphasizes that the origins of Sukkot are in Israel where during this holiday no rain would fall!¹⁹

The Sukkot services create an interesting myth about the time in the desert, and the time when our ancestors were farmers and shepherds. In the aspects of desert and the agricultural life that are depicted, these years are portrayed as ideal time. People were cognizant of the presence of God, grateful for the harvest, and recipients of the bounty of the land. We are far removed from that world (even to the point of having our sukkah inside). Yet, if our ancestors had a connection to the land and to God the Creator, then through our Sukkot services we can identify ourselves as a group with a similar connection. As we identify with the Maccabees on Hanukah or with Esther on Purim (as will be seen) so too do we identify with our ancestors who were farmers. In all these instances, we attribute to these groups or individuals certain characteristics with which we associate ourselves as well. In specifically recalling the positive feelings of thanksgiving and appreciation of our ancestors who worked the land, we recapture these feelings and qualities for ourselves.

In most of the characteristics described so far the creative services are similar to the services in *Gates of Joy* (holiday family worship services).²⁰ The same themes are present, and they are quite thickly woven into the service, centering the whole service around Sukkot as is true of the creative services. (All of the services in *GAJ* could be conducted on

¹⁹ Anonymous, "Untitled" (Stephen Wise Free Synagogue), 4.

²⁰ Rabbi Chaim Stern, *Gates of Joy*, (New York, 1979).

Shabbat or on a weekday. In this respect the holiday itself assumes a greater importance than Shabbat if the two are celebrated on the same day, something that will be characteristic of some categories of creative services as well.) It is more difficult to compare the creative services with *GOP* because the orientation and basis of each is wholly different. While the introductory readings provided in *GOP* do reflect the themes that are found in the creative services, *GOP* provides one standard service to be used for all festivals, and the service is based on the traditional liturgical structure. On the other hand, the creative services are comprised of very few liturgical texts and mostly consist of supplementary readings particular to a given holiday. As a result, comparison of *GOP* and the creative services is very difficult. The same thing is true in the case of services for Simhat Torah.

Simhat Torah

Of the sixteen Simhat Torah services that I studied only five are dated. Nine are intended to take place on Shabbat and eight indicate that consecration occurs during the service, although most do not include any kind of printed text of the ceremony. There is very little traditional text utilized, and no music that is specific to Simhat Torah. There is, as one would expect, a great deal of music in the services, primarily to be sung during the hakafot. There is one particular reading that appears commonly in various adapted versions. Here is one text:

Our sages likened the Torah to water, wine, milk, and honey.
 As water gives life to the world,
 So the Torah gives life to the world.
 As water revives our life
 So the Torah revives the spirit.

As water cleanses the body,
 So the Torah cleanses the soul. . . .
 As water helps plants to grow
 So the Torah helps us to grow in spirit.
 As wine improves with age,
 So with advancing years does understanding of the Torah
 Improve.
 As wine gladdens the heart,
 So do the words of Torah gladden the heart.
 As milk and honey are sweet to the taste,
 So are the words of the Torah sweet to the mind. . . . 21

There are many different themes connected to Torah that can be found in these services. Almost every service stresses Torah as a source of guidance, the way that we can learn how to behave and bring justice and truth to the world (as was found in the Shavuot services). There are several other themes that are also worth pointing out. Survival is stressed from several perspectives. Torah has helped to insure our survival; our ancestors fought to keep it alive and therefore we have an obligation to do the same. "May we never fail in gratitude to our ancestors for the heritage of Torah, and for the martyrdom they suffered in its defense." 22 The idea of Torah being passed from generation to generation is very strongly stressed. The importance of the fact that our ancestors not only insured the survival of the Torah, but that they did so in order that we could inherit it, is quite central.

Torah is light. It is the light that beckoned Abraham and called Moses to his task.

21 Anonymous, in Rabbi Michael Sternfield, "Family Worship Service for Shabbat Eve and Simchat Torah" (creative service, congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA, n.d.), 5-6. A somewhat similar reading appears in *GDP* (p. 698) and *GU* (p. 32) and is attributed to Rabbi John D. Rayner, *Service of the Heart*. Although similar in concept, the reading that I quoted is different enough that it is unclear if it is based on Rayner. Rayner's reading also appears in several services.

22 Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Simchat Torah" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 10.

It is the light that beckoned to the slaves in Egypt and gave courage to Joshua's men.

It is the light that moved David to write the Psalms and touched Solomon with wisdom.

It is the light that filled our prophets with fearlessness and our sages with understanding. . . .

Carefully the words of the Torah were inscribed on scrolls of parchment so that later generations might read.

The scrolls were sometimes destroyed, but the light of Torah was never dimmed.

For the Torah is written in the hearts of the people Israel. ²³

The continuity of Torah throughout the generation is emphasized even more strongly in the following reading which is found in a number of services:

Into our hands have You placed Your law to be handed from father to son and taught by one generation to another. Through all the ages, whatever befell them, our people remained steadfast in loyalty to thy Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of fathers that their sons might not lose their birthright. We pray, O God, that we may be worthy of this inheritance. May we take its teachings into our hearts and transmit it to those who follow us. . . . ²⁴

The chain of tradition, and the continuity of Torah is very important to these liturgists. That Torah has been handed to us gives it intrinsic value, and mandates that we preserve it and pass it on to the future. Connected to this concern for the future survival of Torah is the theme of oppressed Jewry. Cognizant of our need to preserve Torah for the future, there is concern in regard to those whose Jewish future is uncertain and who do not have the freedom to enjoy the inheritance of Torah. Simchat Torah has been an important holiday for Soviet Jews in particular, and two services are

²³ Rabbi Harry Essrig, "Family Simchat Torah Service" (creative service, University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, n.d.), 3.

²⁴ Anonymous, "Simchas Torah Eve Family Service" (creative service, Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.), 6.

specifically dedicated to Soviet Jews, expressing solidarity with them in their struggle for religious freedom. ²⁵

The Torah is also valued for its connection to God. "We praise God for inspiring it" for in it we learn "how God loves us and how we can best love him."²⁶ Harvey Fields summarizes many of the ideas that are expressed about the relationship between Torah and God when he says,

Torah is the attempt of a people covenanted with God to fulfill its obligation. Torah is the ladder by which the Jew seeks to ascend to God. It is the bridge he builds between himself and humanity. ²⁷

In general, the references to Torah in these services are more God-centered than was the case in the Shabbat services. Torah connects us to God, but it was not necessarily given by God. (One service, for example, uses the idea of God "Inspiring" Torah--see note 25.) Another service emphasizes the continual development of Torah, using a reading similar to the one found in a Shavuot service (see note 6) that speaks about Torah growing as our vision grows. ²⁸ A similar idea is expressed by readings that suggest that Torah is not just a scroll, but all of Jewish tradition from David to Maimonides to Isaac Mayer Wise. ²⁹ Still another explanation of the origin of Torah is that it was given to us by sages and prophets. ³⁰ While not given by God, Torah

²⁵ Anonymous, "We Shall be Their Voice" (creative service, "Congregation B'nai Brith, n.p., n.d.); Anonymous, "A Simchas Torah Service from Service of the Heart" (Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.).

²⁶ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Service for Simkhat Torah Eve" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, n.d.), 1.

²⁷ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Celebration of Simchat Torah" (creative service, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, Ontario, n.d.), 12.

²⁸ Anonymous, "Simchat Torah Service" (Woodlands Community Temple, White Plains, NY, n.d.), 7.

²⁹ Rabbi Alan D. Fuchs, "Simchat Torah Service" (Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 7.

still connects us to the Holy One. It reflects our search for the Divine Presence and helps us find God. As has been expressed in other services, in learning to behave ethically (which we can do through Torah) we find God and bring the presence of the divine into the world.

As a final note, it is worth mentioning something about the actual structure of the Simhat Torah celebration. With all of the talk about Torah and its importance, it is interesting to note that very little Torah is read in most of these services. Usually Deuteronomy 34: 9-12 and Genesis 1: 1-5 constitute the reading from the scrolls, representing a small fraction of the traditional portion to be read. While it is typical in Reform synagogues to only read a part of the entire portion, it is interesting that even while celebrating the value and beauty of Torah most do not read a larger portion. Additionally, the actual rejoicing with the scrolls, the hakafot, is often very structured and organized. Whether it is by age group, or by role and responsibility within the congregation, hakafot are often assigned to particular worshippers, who carry the Torah for a certain period of time along a certain path. As was true with Sukkot in relation to the sukkah, it would appear that it is easier for worshippers on Simhat Torah to talk about the values of Torah than to engage in uninhibited celebration.

Pesach

Introduction

The discussion of Pesach will focus primarily on Seders although as the chart indicates, I have also studied some synagogue liturgies for Pesach. After discussion of the Seders, these will be dealt with as well.

PESACH SEDERS AND SERVICES					
	1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
Seders	2	5	5	7	17
Services	1	3	3	0	7

Haggadahs appeared to be produced fairly steadily throughout this period. Although the large quantity of undated material makes this hard to determine, it appears that the publication of *A Passover Haggadah*³¹ by the CCAR in 1974 did not stop new Haggadahs from being produced. The music that is used in the Seders is fairly traditional. Most Seders include "Elihu Hanavi," "Who Knows One?" "Chad Gadya" and "Dayenu." Many include "Adir Hu" as well. While this forms the basic core of the music in most Seders, the diversity of music is truly astonishing. To give some indication of the tremendous variety, other songs that appear are "Go down Moses" (which is found in most Seders), "If I Had a Hammer," "Blowin' in the Wind," "Hatikva," "America," "Am Yisrael Chai," "Sachaki" and "Solidarity Forever." The use of source material is also varied. Although it is mostly Jewish, statements by people such as Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu and Caesar Chavez are also included. Specific sources that are commonly used will be indicated as they apply to certain themes or parts of the Seder.

Structure of the Seder

The following outline shows the structure of most of the Seders. There may be some variation: *karpas* may be placed after *yahatz*, the four questions

³¹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah* (New York, 1974).

may be placed after the four children, or the cups of wine drunk in slightly different places, but basically this structure is maintained. The specific content of certain sections will be dealt with separately. This outline is just intended to show the flow of most Seders.

- A. Candles
- B. Kiddush
- C. *Karpas*
- D. *Yachatz* (most Seders include some version of "This is the bread of affliction," often in Aramaic and English in this section, as does *A Passover Haggadah* although traditionally it is part of the *magid* as are the four questions and four sons.)
- E. Four Questions
- F. Four Sons
- G. *Magid* (*dayenu* and the plagues are included here.)
- H. Explanation of pesach, matzah, maror
- I. Second cup of wine
- J. Eat the matzah and korech. (In most services the maror is not eaten separately from the Hillel sandwich.)
- K. Eat the meal, find the afikomen, say *birkat hamazon* over the third cup of wine.
- L. The cup of Elijah
- M. The fourth cup, final readings, songs.

This is the basic structure of both the old ³² and new Union Haggadahs, although a few differences are worth pointing out. *Hallel*, which appears in both Haggadahs is not a significant part of most of the creative Seders. It is (at least in part) included in a number of Seders, but it is a more flexible, less integral part of the structure than those things listed above.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that certain changes made by each Haggadah did not catch on and were not retained by the creative Haggadahs. *The Union Haggadah, Revised* does not include the ten plagues, while most of the creative services do. The elimination of the words "Next year in

³² Central Conference of American Rabbis, *The Union Haggadah, Revised* (New York, 1923).

Jerusalem" to conclude the seder, is, however, a change that a number of Seders accept. (Others indicate through explanation or changes that this phrase is somewhat problematic although for different reasons than existed in 1923.) *A Passover Haggadah* suggests moving the eating of the matzah, maror and korech to the beginning of the Seder. Not one creative Haggadah adopts this change. *A Passover Haggadah* also has the participants eat maror and a mixture of maror and charoset, while most of the creative Haggadahs follow the practice of *The Union Haggadah, Revised* and just eat the maror as part of korech. While many of these may be minor points, they indicate a willingness on the part of the liturgist to take from both the old and new traditions and combine them with his or her own preferences in creating a new and creative ritual. There are not enough creative seders prior to the publication of *A Passover Haggadah* to make a comparison of creative Seders before and after its publication worthwhile. (Based on the large quantity of undated material, any change over time is difficult to gauge.) At this point, it is worth examining certain parts of the Seder to see how they are interpreted and expressed by the liturgists.

The Four Sons

A number of services include supplementary or alternative versions of the four sons. One of the largest variations occurs in interpreting the "son who doesn't know how to ask." Several services assume that he is too young to be able to ask.³³ In one instance this "wondering" child is

³³ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA, n.d.), 6. See also Amy Blank, "Family Haggadah" (creative service, Cincinnati, OH, 1985, revised) in which this child is assumed to be a baby.

assumed to be "retarded or handicapped." ³⁴ Others take a completely opposite view and assume that this child is willfully ignorant and does not want to know. Similar to the wicked child, "... he doesn't want to know about other people's experiences or to be bound by collective responsibility." ³⁵ This bears some similarity to *A Passover Haggadah* in which this child has "no need to know, no will to serve." ³⁶ The tradition itself varies as to the meaning of the question asked by each child and the differences between them. Whether the differences in the creative Seders intentionally reflect variants in the tradition or simply the views of individual liturgists, is impossible to say, but diversity is clearly present.

Another difference can be found in the answer given to the wise son. In this case one can probably surmise that the change is intentional. Rather than giving him an answer that seems to refer to the laws and practices of the holiday, the answer one gives should reveal the social and spiritual dimensions of the Seder. Answers to the wise son such as this one are not uncommon:

Passover marks the birth of our nation. It recalls the time when our ancestors were delivered from the slavery of Egypt and became free men. This historic event served as a constant challenge to our people to search for freedom. Its recital filled their hearts with hope, with courage and with strength. . . . ³⁷

In versions of the four sons that follow the traditional format, it is not uncommon to include a fifth son, the one who is not allowed to ask.

³⁴ Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Seder Haggadah" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Sharon, MA, n.d.), 4.

³⁵ Anonymous, "A Seder for Jews and Farm Workers" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 6.

³⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah*, 32.

³⁷ Anonymous, "Haggadah" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 4.

In our time, we have come to recognize a fifth type of person, a person who is not allowed to ask any questions. There is the tiny remnant of the Syrian Jewish community. There are the few thousand of Beta-Israel ignored by the organized Jewish leadership and others like them. These Jews ask very simply "When will we be allowed to join you in your freedom?"

There is no answer to be given to this person. Our words must be directed to others. We must demand, on their behalf, "Let our people go!"³⁸

The addition of this question reflects the general concern for social justice that dominates these Seders as will be pointed out shortly.

While these are variations in the traditional structure of the four sons, it is not uncommon to find completely new versions. Many of these relate the four sons to four types of Jews. In a Seder that has two texts, one for the first Seder and one for the second, one text is traditional, and one is "Zionist/ethnic:"

Jews who are at one with Israel say: "My people need me, and in serving it I find my highest fulfillment" To them you shall say, "Because you have faith in your people and are devoted to its historic tasks, you shall be proud, and your labors shall be rewarded. For our dream of 2,000 years is becoming a reality and you bring closer the Messianic Age of peace and justice."

Jews who would flee from their God and their people, say: "Judaism is my misfortune. I wish to escape" To them you shall say: "You condemn yourself to inner conflict and shame. All your life you shall be a wanderer, seeking in vain a refuge for your soul."

Jews who esteem all knowledge except that of their own people, say: "Why trouble myself with the teachings of this small group, when the wisdom of all humanity lies open before me?" Them you shall rebuke, saying: "You despise your own birthright, your roots. Do you not know that the whole world

³⁸ Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "Caught between the Pharaoh and the Deep Red Sea" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, Bakersfield, CA, 1983), 7.

has been enriched by the wisdom of Israel? Learn to cherish your own heritage."

Jews who have have been adrift, assimilated or alienated, do not even know to ask: "What must I do to return to my faith and my people?" Then you shall take by the hand, and say: "Come, let us walk together. Perhaps your father didn't care, or your mother had no Yiddishkeit. You might feel you are only half a Jew. No matter, come home. Together we shall seek the presence of God, and labor for the redemption of our people." ³⁹

This is an interesting version of the four sons, not just for the characteristics of the sons (all but one son is portrayed negatively), but for the answers given to them which are often harsh and emphasize cultural values and peoplehood. This interpretation appears to be addressed specifically to alienated Reform Jews who may hear their own thoughts expressed in the words of each speaker, and who are presented with the consequences of their hostility to the Jewish people. Other texts, which also speak of four types of Jews, emphasize learning, practice and involvement in Jewish life.

The Jew who lives devotedly as a Jew says, "I find great fulfillment by participating in the life of the Jewish community and sustaining the values and traditions of Judaism.

The Jew who considers being born a Jew his misfortune . . . To him you should say: "Have self-respect! Study and discover the unique contributions and novel challenges of Jewish life."

The Jew who is loyal to his people but whose knowledge of his faith is minimal . . . To him you shall say: "Set aside time to learn. Incorporate the poetic ceremonies and beautiful holidays of Judaism into your home and life."

The fourth is the child who is learning what it means to be a Jew. For him we should create homes that are richly

³⁹ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Family Haggadah for Reform Jews" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1985), 10; See also Rabbi David Polish, "The Seder" (creative service, Beth Emet the Free Synagogue, Evanston, IL, n.d.), 7-8.

Jewish. We should strive to live by the highest ethical ideals of our faith. And we should demonstrate by our own devotion that the synagogue and Jewish community are important in our lives.⁴⁰

In this version, four different pictures of Reform Jews are depicted. Typical worshippers are likely to identify themselves or their families with one of these voices. Moreover, the "parent" who answers, representing the voice of the Jewish community, is welcoming and open even to the most hostile child. The answers to the children very much emphasize the values of the Reform synagogue: education, community, ritual practice and ethical behavior. In a similarly structured version of the four children, David Polish has this answer to the "uncertain Jew" who asks:

"Why must I attend the synagogue when I am a good Jew at heart, and live an ethical life and can pray anywhere at all?" To him you will say: "There is much more to Jewishness than sentiment and charity. There is knowledge and observance, both sponsored by the synagogue. What is required is information and practice that gives substance to inspiration, and stimulation to service. . . ." ⁴¹

In readings such as this one, the liturgists seek to emphasize the need for involvement in and connection to the Jewish community. The dialogue with the sons becomes paradigmatic for the dialogue between Jews and the synagogue, and gives the liturgists the opportunity to emphasize the value of synagogue involvement.

Services devoted to a certain theme also utilize the four sons as an opportunity to emphasize that particular theme, as in a Seder written by the Task Force on Equality of Woman in Judaism. In addition to the text of the

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 7.

⁴¹ Rabbi David Polish, "The Seder," 8-9.

questions and answers, each child is related to the way that women have traditionally been viewed:

The wise person is one who seeks knowledge of what God wants from us. Traditionally, it was assumed that women had little need to know. Her most honored position was to enable her husband and her sons to become learned in Torah. Today we celebrate as women join men in seeking the wisdom to understand thoroughly the meaning of Pesach.⁴²

The four sons thus present an opportunity for the liturgist to address a theme of importance, whether it pertains to the Jewish community (as is most often found) or oppressed Jewry, or women. This is somewhat different than treatment of the children in *A Passover Haggadah*. While *A Passover Haggadah* does present additional readings for each child, they are less contemporary, and more centered on the broad themes of suffering, redemption and Jewish unity. The tendency of *A Passover Haggadah* is to be more general, focusing on broad themes, while the creative Haggadahs are more rooted in specific contemporary situations will be revealed in other contexts as well.

The Plagues

Several services provide additional lists of modern plagues. New interpretations of the plagues are not, however, as common as new interpretations of the four sons, or other parts of the Seder. One alternative version replaces the traditional plagues with a list of the "ten plagues of tyranny:"

⁴² Task Force on Equality of Women In Judaism, "Passover Haggadah" (creative service, New York, NY, 1979), 10. The emphasis on the word "person" as opposed to "son" is part of the original text.

Useless hatred, bigotry, violence, irreverence for the dignity of man, disregard for life, promoting prejudice, inflicting fear amongst those practicing their religion, forbidding the publication of religious and other books not designed by the government, restricting the freedom of religious organizations and educational institutions to develop and promote their causes, restricting freedom of movement of its citizens who wish to be united with the family of people. ⁴³

Others include a general list of modern plagues in addition to the traditional plagues, which is the method of *A Passover Haggadah*. A common list is one which includes a wide variety of modern problems: discrimination, poisoning of the earth, ravages of war, economic injustice, chemical dependency, world hunger, religious intolerance, unemployment, denial of human rights and threat of nuclear holocaust. ⁴⁴ An unusual use of the plagues is in the woman's Seder mentioned above. Each plague is a metaphor for a particular situation relating to women. For example:

Frogs: Within the marsh, the frog goes about its daily tasks, unnoticed, unappreciated; yet, fulfilling the role which nature has decreed: maintaining the balance of nature. So, too, for generations has the voice of woman been a part of nature but viewed merely as a part of the background, merely as the clarion call at daybreak. Perhaps today is the new dawn for the Jewish woman. ⁴⁵

Most services make a concerted effort to show that the inclusion of the plagues does not mean that we are gloating over the pain suffered by the Egyptians. Most connect the removal of wine from the cups to the need to diminish our own joy even when the enemy suffers. There are few services

⁴³ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Temple Israel), 15.

⁴⁴ Rabbi Nathan B. Landman, "A Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder" (creative service, Temple Emanu-El, Reform Congregation of Queens, Elmhurst, NY, 1983), 10b-10d.

⁴⁵ Task Force on Equality of Women in Judaism, "Passover Haggadah," 11-13.

that completely eliminate the plagues,⁴⁶ as does *The Union Haggadah, Revised*. (Perhaps for the same reason, *A Passover Haggadah* provides psalm 105 as a replacement for the plagues. While mentioning the plagues, the psalm focuses more on praising God for the many manifestations of divine power during the Exodus.⁴⁷) No reason is given for this, although one would assume that it was considered inappropriate to dwell on the torment of the Egyptians. Several Seders also transform the ritual of removing the wine from our cups, connecting it to events in our own day and not even mentioning the plagues in Egypt. For example, after mentioning the midrash in which God rebuked the angels for rejoicing when the Egyptian soldiers drowned, this service continues:

Thus it is fitting for us to diminish our joy in sympathy for those who suffered. We do not rejoice at the punishment meted out to an enemy; we have been taught by our faith to have human sympathy.

In our day as well we must remember the mission of our people. We must be aware of those who yet suffer at the hand of hunger or indifference, whose voices are to be heard crying out to us this night from the trenches of the battle zone, the squalor of the city and the synagogues behind the Iron Curtain. This night even as traditions call upon us to diminish our joy by spilling wine from our cups we, with this act express our sorrow for the human potential destroyed through all acts of man's inhumanity. We do care!

(Each person spills a drop of wine from his cup.)

Let it be, as well, that as we take this drop from our wine we recall the many times when violence was the means,

⁴⁶ For example, Rabbi David Polish, "The Seder" or Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple).

⁴⁷ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah*, 48-51.

peace the proclaimed goal, and let us reaffirm our belief in non-violence. (A quote from Martin Luther King follows.)⁴⁸

Whether in adding to the traditional plagues or in greatly altering them, the Seders use the plagues as an opportunity to emphasize modern evils and our need to empathize with all of humanity. In doing this, the traditional meaning of the plagues is greatly altered. In the traditional text, the plagues are specific acts by God, and they have the very specific purpose of bringing about the freedom of the Israelites. In the creative versions, both of these characteristics are reversed. Firstly, they are usually evils brought about by humanity. Secondly, they become negatives that we have to overcome rather than acts to achieve a positive end (freedom). In this way the creative services (and *A Passover Haggadah* in its interpretive reading) greatly departs from the traditional text.

The Seder Symbols

The symbol that is given the simplest and most straightforward explanation is the maror. As *A Passover Haggadah* explains, we eat it to remember that the Egyptians embittered our lives.

Matzah is usually related to the haste in which our ancestors fled from Egypt, but there are several common texts associated with the explanation of matzah that give it an added level of meaning. One reading, apparently based on the Reconstructionist Haggadah⁴⁹ (which is commonly drawn upon) emphasizes a threefold meaning of matzah. It is a sign of the haste in which the Israelites left Egypt, it is a symbol of the bread of

⁴⁸ Rabbi Larry J. Halpern, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (creative service, Congregation of Liberal Judaism, Orlando, FL, n.d.), 4. See also, Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple), 10.

⁴⁹ Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, ed. "The New Haggadah for the Pesach Seder" (New York, 1978, newly revised), 65-67.

poverty that our ancestors ate while oppressed, and it reminds us of the simple life in the desert, emphasizing the need for all to live equally and abolish inequalities of wealth. The association of matzah with affliction is emphasized as well by the occasional use of the prayer for eating leavened bread during Pesach, composed in Bergen-Belsen.⁵⁰ And sometimes matzah is interpreted metaphorically, as in this commentary which describes matzah in relation to human characteristics:

Matzah is regret-bread, or "I wish I could have had more time bread." And Matzah is our excuse-bread, or, "I am sorry I couldn't make it bread," our "I was in such a rush I forgot bread." And Matzah is our no-frills bread, our "this is me without pretense bread"--our honesty-bread.⁵¹

The greatest diversity is seen in the explanation of the shank bone, the pesach. The usual explanation is similar to the one in both Reform Haggadahs and in the traditional Haggadah. Our ancestors ate the paschal lamb as a sacrifice in remembrance of the fact that God passed over the Israelites' houses in Egypt. One service fleshes out the story of the last plague, describing how the Israelites sacrificed a lamb and marked their doors with its blood, and thus later generations offered a sacrifice in gratitude for the fact that God had passed over the Israelite houses.⁵² However, different facets of this story and the symbolism associated with the lamb are emphasized in other Seders. One Seder has a fairly typical explanation, mentioning that God passed over the houses of the Israelites

⁵⁰ Both of these readings can be found in Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah with Commentaries and Supplemental Readings" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, n.d.), 25-26.

⁵¹ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Haggadah for Pesach" (creative service, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, CA, 1984), 20--"Interpretations for Discussion."

⁵² Religious Action Center, "The Common Road to Freedom: A Passover Haggadah" (creative service, Washington D.C., 1985), 21.

but making no mention of the paschal sacrifice.⁵³ The lamb itself appears to be arbitrary, and the paschal sacrifice is not mentioned. In these services, liturgists wish to emphasize the connection of the shank bone with redemption more than with the sacrificial offering. Another service, however, connects the shank bone only to the offering of the sacrifice in Jerusalem, in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 16:1, making no mention of God passing over the houses.⁵⁴ The significance of these differences is unclear. I would hesitate to assign to them any particular underlying meaning, for the implications of the different interpretations are slight. It would rather seem to me that liturgists themselves are under a number of different perceptions about the significance of the bone. They feel free to explain it in accordance with their individual interpretation and not necessarily in accordance with the traditional explanation.

There are a few instances where it would appear that the liturgists have deliberately interpreted the shank bone in a particular way in order to emphasize a certain point. A couple of seders emphasize the fact that the lamb was the meal that the Israelites ate upon leaving Egypt. The communal nature of the meal is stressed in one Seder.

That bone represents the PASCAL LAMB which we shared prior to our flight. It reminds us that we are a family, and that we share a common fate by choice. Prior to our Exodus, we gathered as families and shared a meal. In eating together we told each other, and our God, that we felt that we were in this quest for liberation together. We were one family.⁵⁵

⁵³ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Temple Israel), 12.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple), 12.

⁵⁵ Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "Caught Between the Pharaoh and the Deep Red Sea," 13.

In this interpretation the bone is changed from a symbol of divine protection to a symbol of human unity. *A Passover Haggadah* has a similar, although less clearly stated, interpretation accompanying the pesach:

In our day, too, we invoke God as the guardian of the household of Israel, as in our dwellings we renew the family bond and strengthen our ties with the whole household of Israel.⁵⁶

In one creative service, the symbol of the pesach is completely altered:

Pesach means the Paschal lamb, the symbol of innocence and gentleness. Israel, the servant of the Lord, was led like a sheep to the slaughter at Auschwitz and Buchenwald, at Bergen-Belsen and Babi-Yar. . . . They lie at rest in nameless graves, interred in far-off forests and lonely fields, the sacrificial lamb of man's brutality to the innocent and the meek.⁵⁷

Not only is the lamb not even related to the Exodus, but the imagery of the sacrificial lamb has Christian overtones. The symbol is thus completely transformed, in more ways than one. (In the same service the maror is related to the bitterness Jews felt during the Holocaust when they were abandoned by the rest of the world.)

Most of the other symbols on the Seder plate and on the table are explained at the beginning of the Seder, although sometimes they are explained at the end with the matzah, maror and pesach. The symbol that is explained in the greatest variety of ways is the egg. It is most often connected to spring and rebirth, although another common reading connects it to Jewish survival. The egg becomes harder the more that it is boiled, as Jews become stronger and more resilient the more they are oppressed.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah*, 55.

⁵⁷ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Family Haggadah for Reform Jews," 18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

Occasionally the egg is associated with a special festival offering in the temple, or with mourning: "at the seder it is a reminder of the destruction of the Temple which our people recall on every joyous occasion."⁵⁹

Sometimes more novel explanations are found such as the idea that the eggs were very expensive in ancient Judea and only the wealthy could afford them. Their inclusion indicates that our ancestors pretended that they were free, wealthy aristocrats who could afford such luxuries.⁶⁰

Neither of the Reform Haggadahs explain other symbols such as *charoset* or the roasted egg as part of the actual Seder (although *A Passover Haggadah* mentions the option of eating an egg--representing rebirth and reminding us of the ancient Temple service--as was the Roman custom prior to the meal.) In the creative Seders it is clearly important that all of the symbols are explained. The role of the traditional objects and foods in addition to matzah, maror and pesach is stressed.

Magid

The *magid* is the most varied of all of the parts of the Seder. It also reflects the greatest departure from the traditional and Reform Haggadahs. The narrative is usually told in story fashion, as in *The Union Haggadah, Revised*. There is very little use of biblical text and this sets these service apart from the traditional Haggadah, and even from *A Passover Haggadah*. There are certain parts of the traditional narrative that usually appear in the creative services, although the order of these parts varies greatly. Generally included are: "We were slaves in the land of Egypt" (often in Hebrew and English), "Even if all of us were wise . . . it would still be our

⁵⁹ Anonymous, "Haggadah" (n.p., n.d.), 7.

⁶⁰ Rabbi Stephen E. Weisberg, "A Pesach Haggadah" (creative service, Congregation Ner Tamid, Las Vegas, NV, 1975), 10.

obligation to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt," "More than one enemy has risen against us to destroy us," the story of the rabbis in B'nai Brak discussing the Exodus through the night, and *dayenu*. Part of the narrative in *A Passover Haggadah* is occasionally used as well:

We knew *physical* servitude in Egypt. But before that our *souls* were in bondage. For in the beginning our ancestors were idolators. . . . We have known physical bondage and spiritual servitude. We have also been subjected to *social degradation*. For in the eyes of others we were a subject people--Arameans.⁶¹

The question to consider is how these elements are utilized to form the narrative itself, for it is clear that the traditional structure of the *magid* is completely abandoned. It is also worth noting that the role of the *magid* within the Seders varies. At times the *magid* is brief, consisting of a few brief paragraphs.⁶² Occasionally there is no formal *magid* at all, as in one service that describes Passover in biblical times (quoting 2 Chronicles 8) and in the Christian tradition (using Mark 14 in addition to explanations from *The New Union Haggadah, Revised*).⁶³ These selections seem to replace a more traditional *magid*. Another example of a minimalist *magid* is seen in another Haggadah that basically tells the story through describing the symbols of the Seder.⁶⁴ On the other hand, there are certainly services that give greater attention to the narrative, even providing commentary so that the *magid* could conceivably be enlarged even beyond the text

⁶¹ Central Conference of American Rabbis *A Passover Haggadah*, 36-7.

⁶² Anonymous, "Haggadah" (n.p., n.d.), 6.

⁶³ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *The New Union Prayerbook, Revised*, 147-8 in Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Seder Haggadah."

⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Temple Israel).

provided.⁶⁵ In general, however, while the *magid* is not insignificant in most services, it does occupy a smaller role in proportion to discussion of the symbols, the four sons, and other parts of the Seder than is true in *A Passover Haggadah*.

The interpretations of different parts of the *magid* in the creative Haggadahs generally serve to make it more contemporary, integrating situations of the modern era into the narrative. This distinguishes the creative services from *A Passover Haggadah* in that the readings added to the *magid* in the latter tend to focus on broader, more general themes and less on contemporary situations. Readings referring to the nature of idolatry, slavery, redemption, as well as midrash about our ancestors' experience in Egypt, constitute the bulk of the supplementary readings in *A Passover Haggadah*. The Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel are the primary events of the modern age referred to in this Haggadah. This is in contrast to the creative Haggadahs which contain references to many modern situations such as civil rights, oppressed Jewry and hunger, in addition to the emphasis placed on the Holocaust and the State of Israel. By bringing in these additional examples from modernity, the creative Haggadahs are a more direct reflection of contemporary society than is *A Passover Haggadah*, which is less tied to today's world. Of course *A Passover Haggadah* does not wholly ignore modern events (the readings associated with the plagues and *yachatz* are two key examples of contemporary references), nor do the creative Haggadahs ignore discussions of the broader themes of the Seder. But the emphasis is quite different in

⁶⁵ See for example, Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Haggadah for Pesach" and Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah with Commentaries and Supplemental Readings."

each, giving the creative Haggadahs a very different feel and flavor from the standard Haggadah.

One example of the role that modern problems take in the creative Seders is the use of Arthur Waskow's "Lo Dayenu" which occurs in several services.

If we were to end a single genocide but not stop the other wars that are killing men and women as we sit here, it would not be sufficient;

If we were to end those bloody wars but not disarm the nations of weapons that could destroy all humanity, it would not be sufficient.

If we were to disarm all the nations, but not to end the pollution and poisoning of our own planet, it would not be sufficient.

If we were to end the poisoning of our planet, but not prevent some people from starving . . . it would not be sufficient.

If we were to make sure that no one starved but not to end police brutality in many countries, it would not be sufficient.

If we were to end outright police brutality but not to free daring and caring from their jails, it would not be sufficient.

If we were to free the daring and caring from their jails but to cramp the minds of people that they could not understand their words, it would not be sufficient.

If we liberated all men and women to understand the free creative minds . . . but would not allow them to love one another and share in the human family, it would not be sufficient.

How much then are we duty bound to struggle, work, share, give, think, plan, feel, organize . . . speak out, dream, hope and be on behalf of humanity. ⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Rabbi Arthur Waskow, "Lo Dayenu," in *The Freedom Seder: A New Haggadah for Passover* (Washington D.C., 1969) quoted in Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "Caught Between the Pharaoh and the Deep Red Sea," 12-13. Other variations of *dayenu* that speak of similar social ills are found in several services, and are based on Rabbi Arthur Waskow, *The Rainbow Seder* (New York, 1984).

The *magid* is also made contemporary by reference to certain details that reflect the concerns or orientation of a specific Haggadah. For example, the Haggadah oriented to woman's concerns specifically recalls (and is in fact centered upon) the role of women in the Exodus:

Forgotten, and systematically excluded from our history texts, is the crucial role played by women in the story of our search for freedom. So today, WE REMEMBER not only that God brought us out of the house of bondage, but WE REMEMBER and we record in the narration: Shiphrah & Puah who dared defy Pharaoh's order to kill all new-born Hebrew boys; Yochebed, Moses' mother, who devised a plan to save his life; Miriam, traditionally regarded as a Prophet in Israel, and admired as a woman of courage and commitment to her people.⁶⁷

Another Seder tells the story from a Zionist perspective, using the Haggadah of Americans for Progressive Israel. Egypt is depicted as a prototype of future exiles:

The Jews came to feel at home in this galut. Years, even centuries after the famine in Eretz Yisrael had ended and it was possible to return home again, they lingered on because it was comfortable and because they trusted that things would go on like this indefinitely. Being accustomed to their galut, the Jews denied their own homeland, their real identity, and little by little began to forget that they had ever lived on their own soil.⁶⁸

The entire story is told using modern political and economic terminology. Describing the longing that the Israelites in the desert had for Egypt, the *magid* concludes:

... [T]he Jews who came out of Egypt were unable to make the personal revolution of casting off their galut mentality and

⁶⁷ Task Force on Equality of Women in Judaism, "Passover Haggadah," 2.

⁶⁸ Mark Hurvitz, rabbinic intern, "Untitled" (creative service, Congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim, Los Angeles, CA, 1976), 10.

going on aliya to Eretz Yisrael. With the exception of two men, all of them (including even Moshe) died in the desert. . . . And only when the Jews settled down again in their own homeland and became master of their own destiny, did they achieve true liberation. ⁶⁹

As a final example, in another Seder, for "Jews and Farm Workers" the idea that God looked upon our affliction is applied both to farm workers and to the Holocaust. ⁷⁰

The most common way in which contemporary situations are brought into the Seder is in reference to the idea that "more than one enemy has risen against us to destroy us." In a Haggadah designed for a Black-Jewish Seder, Peter Fischl's description of Auschwitz (which is frequently used and is also found in *A Passover Haggadah* ⁷¹), and a quote from Winnie Mandela about being in detention, follow this statement. ⁷² The Holocaust is most often described in relation to the idea of an enemy rising against us in every age. A variety of sources are utilized in this context, such as the Peter Fischl quote indicated above, or entries from *The Diary of Anne Frank*. ⁷³ (The Holocaust will be dealt with at greater length in addressing particular themes found in the Haggadahs.) Another reading that sometimes appears (and is also found in *A Passover Haggadah* ⁷⁴) acknowledges that these words ("more than one enemy") cannot help but bring the Holocaust to mind for most of us, but that we must guard against bitterness and hate. If it is hard to understand such brutality, it is equally hard to understand the

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 15.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, "A Seder for Jews and Farm Workers," 9.

⁷¹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah*, 41.

⁷² Religious Action Center, "The Common Road to Freedom," 12.

⁷³ Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "A Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder," 10a.

⁷⁴ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *A Passover Haggadah*, 48.

miracle of redemption that we celebrate at the Seder.⁷⁵ The Holocaust, although the most frequent threat, is not the only one that is described in reference to these words. Several services mention the Arab nations as well.⁷⁶ A final reading that is commonly used (from the Reconstructionist Haggadah) emphasizes that in reality Pharaoh is every tyrant of every age:

And that is why Passover means more than that first emancipation the Israelites won from Pharaoh when they left Egypt. It means the emancipation the serfs in the Middle Ages won from their overlords; the freedom the slaves won from their masters; the freedom the common people of countries won when their kings were overthrown; it means the guarantee of human rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thus the first emancipation was only a foreshadowing of all the emancipations that were to follow....⁷⁷

This reading is interesting in that it is more universal; tyranny against all people not just Jews is not the focus.

The theme of slavery is also interpreted in the *magid* either metaphorically, or else in a broader context than servitude in Egypt. The Black-Jewish Haggadah reminds us in the Introduction that slavery is part of our history in America, and thus the words, "*avadim hayinu*" (repeated later on in the *magid*) assume new meaning.⁷⁸ Slavery is frequently related to more than physical bondage:

The freedom we strive for means more than broken chains. It means liberation from all those enslavements that warp the spirit and blight the mind. For people can be enslaved in more ways than one.... Pesach calls us to be free, free from the tyranny of our own selves, free from the enslavement of

⁷⁵ Anthony Hecht, in Anonymous, "Haggadah" (n.p., n.d.), 6.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, "A Seder for Jews and Farm Workers," 7.

⁷⁷ "Pharaoh, Arch-Tyrant" in, Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "A Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder," 10.

⁷⁸ Religious Action Center, "The Common Road to Freedom," 9.

poverty and inequality, free from the corroding hate that eats away the ties which unite humanity. ⁷⁹

Another common reading from the Reconstructionist Haggadah, appearing in many Seders (both as a formal part of the *magid* and elsewhere in the Seder), emphasizes non-physical forms of slavery:

Men can be enslaved to themselves. When they let emotion sway them to their hurt, when they permit harmful habits to tyrannize over them--they are slaves. When laziness or cowardice keeps them from doing what they know to be right, when ignorance blinds them . . . they are slaves. . . .

Men can be enslaved by poverty and inequality. When the fear of need drives them to dishonesty and violence, to defending the guilty and accusing the innocent--they are slaves. . . .

Men can be enslaved by intolerance. When Jews are forced to give up their Jewish way of life, to abandon their Torah, to neglect their sacred festivals, to leave off rebuilding their ancient homeland--they are slaves. ⁸⁰

What all of these sources have in common is the attempt to make the narrative itself more contemporary. Whether by speaking of modern enemies, things in the world and in our own natures that enslave us, or addressing particular issues like women's rights or Israel, the *magid* often provides an opportunity to tell about slavery and the quest for freedom in our world, as much as it does about the Egyptian slavery and the Exodus. This will be clear in summarizing some of the main themes of the Haggadahs.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "Caught Between the Pharaoh and the Deep Red Sea," 9.
⁸⁰ "Passover and Freedom," in Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Haggadah," 8.

Themes of Creative Haggadahs

Social Justice

The key theme of the creative Haggadahs is that of social justice and our responsibility to care for the world. The idea that "In every generation we are to see ourselves as if we left Egypt" is interpreted as a mandate to end oppression and work toward a free and just society. This is emphasized in a number of ways. Several services include variations on the midrash of Nachshon jumping into the sea, emphasizing the need for us to take action:

... [T]he sea was divided only after Israel had stepped into it and the waters had reached up to their noses; only then did it become dry land. They had to have the faith and do the work in order for the miracle, the redemption, to take place. And so we must keep our faith that what we do makes a difference, that we can achieve progress for humanity.⁸¹

An interpretive version of the four questions indicates that without the continual and historic struggle for freedom that we have been involved in, the Seder might not be so meaningful:

Why has this celebration been continued by our people from the days of the Exodus?

Our people has always been involved in the struggle against those who wish to usurp freedom. When the fight for freedom is no longer necessary perhaps this celebration will lose some of its importance. But until that time comes to be, we must continually remind ourselves of the blessing of freedom.⁸²

Harvey Fields summarizes this connection between the Seder and our obligation toward the world and its future when he says, "For Jews, the

⁸¹ Anonymous, "Seder for Jews and Farm Workers," 3.

⁸² Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah" (Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, n.d.), 5.

Seder is a sacred opportunity to bond together, to relive the past for the purpose of forging a better future." ⁸³

Not surprisingly, the significance of Elijah is related to the need to work toward a better age. Most seders describe Elijah as symbol of hope and peace for the future; many of them indicate that Elijah is not a real person but that, in the words of one Seder, "in each of us there is a bit of Elijah, in each of us, the dream, the wish, that we might effect justice and goodness among men and nations. . . ." ⁸⁴ Another very common reading has the following dialogue in regard to Elijah:

Has Elijah arrived? I cannot see him.
He cannot be seen. He comes as the goodness that is in our hearts. Each one of us can bring freedom to this world if we teach ourselves to be kind to other people. Then we would be helping to bring Passover freedom to everybody. Elijah is our hope of freedom for all people. ⁸⁵

The need to work toward the betterment of the world is not only expressed in general terms. Specific social ills are mentioned, as has been clear throughout the discussion of the interpretations of the parts of the Seder. (One issue that has not yet been mentioned is the nuclear threat, which is referred to in several services. ⁸⁶) It is worth pointing out that oppressed Jewry in general, and Soviet Jewry in particular, are mentioned with great frequency in these Seders. Many include (in a wide variety of

⁸³ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Haggadah for Pesach," 1.

⁸⁴ Rabbi Abraham J. Klausner, "The Bicentennial Passover Haggadah," 25.

⁸⁵ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah for Families with Young Children" (Temple Beth Hillel, Los Angeles, CA, n.d.), 23.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Family Haggadah for Reform Jews," 1; Rabbi Earl Kaplan, "Beth Israel Passover Haggadah for a Community Seder" (creative service, Temple Beth Israel, Pomona, CA, 1980), 7.

places) a fourth matzah--a matzah of hope. This is one text accompanying the matzah of hope:

This matzah, which we set aside as a symbol of hope for the three and a half million Jews of the Soviet Union, reminds us of the indestructible links that exist between us. As we observe this festival of freedom, we know that Soviet Jews are not free --not free to leave, not free to learn of their Jewish past or to hand it down to their children. They cannot learn the language of their fathers. They cannot teach their children to be the teachers, and the rabbis of future generations. As their voices rise in Jewish affirmation and protest, we add our voices to theirs, and we shall be joined by all whose consciences are aroused by the wrongs inflicted on Soviet Jews. Thus shall they know that they have not been forgotten and they shall yet emerge into the light of freedom.⁸⁷

Sometimes Jews from Ethiopia and Arab lands are included in readings such as these. A novel introduction of this theme occurs in one seder when oppressed Jewry is introduced at the breaking of the matzah (*yachatz*). The comparison is made to the many Jews who are broken off from their people; liberation will not occur until all are reunited (the *afikomen* found).⁸⁸ The theme of freedom for our Israelite ancestors from oppression in Egypt suggests to these liturgists a striking parallel to Jews in our world who are oppressed. (This theme is absent from *A Passover Haggadah*).

It is not only the Exodus that suggests our obligation to help others, but the covenant established at Sinai. Several services emphasize that the Exodus alone was not a complete act, but that it reached its fulfillment in the Sinaitic covenant.

The freedom our rabbis defined and which we seek is redemption through God. It is not because Israel went out of

⁸⁷ Rabbi Larry J. Halpern, "Haggadah Shel Pesach," 8.

⁸⁸ Mark Hurvitz, "Untitled," 6.

Egypt that it became a free people; it is because it set its face towards Sinai. The freedom of the deliverance is important, therefore, because it led to, and still leads to covenant and dialogue. The historical lesson learned by Israel and its ethical significance are as pertinent today as it was three thousand two hundred years ago. . . .⁸⁹

As another service states in discussing this same issue, "freedom must culminate in commitment."⁹⁰ It is exactly this idea that the creative seders emphasize.

Holocaust

The Holocaust is frequently a focus of discussions of oppression and injustice. As has already been mentioned (see page 210) the idea of a tyrant rising against us in every age is often applied to the Holocaust, and the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt is often compared to the suffering endured during the Holocaust. A large majority of the services contain some reference to the Holocaust, usually in connection to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which began on the first day of Pesach. As a result, the idea of resistance is more prominent in these services than in many others. Although it is not made explicit, it is likely that the similarity to the Israelites rising against Pharaoh is not far from the mind of the liturgist. It is not military resistance alone that is stressed, however, but the ability of the victims to maintain their belief (as will be true in the Yom ha-Sho'ah services):

Now the remnants of our people who were left in the ghettos
and camps of annihilation rose up against the wicked ones for

⁸⁹ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (creative service, Congregation Solel, Highland Park, IL, 1966), 63.

⁹⁰ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah with Commentaries and Supplemental Readings," 46.

the sanctification of the Name, and slew many of them before they died. On the first day of Passover the remnants in the ghetto of Warsaw rose up against the adversary, even as in the days of Judah the Maccabee. They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided, and they brought redemption to the name of Israel throughout the world. And from the depths of their affliction the martyrs lifted their voices in a song of faith in the coming of the Messiah, when justice and brotherhood will reign among men. (Sing "Ani Ma'amin").⁹¹

As in this reading, and references to the Holocaust in other services, the faith of those who perished is stressed, as is the fact that we have continued to survive in spite of efforts to annihilate us. This ability to survive is further emphasized in readings such as this one, when other historical forms of oppression associated with Passover are mentioned:

This very night which we celebrate so safely and joyfully in our homes was often turned into a night of anxiety and of suffering for our people. Cruel mobs rushed upon them, destroying their homes and the fruit of their labors. But they clung to their faith in the final triumph of right, of freedom. . . . We must never forget what our people endured during the dreadful years of Nazi tyranny and destruction. We must never forget the concentration camps, the death of six million of our fellow Jews. We must never forget the resistance and the heroism of the Warsaw ghetto. The martyrs of our age died, but the people of Israel lives. (Sing "Am Yisrael Chai").⁹²

Sometimes Righteous Gentiles and those who helped save Jews are mentioned, as in a service that at the end of a very lengthy reading, mentions not only those who protected Jews at risk to their own lives, but the Allied nations who ultimately "liberated our people."⁹³ In one rather unusual reading, the Holocaust, and antisemitism in general, are discussed

⁹¹ Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "The Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder," 1.

⁹² Rabbi David Polish, "The Seder," 22.

⁹³ Anonymous, "Haggadah" (n.p., n.d.), 13.

after the recitation of "Pour out thy wrath," which is found only in the traditional, not the Reform Haggadah.

Some people are embarrassed by the anger and hatred here expressed. They have grown too complacent. They forget that if the oppressed do not hate their oppressors, they will turn their anger inward and hate themselves.

Remember, no Jew ever "caused" anti-semitism. No woman ever asked to be attacked. Victims may be weak and thus tempting, but assailants are always responsible. They should be cursed, not excused.

Other people react to Anti-Semitism [sic] by becoming paranoid. They see the danger everywhere, in everyone. They forget that even in the depravity of the Holocaust there were sparks of light.

Most people simply went along following orders.

Many people eagerly joined in, following their beliefs.

A few people resisted following their conscience, the

"Righteous Among the Nations. . . ." ⁹⁴

This is clearly unusual for many reasons, but encouraging feelings of anger and bitterness is definitely contrary to the usual attitude taken toward the Holocaust, and toward one's enemies in general (as discussed above on page 199 in reference to the emphasis placed on decreasing our joy at the suffering the Egyptians endured during the plagues). The references to the Holocaust serve to remind participants in the Seder that while we celebrate redemption, there has been a particularly dark moment in recent times for our people. Much like the references to oppressed Jewry, the Holocaust is a reminder that redemption did not occur for all people, and there is still hatred in the world. But furthermore, the faith of the victims and the continual survival of our people (as well as the occasional references to Righteous Gentiles) provide hope for the future. Just as the Exodus itself

⁹⁴ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "A Family Haggadah for Reform Jews," 27.

can inspire us to work for future redemption and believe in the possibility of a better world, the ability of the victims to say "Ani Ma'amin" and to stand up to the oppressors in the Warsaw Ghetto, make us believe that we too can rise against injustice. "Their hope is a challenge to us, to build that world in which they believed."⁹⁵ As will be discussed shortly, this is an important part of the sacred myth portrayed by the creative Seders and by *A New Passover Haggadah*.

Israel

Israel is also mentioned in a variety of ways in a number of services. There is a service that concludes with "Hatikva" (and "My Country 'Tis of Thee");⁹⁶ several services, in fact, include "Hatikva." Harvey Fields includes a fifth cup of wine for the State of Israel, emphasizing that the people rose again in the Land of Israel after the destruction of the Holocaust.⁹⁷ Several services include prayers for the State of Israel such as this one which follows a prayer for the six million and a reading for the matzah of hope:

Although in this century our people suffered its greatest loss in the death of the Six Million, we have also seen wonderful rebirth of the State of Israel. In 1947 the United Nations voted for the creation of a free and independent Jewish State. The dream which our people had cherished for almost 1900 years, finally came true. The Jews had their own homeland. But no sooner did the Jewish State come into being than it was attacked by seven Arab States. The spirit of the Six Million inspired the Jews of Israel to fight heroically for their very

⁹⁵ Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Seder Haggadah," 5.

⁹⁶ Rabbi Frederick Grosse, "Seder-on-the-Desert" (creative service, Temple Solel, Scottsdale, AZ, n.d.), 32-33.

⁹⁷ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Haggadah for Pesach," 29.

lives. They won their War of Independence in 1948. Again in 1956 and still again in 1967, Israel had to fight for its survival. With courage and sacrifice, Israel won. On this Seder night, when we thank God for His great gift of freedom, we think not only of freedom from Egyptian bondage long ago. We think also of the freedom which the State of Israel has brought to our people--freedom from homelessness and exile, freedom from persecution, and freedom to build a new life in an ancient land.⁹⁸

While not all of the prayers focus on the wars that Israel has fought, they do focus on the miracle of a people in its own land, free from oppression and injustice. Although the founding of the State of Israel is not always expressed in terms of "redemption" one wonders whether the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land is likened to the reclaiming of the Land of Israel in our time in the minds of the liturgists. In a few instances, this is made specific: "Never since that wondrous time in Egypt has deliverance come to Israel as it has in our own time," followed by quotes from Israel's Declaration of Independence and Isaiah 43.⁹⁹

It is also interesting to note that in discussions of freedom and responsibility, modern situations in Israel are sometimes used as examples although in very different ways. One Israel reference is to the 1967 war:

As we celebrate this night, we give thanks that some of our brethren may now recount this tale in Jerusalem reunited. . . . This night, in the midst of our retelling of our days of might and power, we are reminded of the dangers of power--the intoxicating effect of victory, the abuses committed in the name of security, the misjudgments of battle, the revenge in victory. Our Haggadah, our telling of "the tale," portrays the Jew as victim, as hero; the Egyptian as villain. But in truth we know, that throughout the long centuries of the telling, names and places changed, but the dilemma remained the same--to the

⁹⁸ Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Seder Haggadah," 5.

⁹⁹ Rabbi David Polish, "The Seder," 19.

powerful went the opportunity for both right and wrong--that no people, no individual is the exclusive purveyor of either.¹⁰⁰

In warning of the possibility that we could become the Egyptians, the introduction to this service establishes a very different tone, and gives a very different message than most other Seders that emphasize our capacity to act as a force for justice. Another reference to Israel, in this case to Israel and Lebanon, is completely different. In discussing the fact that freedom is found in exercising responsibility, the service says, "We celebrate Passover this year, proud that a militarily strong Israel has ultimately shown the moral courage to face up to its responsibilities in the tragedy of Lebanon."¹⁰¹ These two readings examine responsibility and justice in terms of the behavior of the State of Israel, showing that Israel is certainly in their consciousness, although they draw very different conclusions about Israeli actions.

Given that a number of services include prayers for the State of Israel, it is noteworthy that so many of them remove the words "Next year in Jerusalem" or alter it. There are several different versions of these words found in Seders.

As the Seder drew to a close our ancestors yearning for a safe home, declared: "Next year in Jerusalem." We tonight echo their hope as we say together:

Next Year may Jerusalem truly be free!

Next year may all the children of Israel be free!

Next year may every enslaved human soul be free!¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Rabbi Larry J. Halpern, "Haggadah shel Pesach," 1.

¹⁰¹ Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "A Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder," 9.

¹⁰² Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah with Commentaries and Supplemental Readings," 37.

In a reading over the final cup of wine
 one day all people will be able to
 Jerusalem.¹⁰³ Another version
 this year yearn to be in Jer
 ahead. Amen.¹⁰⁴ In one
 h'abo b'nai chorin; Next,
 (Interestingly, this service is
 Andrew Goodman and Michael Schw.
 meaning of the phrase. In doing so, the
 be struggling with is spelled out as in this s.

and from bondage
 the future based on
 when reciting the
 Haggadahs
 instance, the
 continued
 recorded
 the
 of

This phrase has concluded PASSOVER SEDAR.
 Rabbi Akiba. Yet, reality tells us that most of us
 moving to Israel in the year to come, nor plan at all,
 so. Most of will not celebrate next PESACH in Jerusalem
 why do we include it in our service? When we speak of
 Jerusalem we are not speaking of YERUSHELAYIM SHEL MATA-
 Jerusalem the city of bricks and mortar. No! We are speaking
 of YERUSHELAYIM SHEL MA'A'LEH [sic]--the mystical concept of
 a perfected Jerusalem of the spiritual realm. . . . Standing in
 that Jerusalem, we stand on the threshold of redemption. . . .¹⁰⁶

It seems as if the phrase, "Next Year in Jerusalem" is understood so
 literally by people that in order to be meaningful it either has to be altered,
 or introduced and explained. Of the many symbols that are a part of the
 Seder, the symbolism of these words does not appear to be automatically
 understood or appreciated by worshippers.

¹⁰³ Rabbi Larry J. Halpern, "Haggadah Shel Pesach," 14.

¹⁰⁴ Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "A Passover Seder Haggadah," 17.

¹⁰⁵ Lewis M. Moroze, "Passover Haggadah" (creative service, Newark, NJ, 1965), 20.

¹⁰⁶ Rabbi Steven J. Peskind, "Caught between the Pharaoh and the Deep Red Sea," 21.

Pesach Services

Prior to summarizing Pesach by looking at the image of God and the sacred myth found in these liturgies, it is worth briefly discussing the fifteen Pesach services that I have examined. They are thematically similar to the Seders, and some of the music and liturgy of the Seder is included. Otherwise, they are very similar in structure and style to Shabbat services.

Many of the services emphasize the idea that in every generation we are to view ourselves as if we went forth out of Egypt. As in the Seders this gives us a certain obligation to care for other people and work for justice.

As we remember this moving chapter in our people's past, may we learn to appreciate more deeply the freedom we enjoy. May we also learn to care about all those who are not yet free.¹⁰⁷

As is the case with the Seders, there are several modern situations that are connected to this obligation. One service is specifically centered around "Freedom, Pesach and Soviet Jewry."¹⁰⁸ Several services refer to the Holocaust. A reading found in the Seders, emphasizing that the miracle of redemption is no easier to understand than the brutality of "barbaric annihilation" is also found in one Passover service.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes freedom is applied generally to the personal and social ills that plague us:

As we come together on the Shabbat during Passover, we kindle the light of freedom.
May we be free from the bonds of selfishness that lock us in the prison of apathy and indifference.

¹⁰⁷ Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Shabbat and Pesach" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 5.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, "A Worship Service on the Theme of Freedom, Pesach and Soviet Jewry" (creative service, Temple Adath Israel, Lexington, KY, 1975).

¹⁰⁹ Anthony Hecht, in Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Shabbat and Pesach," 8. See footnote 75.

May we be free from the bondage of the spirit that prevents us from thinking for ourselves.

May the Jewish people trapped in the prison that is Russia be free to find a new life for themselves and their children.

May the hopeless in our own land, trapped in the prison of poverty, be free to make the most of their capacities in a world where opportunity is real and not a distant dream.

May people everywhere be free from hunger and from famine, from violence and war. ¹¹⁰

Most of these services interweave the themes of Passover mentioned so far, particularly those relating to social justice, with the basic Shabbat liturgy.

There are a few services that are somewhat unique. One service, "A Service of Searching" for the Shabbat prior to Pesach is dedicated to the theme of removing chametz.

There is no proper celebration of Passover without this physical removal. We can not live the Exodus while the crumbs of slavery still abide in our homes. . . . We must [also] search within. We dedicate these moments to the removal of all those emotions which block our participation in the Exodus from Egypt. ¹¹¹

The service also includes the blessing for the removal of chametz. Another service mostly consists of readings about the observance of Passover in other lands and times--biblical observance, the customs of the Samaritans and the Marranos, making matzah in the Warsaw Ghetto, and jokes and stories about Passover. ¹¹² These last two services are not typical, but they do reflect the variety of ways in which Pesach is dealt with liturgically.

¹¹⁰ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Passover Family Service" (Beth David Reform Congregation, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 1.

¹¹¹ Rabbi Howard Shapiro and Elaine Snepar, "A Service of Searching" (creative service, n.p., 1977), 1-2.

¹¹² Rabbi Kurt L. Metzger, "Passover Experiences through the Ages" (creative service, n.p., n.d.).

The Image of God in Creative Passover Liturgy

It will be important in attempting to understand the role that God plays in these services to distinguish between emphasizing God as Redeemer (as the traditional Haggadah does) and not de-emphasizing God, as is the case with the creative Haggadahs. While thanks to God who redeems and protects us is certainly a part of these Seders and there is no attempt to shy away from this imagery, the primary focus of the Seders is not upon God, but upon humanity.

Certainly, if one looks at the traditional elements of the Seder that are included, it will be evident that there is no absence of the idea that it was God who brought us out of Egypt. *Dayenu*, the frequent explanation of the pesach, and even parts of the *magid* make this abundantly clear. God's redemptive role is often stated clearly and directly:

The Passover Seder is more than just a ceremony marking an historical event. We are taught that "in every generation all are obligated to regard themselves as if they had personally gone forth from the Land of Egypt. . . ." Thus, the seder is a re-creation and a re-living of that historical exodus, of God's redemptive power and the wonder of freedom. ¹¹³

Many services have no hesitation about using traditional God language, even when they depart from many other aspects of the Seder. For example, this traditional introduction to *hallel* is found in a service that is in other respects quite different from the traditional Haggadah:

We should therefore sing praises and give thanks to Him who did all these wonders for our fathers and for us. He brought us from slavery to freedom, and from sorrow to joy, from

¹¹³ Religious Action Center, "The Common Road to Freedom," 1.

mourning to festivity, from darkness to light, and from bondage to redemption. ¹¹⁴

There is also no hesitation about expressing faith in the future based on past divine redemption. As in the traditional Haggadahs, when reciting the phrase that "in every age some rise up to destroy us" some Haggadahs include that promise that God will always save us. ¹¹⁵ In one instance, the founding of the State of Israel is cited as an example of the continued presence of God in history, "a modern miracle as impressive as any recorded in our Bible." ¹¹⁶ Surprisingly, there are few instances of translating the powerful image of God the mighty Redeemer into more intimate God language. Harvey Fields does just this when, in discussing the presence of evil in the world, he comments:

Perhaps God is waiting to be saved, redeemed. Perhaps all that we call God; all the justice and truth, mercy and love we yearn for, is waiting for our embrace. Perhaps God's "mighty hand" is waiting for us. ¹¹⁷

This is one reference to the idea that we bring God into the world through our actions, that God works through humanity. Given how frequently this idea occurs in Shabbat liturgy, one would perhaps expect it to be more predominant in these services. While it is the dominant "master image" of our age as described by Hoffman (see page 92), it is not an image that is overwhelmingly present in these Seders. Perhaps, as in the High Holiday services, the traditional image of God associated with the holiday--God as powerful Redeemer--is difficult to interpret in more intimate, personal

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, "Haggadah Shel Pesach" (Temple Israel), 13.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous, "Haggadah" (n.p., n.d.), 5; Rabbi Nathan Landman, "A Basic Haggadah for the Passover Seder," 10a.

¹¹⁶ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "A Family Haggadah for Reform Jews," 29.

¹¹⁷ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Haggadah for Pesach," 15--"Interpretations for Discussion."

language. Or, as will be mentioned shortly, perhaps creative liturgists feel no discomfort with the traditional language and thus have no desire to alter it.

Of course, there are also times when the role of God appears to be deliberately downplayed. One service, in describing the Exodus says,

Then a new time came; Egypt changed and the Pharaoh weakened. The Israelites found strength to leave the bondage under the leadership of Moses. They departed Egypt in a great exodus to begin a long journey to freedom. ¹¹⁸

One would never know from this reading that God had anything to do with the Exodus, although other parts of the same Seder do refer to God as Redeemer. Another service (which speaks much less of God in general than is the case in other Haggadahs) tells of the plagues that were "visited" upon the nation, and of Moses stretching his hand across the sea to part it. ¹¹⁹ Again, God is not connected to these events. This, however, is not the dominant trend. Even when God's role is downplayed in one place, usually other parts of the Seder emphasize that God did take us out of Egypt, and often in language very similar to that found in the traditional Haggadah. As in the High Holiday services, mixed or contradictory images of God often exist side by side. As will be discussed below, however, the implications of this feature of the Seders is different than it is in the High Holiday services.

In spite of the presence of traditional God language, God does not seem to be the primary focus of these Haggadahs. Moses is discussed in the *magid*, unlike the traditional Haggadah or *A Passover Haggadah* both of which specifically avoid reference to Moses in order to highlight God as

¹¹⁸ Rabbi Earl Kaplan, "Passover Haggadah for a Community Seder," 10.

¹¹⁹ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah for Families with Young Children," 14.

Redeemer. The character and nature of the Israelites, slavery and redemption, and the relationship between the Exodus and our age seem to be much greater concerns on the part of the creative liturgists than God's role in bringing freedom. While not denying God, the focus of these services is more centered on the human situation, and in this respect they stand out not only from the traditional Haggadah, but from *A Passover Haggadah*.

The question to consider, obviously, is why is this so? Why is God present in the creative Seders primarily in traditional language and imagery, is the emphasis more on humanity in general, and are these two characteristics contradictory? (The latter characteristic is typical of creative services overall as has been seen and will be addressed in the conclusion to this thesis.) It would appear that the traditional God language associated with the Seder is not problematic for the creative liturgist (as it was in the High Holiday services). The possibility that because God redeemed once, we should sit back and wait for divine intervention again does not even seem to be considered. Quite the contrary, the idea of a God who can redeem and save functions as a type of paradigm. As God cares about freedom, so too should we. As God can bring justice and goodness to an oppressed and persecuted world, so too can we. While not clearly stated, it seems plausible that this is the subtext of the Seders, for in emphasizing both our human obligations toward the world and God's role as Redeemer, the one who brings freedom, the Seder participant is in actuality being urged to be God-like. In this sense, the traditional God language and the emphasis on humanity's obligation are not contradictory, for the former reinforces the latter. Rather than viewing the Seders as depicting a change from the idea of God who redeems to humanity who redeems (as one might since the emphasis is more on this latter idea), the presence of traditional

God language raises the possibility that these two roles are intertwined. (The selection from Harvey Fields' Seder quoted above suggests this very thing.) The language of the Seder is thus a perfect backdrop for the idea that the creative liturgist wants to stress: redemption is possible, the world can be changed and it is up to us to bring about this change by using the God-like qualities that we possess as people made in the divine image.

It would also seem that in stressing human responsibility and obligation, the Divine Presence is likely to be felt as part of the Passover celebration. In emphasizing our common responsibility, a feeling of togetherness and closeness is likely to be engendered among the Seder participants. In general, the Seder is a very communally oriented celebration. But people are likely to feel an even greater sense of community as they speak words indicating a joint obligation, a mandate that arises out of a shared history. And as Hoffman has indicated, through this sense of community people are likely to feel the presence of God. "Far from destroying community, we need more than anything else to build it up, because that is where God will be present among us."¹²⁰ The communal nature of the Seder, and the emphasis on shared responsibility may very well help participants feel the presence of God not only in connection to past events, but in relation to future hopes and aspirations.

Sacred Myth

In discussing the nature of the sacred myth, it is important again to remember that sacred myths are different from history. They provide a

¹²⁰ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer--Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C., 1988), 173. See also page 92 for a fuller discussion of this issue.

basis for behaving in a certain fashion for those who accept them, irrespective of their empirical truth (see pages 1-2). An example of this distinction can be seen in the previous discussion of God. God as Redeemer (which appears to be part of the myth in the creative Haggadahs even if it is not the central element) creates the imperative that we work for freedom. The question of the historical veracity of God taking the Israelites out of Egypt is irrelevant. While one can assume that these communities would discuss this in adult education, for ritual purposes empirical evidence is not important. The myth centered around redemption (as opposed to the factual history) becomes the basis for acting to bring redemption to our world.

It is also clear that the sacred myth that these Haggadahs establish is designed so that modern events can be seen as part of the chain of tradition that began with the Exodus from Egypt. The oppression is described in such a way that events from the Holocaust to South Africa to farm workers appear to be parallel. The story of Nachshon enters the narrative in certain cases as a way to point out that redemption follows action. The four children represent Jews today and the plagues are the evils of our world. The creative Seders are constructed so as to emphasize those aspects of the ritual that can be seen through the eyes of modernity. In this respect, the creative Haggadahs are in keeping with the classical pattern and development of the Haggadah. Hoffman, in describing the sacred myth of the traditional and Reform Haggadahs cites two examples of a similar process, the first one from the traditional Haggadah:

Why did the rabbis go to such lengths to identify the Aramean as the culprit of the story? Laban is certainly no hero in the bare biblical account, but he is hardly worse than the mythic arch-foe Pharaoh. However, the rabbis obviously wished to portray him that way here, so they invoke the interpretive

capacity of midrashic exegesis to apply the circumstances of their own day to their understanding of the sacred myth.¹²¹

As with the creative Haggadahs, the Rabbis saw their present reality reflected in the past. Of course, this process was not an ongoing one for new events and historical realities did not continue to be added to the Haggadah. By adding modern elements *A Passover Haggadah*, and to an even larger degree the creative Haggadahs, represent an important innovation.

Another example of altering the traditional myth according to one's own vision and perspective is drawn from the Reform Haggadah. In *The Union Haggadah, Revised*, two lines are added to *dayenu*: "Had He built for us the Temple--and not sent us prophets of truth-- *dayenu*! Had He sent us prophets of truth, but not made us a holy people-- *dayenu*!" In adding these lines, the prophetic tradition, and the universal mission of the Jewish people, which were parts of what Hoffman calls the "classical Reform sacred myth" became part of *dayenu*. This myth, which became part of *dayenu* was closely related to the way that the early Reformers viewed their world.

The classical reformers, like the rabbis who preceded them, necessarily formulated such a myth to explain the world they knew, as well as the world they wanted, and to mandate the requisite behavior to transform the former into the latter.¹²²

So too, the creative liturgists who wrote these Seders have a myth to explain the world that they see, the world they wish and the way to make this change. As we see by the many examples cited in the creative Seders, the world depicted is still filled with oppression and injustice (as was the case in Egypt). We strive for an age when all people--Jews and non-Jews--

¹²¹ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 97.

¹²² *Ibid*, 123.

can live in emotional, spiritual and physical freedom (a redemption like the ancient Israelites experienced). The way to get there is "for each person to see him or herself as if he or she had left Egypt" and for this feeling to operate as a mandate to get involved and make a difference. As God redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, so too we can bring redemption to our world. The Exodus is described in such a way as to make this parallel apparent.

It is important to consider the degree to which this myth is similar to that depicted in *A Passover Haggadah*, which was the standard Reform text when most of these Haggadahs were written. *A Passover Haggadah* depicts a historical cycle of oppression and rebirth. (This view of history is found in the creative High Holiday services as well.) History is filled with hope, but at times suffering and inhumanity will be clearly evident, in distinction from the earlier myth of continual progress and improvement. Hitler is the Pharaoh of our age, representing the ultimate in suffering. (The many texts related to the Holocaust help to fashion this parallel.) The State of Israel is an indication of the possibility of an ultimate redemption, especially as it is presented in the optional fifth cup.¹²³

There are several important similarities and differences between *A Passover Haggadah* and the creative Haggadahs. The general view of history as a cycle of suffering and rebirth is common to both, yet while the Holocaust and State of Israel are the primary indications of persecution and triumph in *A Passover Haggadah*, the creative Seders have a broader vision. The role of the Holocaust is certainly pronounced in the creative Seders.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 139-143 for a much fuller discussion of *A Passover Haggadah* than is given in this brief summary.

However, as was indicated in discussing the *magid* (page 207), other concerns of the modern age are to be found in these Seders that are not found in *A Passover Haggadah*. The creative Seders are thus more deeply rooted in today's society, while *A Passover Haggadah* is more general in its orientation and focuses on specific events that are seen to possess major theological significance.¹²⁴ The creative Seders reflect a greater overall concern with our world today. While the Holocaust is the basis for a part of that concern, even a large part, there are other instances of injustice that are of concern to the creative liturgist. These concerns play a larger role in creative Seders than they do in *A Passover Haggadah*. This distinction between the use of specific themes clearly drawn from today's world and a focus on themes seen as possessing broader significance was also found when comparing creative High Holiday services to *GOR*. A similar distinction of emphasis can be found when one considers the question of redemption in the Haggadahs.

The State of Israel is present in creative services, but again it is found to a lesser extent than in *A Passover Haggadah* where it is a central focus. I would be hesitant to say that in the creative Haggadahs Israel is the primary indication of redemption, although for some liturgists it is certainly evidence of the possibility of redemption in our time, as was indicated. The primary indication of the possibility of redemption in the creative services is power and ability of the individual. While "the new history of [*A Passover Haggadah*] is made of Auschwitz, Entebbe, the Maccabees and Masada; of Eleazer ben Yair, Anne Frank, even Theodor Herzl,

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 137.

and of holocaust writers"¹²⁵ one would have to add the deeds and actions of ordinary individuals to the list in order for this statement to be true for creative Seders. Redemption is most assured by the potential inherent in every person and thus he or she is a key player in the future depicted by the Seders.

Ultimately, this sacred myth is one that we have seen before, in the creative High Holiday liturgy. Here however, it is presented in a more hopeful and positive light. The High Holiday liturgy focuses on our weakness and sin, emphasizing that in spite of this, we can use our human potential to make the world better. Passover focuses on victory, redemption and triumph. The nature of the holiday thus wholly supports the idea that there is hope and potential for the future. In spite of mentioning the Holocaust and other examples of injustice in the world, the services are quite upbeat and hopeful in nature, focusing less on the fact that we have simply survived, and more on the quality of this survival. The events and people of our time are incorporated into the sacred myth in such a way that they hold out the possibility for future betterment and restoration of a troubled world.

Summary of Pilgrimage Festivals

The category of "festivals" in the traditional sense of the word has little applicability to the creative liturgy. (One wonders whether it has significance for a majority of Reform Jews.) *GOP* does, however, include a festival service, with varying introductory readings comprising the main difference from festival to festival. Services completely centered on and

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 143.

Intertwined with the themes of each holiday are not part of the standard Reform liturgy. In the creative liturgies, on the other hand, each festival is a wholly separate holiday with a separate orientation and type of service. There appears to be little creative liturgy for Shavuot separate from Confirmation. Sukkot seems to be mostly family oriented with emphasis placed on the ideas and themes of the holiday rather than on the traditional festival liturgical texts. The degree of direct involvement by the worshipper with the symbols and rituals of Sukkot is unclear. Pesach is the festival of major importance for adults and children, and greatly stands out from the other two. In spite of the fact that the creative festival services are not really related to each other liturgically (contrary to the traditional and Reform liturgical structure) there is a similarity between the festivals that emerges from an examination of the creative services. They all emphasize, at some level, the way that we interact with the world, and the need to do our part to make the world more complete. Torah is valued because it gives us the guidelines needed to act in this world in a fair and just way. Our gratitude for the bounty of the harvest is more significant when we share it with others, thus eradicating hunger and want. Similarly, gratitude for our redemption obligates us to work for the redemption of all. Thus it would seem that the festivals, rooted in past experience, are interpreted by creative liturgists in such a way that they become the basis for present action that will lead to a more just and compassionate future.

Minor Holidays

Purim

I have obtained only thirteen services related to Purim, five of which are dated. They range from services for Shabbat Zachor (which are like Purim services except without the megillah reading), to a havdalah service for the start of Purim, to complete Purim services including the text of the megillah reading. Several seem to be family services, although they are not labeled as such, and a couple are also Shabbat services. The musical selections are mostly modern, child-oriented songs such as "Once there was a wicked, wicked man," "Chag Purim" and "Ani Purim." There are no common English sources; in fact, there is very little outside source material drawn upon. Most of the services appear to be written by rabbis, with traditional liturgical texts in Hebrew and English taken from prayerbooks. In terms of traditional liturgical texts appropriate to Purim, *al hanisim* appears in five of the services, as it does in traditional Purim services. Several services also contain the selections read from the megillah. Usually the actual amount of text read is minimal; the narrative is told through a story or through readings in the liturgy rather than by the actual reading of the megillah. In telling the story, the values and lessons of Purim are emphasized.

Before looking at the specific themes of the services, it should be pointed out that the actual creation of a specific service for Purim is in and of itself an innovation. Traditionally Purim is celebrated by adding *al hanisim* to a standard service; *GOP* also provides an extra reading that will

be discussed later.¹²⁶ Creative Purim services are a completely new type of liturgy and reflect an attempt to integrate the story of Purim into the traditional liturgy--with the former usually overshadowing the latter. Interestingly, while *GOP* has no special Purim service, *GAJ* does. However, the service in *Gates of Joy* is quite different from the creative services. It is much more God-centered, and there is much less reference to the actual story in the course of the service (or the references are more subtle as in the readings before and after the *geulah*¹²⁷). The creative services blend basic worship and references to the lessons of Purim together, sometimes viewing elements of worship through the filter of the Purim story. The specific themes of Purim are a much more dominant part of the creative services than of the standard liturgy.

The most central theme of Purim services is the theme of survival. The events that Purim celebrates provide a quintessential example of the ability of Jews to survive against overwhelming odds, as expressed in this service in preparation for Purim:

The story of Purim is in part a story of Jewish survival. Throughout history people of many lands have found reason to persecute and try to exterminate the Jews. The will of our People to survive has always been strong, and combined with our faith in God we have endured the attacks and have become even stronger in our determination to continue our existence. We are reminded of times past by our grandparents who endured World Wars and realize that the continued existence of the State of Israel and Judaism worldwide is constantly threatened. . . . Let us remember the holiday of Purim as a time of sharing and giving to commemorate our survival.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Prayer*, 403.

¹²⁷ Rabbi Chaim Stern, *GAJ*, 91-93.

¹²⁸ Rabbi Elliot Holin, "A Creative Worship Service in Preparation for Purim" (creative service, Temple Adat Elohim, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1973), 2.

Survival in and of itself is a reason to be happy and rejoice:

We make our happy noise because we are alive, because in the long tale of our people not one Haman has risen to destroy us, but one after another. And yet, because we live, our cup of joy overflows. . . . Our people Israel lives! 129

This service goes on, however, to give the reason and purpose of our survival:

We have lived because we have been the choosing people . . . the people who promised to do our very best to bring love and justice into our lives and into the world. . . . We have lived because the light of learning has never gone out. . . . We have lived in our resolve to struggle against oppression. . . . We have lived because in every generation we have continued to praise God...because we refused to bow down to the false gods of selfishness and greed, of convenience and cruelty. 130

In indicating that we have survived due to certain characteristics and in order to further certain goals, another central theme of Purim is highlighted: our obligations to others and the possibility of achieving a better world. Our suffering and survival increases our empathy for others and gives us the mandate to reach out to them.

Is it right to come here seeking Purim, to seek mirth when men are dying, sweet foods when people starve, costumed gaiety when beggars go about their sooty streets in rags? . . . We must laugh not to drown out the cries of suffering, but to remind us that there is another song, that suffering is not all we can expect. . . . We must rejoice . . . that each of us may form a vision of the world we want and strive to see what each of may do to in that world. . . . Purim and Shabbat, mirth and joy and satisfaction, costume us in the clothing of life we want all

129 Rabbi Chaim Stern, in Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Purim Family Service" (creative service, Beth David Reform Congregation, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 1.

130 *Ibid.* 1-2.

people to live, that for a moment we might experience what that life might be. . . .¹³¹

The story of a particular deliverance of a specific people is thus cause not only to celebrate that particular and personal deliverance, but to extend respect and aid to other people. "Purim stands as a reminder that every individual, regardless of race or religion, has the right to live free of oppression and persecution."¹³²

This theme of survival and triumph is the central theme of *al hanisim*, which is of course, a traditional liturgical text for this holiday. *Al hanisim*, however, emphasizes that we have survived and triumphed due to God's power--a theme which is not a central focus of these readings. In addition to *al hanisim*, *GOP* has a special reading for Purim. This reading connects Purim to our survival throughout history: "We come before You, O God, with words of praise and thanksgiving for the care and guidance under which Your people Israel has ever lived. . . ." ¹³³ *GOP* speaks not so much about our specific obligations to others, but of our hope and faith in a better age when persecution and tyranny will exist no more. While expressed in more universal and loftier language, this basic theme is not so very different from the creative services. The main difference is that this theme is part of one reading and not of an entire service. Furthermore, as in *al hanisim*, God is seen as playing a role in our survival. The Divine is emphasized much less in the creative services, with survival and triumph having a mostly human emphasis.

¹³¹ Anonymous, "Shabbat Zachor" (creative service, n.p., 1983), 5.

¹³² Rabbi Steve Kaplan, "Purim Service" (creative service, Temple Beth Torah, Fremont, CA, n.d.), 1.

¹³³ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *GOP*, 403.

While the themes of survival and our obligation to others dominate these services, they are not overly somber and serious. In general, the importance of laughter and joy is celebrated, although only one service is at all silly or funny, in the tradition of Purim.¹³⁴ Interestingly, this same service, asking what the Jews of Shushan had done to deserve such punishment, points to assimilation:

... [P]arents were forgetting their Hebrew and naming their children with names like Harvey (and) Mark instead of good kosher names like Abraham (and) Ezekiel. . . . Furthermore they had forgotten Shabbat, Tzedakah and the study of Torah.¹³⁵

In the course of fun and silliness, the rabbi does not fail to make a few pointed comments to his congregants based upon the Purim narrative!

The sacred myth depicted in these services is similar in certain respects to the sacred myth of Shabbat and High Holiday services, in that history is seen as providing a testimony to our ability to survive. Like other historical events, Purim shows our ability to rise again following suffering and oppression. In a certain sense, however, the Purim story has not wholly obtained the level of sacred myth. Two services stress that Purim was probably not a true historical event, but was instead a "popular story [that the Jews of Persia] invested with their own hopes and aspirations of triumph and freedom. What they did not have in reality they gained in fiction."¹³⁶ Even a family service makes the following observation:

For the people the month of Adar did bring
the message that we would soon have spring.
With great joy the people of Persia did greet

¹³⁴ Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "A Midrash Reading for Purim" (creative service, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, n.d.).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 8.

¹³⁶ Holin, "A Creative Service in Preparation for Purim," 1.

the warmth of spring and its refreshing treat. . . .
 The cold chill of winter is found in those who hate,
 whose dislike of the different just will not abate. . . .
 Our rabbis and people knew this with hearts broken and sore
 and so in spring's victory over winter they saw so much more.
 The winter winds are Haman, who rises in every age,
 The springtime warmth is a hero or sage.
 An Esther and a Mordecai who will stand up and fight,
 against the bigot Haman, overthrow darkness and bring on the
 light. 137

This need to emphasize the "true" history is not found with any of the other holidays. For example, the veracity of the plagues or the parting of the sea is simply not dealt with. There is for some a dichotomy between history and ritual associated with Purim that is not found with any of the other holidays. While the Purim story can be accepted as a basis for action, some liturgists emphasize that this is so in spite of its non-historical basis. Thus its significance as a sacred myth would seem to be of a lesser stature than holiday such as Pesach which are accepted in a more unqualified fashion.

One way in which the story does become a sacred myth is through those individuals who are its heroes. Mordecai and Esther become timeless individuals, not people of a certain age and historical situation:

No generation has been without its Hamans. But because each generation has also had its Mordecais and Esthers, we have survived. Not alone in the time commemorated on Purim, but in every period of our past, there have been Jewish leaders who loved their people with the love of Mordecai and who helped them with the courage of Esther... 138

137 Rabbi Richard Zions, "A Family Service for the Sabbath Celebrating Purim" (n.p., 1978), 2-3.

138 Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Purim Family Worship" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, n.d.), 6.

Furthermore, we are equated in strength of character and ability to Mordecai and Esther. In telling the Purim story, Esther and Mordecai are portrayed as role models for us today. (This is true in the *GOP* reading as well.) The sacred myth establishes the heroes of the past as heroes today, who inspire us as we remember their deeds.

Inspire us like Mordecai of old, to be unswerving in our devotion to Thee. Like Esther, may we ever be eager to serve our people, even at the peril of our lives. Cause us to know as Mordecai knew, that whether we be born to high or low estate, we share alike our people's lot. ¹³⁹

As a result, our ability to make a difference in the world, to fight the evils that exist, is strengthened, for we are like our ancestors who fought for justice:

What would we do without brave men and women like Mordecai and Esther? Who would help God make the world better? O God, we often feel small and powerless and are afraid to undertake tasks that look big. Make us understand that with Thy help we can do more than we think we can. ¹⁴⁰

Mordecai and Esther are sometimes even included in the *amidah*, elevating them in importance to the patriarchs and matriarchs.¹⁴¹

Another key way in which Mordecai and Esther serve as role models is in their devotion to God. Despite the fact that God is not mentioned in the *megilah*, there is a frequent mention of the Divine in these Purim services. It is belief in God that motivated Esther and Mordecai who are to be praised for their faith. They are even depicted as saying the same words that we say in prayer:

¹³⁹ Rabbi Sidney Steiman, "Untitled" (Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis, IN, 1969), 7.

¹⁴⁰ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Purim Family Service," 10.

¹⁴¹ Anonymous, "Shabbat Zachor," 6.

Now it was evening and--as was their custom--Mordecai and Esther paused for a moment of reflection. The God of Israel had been good to them, and they were free in their new land. . . . They thanked God for His love and, declaring His unity, they found their own unity as a people, a people far from their land and home (recitation of the *shema*). 142

The service quoted above is used by several synagogues. In the Introduction, Rabbi Stephen E. Weisberg states quite directly that this integration of the Purim story with the liturgy is designed to give the liturgy itself a new meaning.

I have attempted--firstly--to tell the story without resorting to neatly contrived plots and sub-plots. . . . More important than fidelity to the original, however, a yearly event like Purim needs new and fresh refurbishments. . . . I have made an effort to integrate the traditional staples of the service with the Purim tale itself, so that they acquire new meaning. Liturgy need not be a thing belonging to the past. It can be integral with the present; the current. And worship, then, gains as a result. . . . 143

Yet not only does the Purim story provide a new view of the liturgy, but the reverse is also true. Integrating the narrative into the liturgy gives the Purim story a new emphasis. Mordecai and Esther are depicted as faithful believers in God, as we try to be. God in these services is thus mostly described as the object of Mordecai and Esther's belief, what motivated them to act.

The more traditional image of God as saving power is also present in these services, but to a lesser extent, as was seen above in the discussion of survival. Fields continually refers to "the Hidden One" who "works in

142 Anonymous, "A Prelude to Purim" (creative service, Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA, n.d.), 3.

143 Rabbi Stephen E. Weisberg, "A Creative Service for the Eve of Purim" (creative service, Temple Beth-El & Center, San Pedro, CA, n.d.), 2.

mysterious ways to save Jews."¹⁴⁴ There are also readings such as this one found before the *michamocha*:

God redeems us from the power of despots;
 God delivers us from the fist of tyrants.
 God avenges oppression;
 God requites the mortal enemy.
 Pharaoh came to know the strong hand of God,
 and every Haman, God's outstretched arm. ¹⁴⁵

This image of a saving God is not dominant, but it is present, as in the traditional liturgy. What is completely absent is the Immanent God imagery so common in Shabbat and even High Holiday liturgy. God is transcendent savior (as in the Haggadahs) or the ruler to whom Mordecai and Esther dedicated their efforts. God is not described as present in the strength we derive from being together, or present in the divine-human partnership that obligates us to fight oppression. This was typical of the Shabbat creative liturgy and would certainly fit here, but it is not present. Moreover, God appears to be more removed from the worshipper than in previous services, perhaps because of the focus placed on Esther and Mordecai's experience of God, rather than the worshippers' own experience. Bringing the liturgical texts and the Purim narrative together thus influences both the way that the story and its central characters are viewed and the image of God that is portrayed, for each is depicted and interpreted in light of the other.

Tu Bi-Shevat

There was no official Reform text for Tu Bi-Shevat observance during the time that these Seders were written, although the CCAR has just

¹⁴⁴ Rabbi Harvey Fields, "A Midrash Reading for Purim," 12.

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Purim" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 5.

published a Tu Bi-Shevat seder. This may well be in response to the increased popularity of Tu Bi-Shevat in recent years. I have looked at twelve Tu Bi-Shevat services, only three of which are dated. Eight are Seders; five are Shabbat services. The music in the services is varied. It includes songs in both Hebrew and English, modern American songs, and Israeli songs. Some of the most frequently used songs are: "Atzey Zeitim Omdim," "Eretz Zavot Chalav," "Eytz Chaim," "The Almond Trees are Growing" and "Dreamer."

One of the most interesting things about these services is the plentiful use of biblical text. Some of the texts that are commonly used relate to our need to take care of the earth, such as Leviticus 19: 23 and Deuteronomy 19: 20ff. Others texts, such as Song of Songs 2:11-12 or Psalm 1, are frequently used because of the images that they evoke. In addition, there are several popular texts that have a messianic connotation, referring to a better age and the promise of restoration and peace using imagery related to trees or nature. Amos 9:14ff, Micah 4: 3-4, and Isaiah 65: 21-25 are the most common examples of this. Without overemphasizing the significance of the use of these particular texts, it would be fair to suggest that they connect Tu Bi-Shevat to a certain hope for the future, giving the holiday both a quasi-historical and perhaps an almost redemptive connection. This will be dealt with further in summarizing Tu Bi-Shevat as a whole.

There is also a common body of non-biblical material that is drawn upon. Mostly Jewish sources are utilized, although occasionally American poets are quoted as well. One common source is a version of the *unetaneh tokef* for trees that is quoted:

On Tu B'shvat the fate of all trees is decided for the coming year.

Which shall flourish and grow with proper rainfall and which shall wither and shrink from drought?

Which shall bend without breaking before the storms and which shall be overturned by strong winds?

Which shall remain healthy and which shall suffer from diseases and harmful insects? ¹⁴⁶

A prayer by Nahman of Bratzlav is often quoted in services, heightening the worshiper's awareness and sensitivity to the beauty of nature and the relationship between the world and God:

Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone; may it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grass, among all growing things and there be alone, to judge myself, to talk with the One that I belong to. May I express there everything in my heart, and may all the foliage of the field awake at my coming, to send the power of their life into the words of my prayer, so that my prayer and speech are made whole.

The custom of planting a cedar tree at the birth of a boy and a cypress tree for a girl and using their branches for a chupah is often quoted as is a story of a man who blesses a tree asking that "all of your saplings be like you." Two other frequently used sources are Talmudic. One is a story from Ta'anit 23 of a man who plants a carob tree not for his own enjoyment but for his children, thus teaching Choni the Circle Maker a valuable lesson; ¹⁴⁷ the other is from Avot de Rabbi Natan, chapter 31: "If a sapling were in your hand and you were told that the Messiah had come, first plant the sapling, then go out to meet the Messiah."¹⁴⁸ A final source that is often quoted is a

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, in Rabbi Fred Davidow, "Tu Bi'Shevat Seder" (creative service, Congregation B'nai Israel, Riverdale, Ga, 1979), 1.

¹⁴⁷ The previous three sources are found in in many services. For example see, Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Seder for Tu Bi'Shevat" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1971).

¹⁴⁸ Anonymous, "A Seder for Tu Bi'Shevat" (creative service, n.p., n.d.).

midrash on a verse in Isaiah. The midrash compares Israel to the sycamore: "Even after it is chopped down and its stump is covered with sand for a long time, the sycamore will begin to grow again."¹⁴⁹ Like many of the Biblical texts, most of these sources use the themes of Tu Bi-Shevat to emphasize taking care of the earth, stressing in particular the relationship between the earth that we live on and the future generations.

The structure of the Seders is quite flexible. Most have the eating of different fruits and the drinking of four cups of wine ranging from all white to all red, but there is no uniform symbolism or meaning associated with the wine or fruit. Maller uses the wine to point to the different types of people in the world:

There are many kinds of wine. The world would be the poorer if there was only one variety. Strange as it seems there are people who think the world would be a better place if everyone was the same. One religion, one political system, one culture, one world is what they seek. Let them learn from wine.¹⁵⁰

Davidow associates each cup with the progression from Winter to Spring in Israel, and dedicates each cup to a certain theme: rebuilding the land, taking care of the land, planting for the future, and giving thanks for the coming harvest. The fruit that is eaten with each cup has no particular significance, however.¹⁵¹ In a Shabbat service that involves the eating of fruit one sees yet another variation. Each fruit is compared to a person or a characteristic:

We eat the nut as a reminder that within each shell, or husk, there is something good. . . . Let us find the good within us. . . .

¹⁴⁹ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "A Tu B'Shevat--Shabbat Family Service" (creative service, Beth David Reform Congregation, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 4.

¹⁵⁰ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Seder for Tu B'Shvat Shabbat," 8.

¹⁵¹ Rabbi Fred Davidow, "Tu Bi'Shevat Seder," 4-9.

We eat the date as a reminder of the date--palm that is able to bend with the wind without breaking. . . . May we know when to accept what cannot be changed and when to stand firm and reach toward the sky. We eat the carob in remembrance of an ancient rabbi who fled from the Romans and lived on carobs until the oppression ceased. While eating this dark fruit, Shimon bar Yohai believed he was coming closer to God who would deliver him from suffering. May we find the Power that will lead our spirits from darkness to light. ¹⁵²

A final example of the diversity of symbolism is derived from a Seder that entails the drinking of fruit juice appropriate to each season: orange juice for the Spring, prune juice for Summer, apple juice for Fall, and red wine for Winter. ¹⁵³

Some of the Seders also understand their role as Seders quite literally. Several include the asking of four questions:

On all other days we eat many kinds of foods, why on this day do we eat fruits and foods connected to Israel?

On all other days we take trees for granted, why on this day do we have a festival just for them?

On all other day we eat fruit in any order, why on this day do we eat fruits in a special order?

On all other days we here in the United States are deep into the middle of winter where nothing is growing, why on this day are we celebrating the coming of spring and the budding of the fruit trees? ¹⁵⁴

Another service revolves around a meal, ending with the words "leshanah haba'ah beyirushalayim" and including the search for the hidden walnut. ¹⁵⁵

There is thus obviously tremendous flexibility in the structure and content of the Seders. As in the case of Selichot (page 132-33), the fact that Tu Bi-

¹⁵² Rabbi Henry Cohen, "A Tu B'Shevat--Shabbat Family Service," 6.

¹⁵³ Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz, "Seder for Tu B'Shevat" (creative service, Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK, n.d.).

¹⁵⁴ Cherie Koller-Fox and Ruth Gruber, "Tu B'Shvat" (creative service, Temple Israel, Westport, CT, n.d.), 9.

¹⁵⁵ Anonymous, "Seder for Tu'Bishevat," 8.

Shevat is a new celebration for many synagogues gives the liturgists tremendous freedom. This freedom is enhanced by the lack of any set ritual published by the Reform movement to which a synagogue might feel bound. It will be interesting to see if and how creative Tu Bi-Shevat Seders change now that an official text has been published.

A number of the important themes of Tu Bi-Shevat have already been pointed out. Our responsibility to take care of the earth not only for ourselves but for the future is greatly stressed. The common biblical and non-biblical texts provide ample evidence of this theme. Given the increased focus on the environment and the need to protect our natural resources and the beauty of the land, this theme is likely to grow in importance and may result in an even greater attraction to the celebration of Tu Bi-Shevat. Another common theme that has not yet been addressed is the importance of the Land of Israel. Many Seders relate Tu Bi-Shevat to our historical longing for the land and the need to develop the land through organizations such as the Jewish National Fund. In Davidow's service, the white wine stands for rebuilding the land. He says:

White also reminds us that the Land of Israel looked white--because of bare mountainsides and sandy wastelands--before Jewish resettlement. Planting millions of trees provided by the Jewish National fund, the Israelites--with the help of Jews from all over the world--have made the mountains and fields green again. ¹⁵⁶

Maller gives a brief history of JNF in his service and also connects Tu Bi-Shevat to the historic longing of our people for the Land of Israel, in another frequently used passage:

¹⁵⁶ Rabbi Fred Davidow, "Tu Bi'Shevat Seder," 5.

On this holiday our ancestors looking through their frosty window panes at the snow piled high outside, gazed with their inner eyes upon a brighter scene in the Land of Israel. . . . And as they welcomed the advent of Spring in the land of their ancestors, the Jews also renewed the timeless bonds that linked them with the Holyland throughout the centuries of their exile. Then 400 years ago the Kabbalists settled in Israel, in Safed, and reformed the holiday of Tu B'Shvat. ¹⁵⁷

Another service point emphasizes our connection to the land in reference to both ancient and modern Israel:

In front of us are two fruits which stand for the ancient and the modern. Almond trees graced the hills of Israel since the days of Moses, Aaron and Joshua. The deep roots of the almond tree remind us of our own firm attachment to the land of our ancestors. Oranges are the fruit of modern Israel. . . . As the color of oranges attracts everyone's attention, so Israel's achievements draw forth our love and pride. Orange and almonds alike have strong outer protection, thick skin and hard shell. While we eat these fruits, let us remember that Jews around the world are Israel's protection. ¹⁵⁸

One service revolves almost completely around the Land of Israel, and is actually very Zionist in nature, beginning with this reading:

We thank thee, O Lord, for letting us share in the redemption of the land of our people. As we celebrate the festival of Tu B'shvat, we give thanks that it was granted us to help restore the fruitfulness of the Holy Land. Give us the strength, O Lord, to develop the resources of the State of Israel, so that even greater numbers of Thy dispersed children may return to the land of their fathers. We ask Thy blessing as we rededicate ourselves to fulfill the miracle of Zion--the redemption of Am Yisrael v'Eretz Yisrael. ¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Seder for Tu B'Shvat Shabbat," 4-5.

¹⁵⁸ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "A Tu B'shevat Seder" (creative service, Temple Albert, Albuquerque, NM; n.d.), 4.

¹⁵⁹ Anonymous, "A Seder for Tu B'Shvat," 1.

Tu Bi-Shevat thus becomes a time to emphasize the centrality of the Land of Israel, and our role in its protection and development. Caring not only for the earth in general, but for Israel in particular is a dominant theme of these services. The special beauty and importance of the Land of Israel is part of the general mood of thanksgiving and appreciation for the world that dominates the Tu Bi-Shevat Seders and services.

It is in connection to the themes of gratitude and thanksgiving that God is mentioned in association with Tu Bi-Shevat. While the services do not overwhelmingly focus on the Divine, there is a general recognition that God is the Creator of the world, and that the world has been given to God by humanity to preserve and tend. Thanks and praise are thus to be given to God the Creator for the beautiful world that we live in. God is also present in these services through the use of biblical text. Our responsibility to care for the world is mandated by God and Torah. It is thus elevated beyond a social responsibility to a religious obligation. Furthermore, our hopes for the future of our world and the land are bound up in God's promises for future peace and restoration, as indicated by texts such as Amos 9:14-15.

In this sense Tu Bi-Shevat has a sacred myth of its own, even though it is not grounded in a particular historical event. The texts chosen for inclusion create a very specific relationship--both past and present--to the Land of Israel. Through the selection of biblical texts, our relationship to the earth and the Land of Israel is rooted in the past. We define ourselves--dating back to earliest times--as a people with a certain relationship to the earth. Prophetic texts (and stories such as the story of Choni the Circle Maker) are selected to direct the worshipper's attention toward the future and the possibility of redemption. The emphasis on the development of the State of Israel indicates that rebirth can indeed occur for it has begun to

occur in our own day. In a narrow view, this rebirth refers only to the physical land. Combined with the prophetic texts, however, it is possible to see a redemptive, almost messianic theme in these services. God promised restoration and it has come to pass in the Land of Israel. Tu Bi-Shevat thus reminds us of the possibility of redemption, if we but live up to our obligation. This importance of this redemptive theme should not be pushed too far, but I believe that it is present. Tu Bi-Shevat proclaims that the promise of the past can be realized in the future if we live up to our responsibilities toward the earth. The ritual of the service or Seder places the worshipper on a continuum of growth and change rooted in the past and headed toward fulfillment in the future.

Hanukah

The 33 Hanukah services that I examined were primarily services conducted in the synagogue, largely on Shabbat. It is worth noting, however, that many rabbis create home services for their congregants' use consisting of brief readings and the Hanukah blessings. The following chart indicates the number of services in each five-year period. About ten of the services are clearly indicated as family services, although as with Purim I would imagine that many others were also intended to be family worship experiences.

HANUKAH SERVICES				
1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
0	6	4	5	18

The music utilized in these services is standard Hanukah music: "Rock of Ages," "Who Can Retell," "O Chanukah" and "Sivivon." The songs are sung in both Hebrew and English. There is very little use of the traditional liturgical texts relevant to Hanukah. A few services contain *haneirot halalu* and *al hanisim* (fewer include this than was the case in Purim services.) One service contains a brief *hallel*. There are also few common English texts. As was the case with Purim, few outside sources are used at all. Also similarly to Purim, the themes of the creative services generally resemble those found in *UPB*, *GOP* and *GAJ*, although there are significant differences as well between the Reform prayerbooks and the creative services. There is no separate service in either *UPB* or *GOP*, yet the readings provided for inclusion are thematically similar to those found in the creative services. One characteristic of the creative liturgy movement is the development of special services that emphasize the theme of the holiday throughout the service, while the official prayerbooks do not do this (see page 237). Thus, for example, a Hanukah service from *GOP* would have less of a Hanukah feel to it than the creative services for Hanukah. *GAJ* is more similar to the creative liturgies because it is a complete service dedicated to Hanukah. Hanukah is woven into the service somewhat more than seems to be the case with the Purim service in *GAJ*, but less than is true of the creative services.

The meaning of Hanukah itself is the significant theme of these services, even when they occur on Shabbat. For example, the lighting of the menorah is an important part of many of the Hanukah services. It is quite common to have each light stand for something in particular. Although there is a fair amount of variety, the themes of faith, hope and courage are often represented. One service contains a series of poems in which each candle

"shines" for something different: Israel's faith in God, the people Israel, Israel's daily work, Israel's joyful rest, love of learning, Israel's decision to reject conformity, Israel's bravery (mentioning Moshe Dayan in particular) and Israel's hope for the messianic era.¹⁶⁰ Another service has the candles representing Torah, the people Israel, the New Israel, synagogue, prayer and communion with God, knowledge, charity and the unity of humanity.¹⁶¹ A final example is found in a service which emphasizes the need to carve out light and happiness in a dark world. The candles stand for: courage beyond reason, truth, the chain of tradition, the pride of the Jew to act and, if need be, suffer alone, hope, peace, and a new and just time for humanity.¹⁶² The themes of Hanukah, mostly focusing on courage, the nature of the Jewish people, improvement of the world and hope for the future are signified by each candle. Not infrequently the wording of the candle lighting involves invoking a certain hope about our own behavior in relationship to the idea or quality that is being mentioned. In one interesting candle lighting service, certain individuals represent each candle, and serve as role models for the qualities that we should all strive to obtain: Judah Maccabee, Theodor Herzl, Stephen S. Wise, Hannah Senesch, the American Indian, Soviet dissidents, the six million who perished in the Holocaust.¹⁶³ All of these people have some relationship to the themes of liberty and courage to withstand oppression.

¹⁶⁰ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Children's Chanukah Service" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1971), 3.

¹⁶¹ Rabbi Saul B. Appelbaum, "Chanukah Candle--Lighting Service" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, Rockford, IL, n.d.).

¹⁶² Rabbi Michael P. Sternfield, "A Hanukah Service of Lights" (creative service, Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA, n.d.).

¹⁶³ Rabbi Marc Raphael, "A Hanukah for our Times" (creative service, n.p., n.d.).

These ideas, and the whole subject of freedom and justice, are important themes that run through the Hanukkah services, often connected to the imagery of light. "Just as the Hanukkah candles bring light to darkness and warmth to cold, so do they call us to bring happiness and gladness into our lives and the lives of others."¹⁶⁴ Another common reading calls upon God to "fill our hearts with the courage and faith of the Maccabees that we may truly carry forward the light which they kindled, the light of truth and justice, the light of liberty and peace."¹⁶⁵ While it is more common to speak in general terms of bringing peace and justice to the world, a number of services do mention a specific obligation: aiding oppressed Jewry:

The light which we refer to during Chanukah is the light of freedom: that freedom which we in the United States are so fortunate to have. At this time of the year, as we light the Hanukkah, let us meditate for a moment to remember our brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union who are unable to see the light of Chanukah as a symbol of deliverance. They are unable to declare God's saving might to the world by openly displaying their lights in their windows. Let us rededicate ourselves to the religious and moral principles of Judaism which include remembering those who are unable to light the light of freedom.¹⁶⁶

The message and imagery of Hanukah is also used to emphasize our obligations toward Syrian Jews and Ethiopian Jews.¹⁶⁷ In these readings

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous, "A Family Sabbath Service" (creative service, The Temple, Atlanta, GA, 1974), 3.

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous, "Chanukah Worship Service" (creative service, Central Synagogue of Nassau County, New York, NY, n.d.), 6.

¹⁶⁶ Anonymous, "Reflections of Light Within" (creative service, Temple Adat Elohim, Thousand Oaks, CA, 1982), 13.

¹⁶⁷ Rabbi Leonard Winograd, "The Cruse or the Curse" (creative service, Temple B'nai Israel, McKeesport, PA, 1974) refers to Syrian Jews; Anonymous, "The Most Forgotten Jews" (creative service, Temple Beth-El, Niagara Falls, NY, 1982) centers on Ethiopian Jews; Rabbi Sally Priesand, "Shabbat Service" (Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, New York, NY, n.d.), 5, mentions Jews in Arab lands and the State of Israel.

relating to justice and the longing for peace, as well as in the candle lighting ceremonies, one can see a certain hope and belief about the future. With dedication, and inspired by the Maccabees, we can make the world better and bring about a time of peace and harmony.

Yet the emphasis is not only on humanity. God is also a dominant theme in these services. Often a candle is dedicated to God's saving power, and to an even greater extent, the continual faith of our people in God. The emphasis is largely on the fact that our people's faith in God has never weakened. The Maccabees fought for their belief in God as Jews always have. Although not mentioned directly, the referent of the following reading is clearly the Maccabees:

Let us now proclaim the watchword of our faith. It is heard round the world. In times of triumph, in days of joy and in every crisis of life, in the presence of death, we affirm our faithfulness to the one and only God: We will try to serve the Highest; we will try not to worship idols. By this we endure the fury of the centuries. ¹⁶⁸

Much as was the case in Purim service, there is an attempt in Hanukah services to relate our deeds and faith in God to the actions of our heroes, the Maccabees. "They [the Maccabees] went to other cities pulling down the king's idols, and testifying to their loyalty to the God of Israel even as we do now as we rise to recite the Sh'ma."¹⁶⁹ Also as in the Purim services, there is language related to God saving us from destruction, but it seems even more prevalent in the Hanukah services. "Our God has given us the victory! He has restored His holy Temple to those that trust in Him! Once

¹⁶⁸ Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, "Chanukah Service" (creative service, North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL, n.d.), 9.

¹⁶⁹ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Children's Chanukah Service," 1.

more we are gathered in his Temple to sing His praise."¹⁷⁰ Another example of this trust in God's protection is seen in part of this translation to the *maariv aravim*: "We have known many a black night but always you preserve us to see another dawn."¹⁷¹ In the Hanukah services, God is viewed as central to our salvation.

This is interesting to note and somewhat surprising because in the creative Purim services God is de-emphasized as a saving force. This set them apart from *GOP*, as was discussed (see page 239). It is unclear why God is more dominant in the Hanukah services. Perhaps it merely appears that way because the sampling of Hanukah services is three times as large. Or, perhaps it reflects the fact that God is not part of the *megillah* reading while Hanukah has always had a connection to the Divine in the rabbinic tradition. It does seem in general (judging by the quantity of material if nothing else) that the symbolism and message of Hanukah is more significant than is the case with Purim. This too may account for greater emphasis on God as Redeemer. It is difficult, however, to ascertain the reasons for this difference with certainty. Given a degree of similarity between Hanukah and Purim in terms of emphasizing our obligation to others and the need to improve the world, the difference in the portrayal of God is somewhat surprising. There are, of course, important similarities between Hanukah and Purim creative services. The Maccabees, like Mordecai and Esther, had faith in God, and loyalty to Judaism, a faith and loyalty which

¹⁷⁰ Anonymous, "Hanukah Family Service" (creative service, Rodef Shalom Congregation, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.), 5.

¹⁷¹ Rabbi Paul Citrin, "Chanukah Family Worship" (creative service, Congregation Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1980), 4.

we are to emulate. This is a key themes of the Hanukah creative services, as it is of the Purim services.

The depiction of Maccabees as having a faith in the one God and Judaism similar to our own raises the whole question of the nature of the sacred myth that is depicted. As was seen above the Maccabees are role models for the freedom and justice that we are supposed to bring to the world. A reading from *UPB* that several services utilize further emphasizes this:

Grant, O God, that the heroic example of the martyrs of old may ever inspire us with renewed devotion to our great heritage. . . . With loyalty and zeal like that of the Maccabees may we overcome the dark forces of tyranny, prejudice and hatred and spread the light of liberty, brotherhood, and peace among all. 172

The impetus behind the Maccabean revolt and the victory of the Maccabees against overwhelming odds are thus the elements of the narrative selected for inclusion in the liturgical history. They form the heart of the sacred myth of Hanukah. It is important to note that specific events are deliberately not included. The text of the story is often taken from *UPB* (a similar version is found in *GOP*) and in that text the miracle of the oil is not even mentioned. The miracle of the oil that burned for eight days is virtually absent from the creative services which emphasize the beginning of the holiday and the reason for the uprising rather than its conclusion in the Temple. This is due to the fact that the sacrificial service associated with the Temple is not valued; the oil and the rededication of the Temple are thus not stressed. (Interestingly, "Maoz Tzur," which centers on the theme

172 Central Conference of American Rabbi, *The Union Prayerbook, Newly Revised*, (New York, 1971), 90, quoted in Anonymous, "Festival of Lights" (creative service, Temple Beth Torah, n.p., n.d.), 10.

of the Temple and sacrifice, is left untranslated in *GOP*.) This reversal creates a significant difference in the nature of the sacred myth in Reform communities, including those who worship from creative services. The primary identity that is reinforced is the identity of worshippers who can take action, who like the Maccabees can triumph even in times of adversity. Furthermore, worshippers identify themselves as standing up for their faith in God, willing to take risks for their beliefs. We act for God; even though God is depicted as a saving power, God the miracle maker is in general downplayed based on the aspects of the story that are chosen to be included in the narrative. The emphasis is primarily on human ability and our potential to act in a brave courageous way for our beliefs.

In discussing human behavior, the story of Hanukah is occasionally compared to modern situations, but not with overwhelming frequency. Maller makes the comparison to Israel: "In our own generation we have seen the modern Maccabees in Israel defeat the eight Arab armies who attacked them not once, but twice. How can we then doubt the miracle of Chanukah?"¹⁷³ In another instance the comparison between Israel and the Maccabees is specifically denied:

In our day we have witnessed events no less astounding. The victories won by our brothers in Israel over Arab armies many times larger than their own would also have seemed to be miracles in ancient times. We no longer believe in this kind of miracle. Yet we too express our gratitude to God, for without His help Israel could not have survived. Therefore we say: *al hanisim*--for the truly wondrous deeds Thou has enabled the Israelis to perform.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Children's Chanukah Service," 2.

¹⁷⁴ Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, "Chanukah Family Service," (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, n.d.), 14.

Although there are other references to Israel such as this one, and Israel is often mentioned in candle lighting services, the comparison between Israel and the Maccabees does not constitute a major application of the story.

Although not common, the story is applied in one instance to the Holocaust. The miracle of Hanukah is a challenge:

"In every age a hero or sage came to our aid." Not true, God! It didn't happen that way in our age. Our Maccabees never had a chance. Our Maccabees went to their death with their wives, their children. . . . Where was the help, the salvation . . . ? Yet we will tell this story too, tell it to You. Why? So that we can still proclaim our ultimate hope that this was not in vain. We will rededicate the Temple of the remnant, without a cruse of oil, but with the spark of memory for our fallen Maccabees. ¹⁷⁵

Here the sacred myth of the Maccabees is denied in speaking of the Holocaust. While the Maccabees motivate us to work toward a better world (as they do in most of the readings), they do so by their death and not by their victory and survival in this reading.

Rather than using the story of Hanukah to speak of other historical situations, it is more commonly used to refer to our own behavior and attitudes. In this way, the sacred myth clearly becomes an impetus for action. The language of Hanukah is transferred to our own lives:

Our fathers of old *cleansed* the Temple and rekindled the *lights*. They *rededicated* Thy sanctuary, and renewed themselves to Thy service. So do we, Thy children, *dedicate* ourselves to Judaism and its ideals. . . . Grant that our souls be *cleansed* from all evil and hatred. May the *light* of Thy truth ever lead us on the path of righteousness (emphasis added). ¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Anonymous, "Chanukah Evening Service" (creative service, Temple Emanu-El, Baltimore, MD, 1971), 10.

¹⁷⁶ Anonymous, "Chanukah Service" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 1.

In the following reading, by using the language associated with Hanukah, Bronstein makes the connection between our synagogue and the Temple in Jerusalem:

When this synagogue is filled with the sounds of earnest prayer and happy song, whenever the word of God spoken here enters into loyal hearts, then our House of Prayer is rededicated as a true Sanctuary and the Temple built by the hands of men becomes God's Dwelling Place.¹⁷⁷

The sacred myth of Hanukah thus becomes part of the life of the individual. It is an event that the worshippers can relive through exemplifying the qualities of the Maccabees and by dedicating themselves to important values and ideals just as the Maccabees rededicated the Temple. Nowhere is this clearer than in a new ceremony for a boy born of a Jewish mother, but who had not identified himself as a Jew. He is called a "Bar Chanukah," as explained in the introduction to this service.

In a very real and forceful sense, the Maccabees of old made an active choice to be Jewish. They might easily have abandoned their Judaism. . . . The miracle of Chanukah is that they chose instead the more arduous road of commitment to their Jewish faith. Some 2000 years later, Kenneth James Carroll chooses to walk in the footsteps of the ancient Maccabees. . . . Kenny is by Talmudic standards, a Jew. Yet neither Kenny nor his Mother were raised as Jews. Through what might well be thought of as a modern day miracle, Kenny found himself drawn to the Jewish heritage he never knew. . . . On this last night of Chanukah, two days after his fifteenth birthday, Kenny Carroll formally affirms his freely chosen commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people. "Bar Chanukah" means "son of dedication." On this night, Kenneth James Carroll becomes a "Bar Chanukah."¹⁷⁸

The "Bar Chanukah" relives the most important aspect of the Hanukah

¹⁷⁷ Bronstein, "Hanukah Service," 11.

¹⁷⁸ Rabbi Myra Solfer, Kenneth James Carroll, "Bar Chanukah" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Reno, Nevada, 1985).

story--the willingness to choose and affirm the Jewish faith. The individual is thus identified as sharing the values, courage and commitment of the Maccabees.

Summary of the Minor Festivals

At the risk of oversimplifying, it seems as if each of the minor festivals emphasizes a certain theme, although an important similarity can be found between them as well. Purim stresses our survival, Tu B'Shevat our responsibility to care for the world and the Land of Israel, and Hanukkah our ability (past and present) to triumph over oppression by affirming our belief in the truths of God and Judaism. All of the holidays ground themselves in a past event as a source of motivation and hope for the future. As our ancestors did, we can make a difference in a world of turmoil. Experiencing the holiday ritual strengthens our resolve to act by emphasizing our connection to our heroes of ages past.

Modern Holidays

Tish'ah Be-Av

Although Tish'ah Be-Av is not a modern holiday, it is worth examining as a form of introduction to the holidays of Yom ha-Atzma'ut and Yom ha-Sho'ah because many of the themes of Tish'ah Be-Av can be found in the liturgy of these holidays as well. I have studied eleven services, eight of which are dated, and five of which are clearly identified as Shabbat services. Five of the services are from the years 1973-1979, and four are from 1980-1985.

The music of these services is varied, although there is no particular song that is dominant. "Al Naharot Bavel," "Eli Eli," "Am Yisrael Chai," "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" and "Ani Ma'amin" all appear in at least several services. There are no common traditional liturgical texts utilized in the services for the holiday with the exception of selections from the Book of Lamentations. Overall, the structure and format of the services is not particularly unusual. There is one rather unusual set of services consisting of a group of three services corresponding to the liturgical cycle in which Tish'ah Be-Av falls, with a service for the week before, the week of, and the week after the holiday.¹⁷⁹ Sometimes certain symbols are utilized. One service includes the lighting of candles,¹⁸⁰ and another involves sitting on the floor and removing the *parochet* from the ark.¹⁸¹ There are no commonly used English sources. Although outside source material is drawn upon, it is fairly specific to each service.

There are however certain themes that are common to the services. The Tish'ah Be-Av liturgy emphasizes that the world has seen many horrors, but that we can improve the situation. Three services deal specifically with the nuclear threat. In each, selections from Lamentations are juxtaposed with descriptions of Hiroshima following the dropping of the Atomic bomb.¹⁸² Even while contemplating the ultimate destruction,

¹⁷⁹ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "Tisha B'Av Trilogy" (creative service, Temple Beth Hillel, North Hollywood, CA, 1973).

¹⁸⁰ Rabbi Eugene H. Levy, "Tisha B'Av Service" (creative service, Congregation Beth-El, Tyler, TX, n.d.).

¹⁸¹ Rabbi Howard A. Kosovske, "Service for the Evening of Tisha B'Av" (creative service, n.p., n.d.).

¹⁸² Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Kinot for Tisha B'Av" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1985); Yoel Kahn, rabbinic intern, "A Commemoration of Historical Destruction--A Contemplation of Possible Destruction in Our Own Time" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, n.d.); Rabbi Don Peterman, "A Tisha B'Av Supplement for Commemorating the Atomic

however, these services assert that individuals have the power to reverse the trend toward annihilation.

Maybe they're right. Maybe there's nothing to be done.
 But if one righteous person can convince another,
 maybe two can convince a minyan,
 A minyan a congregation
 A congregation a community
 A community a town and
 Maybe a town can convince a state, a country. . . .
 The world,
 If you will it, It Isn't Just a dream. ¹⁸³

The service at Temple Israel, which weaves the theme of possible nuclear destruction even into the translations of traditional liturgical texts, states this theme even more directly:

We have joined together to think the unthinkable--and together,
 to stop it. We choose to express hope in a world of despair;
 unity in a time of dispersion; and faith in a world awash with
 cynicism. We have come together to share a common
 purpose. ¹⁸⁴

And both of these services use Deuteronomy 30 to support their points-- Temple Israel's service ends with "choose life" and Maller brings in "the commandment that I give to you is not too hard for you."

The emphasis on human ability to change the situation confronting us in the world is not only found in services centered on the nuclear threat. Readings, such as this one by Elie Wiesel, dominate the Tish'ah Be-Av services:

Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (creative service, Congregation Beth Shalom, Atlanta, GA, 1981).

¹⁸³ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Kinot for Tisha B'Av," 20.

¹⁸⁴ Yoel Kahn, "A Commemoration of Historical Destruction--A Contemplation of Possible Destruction in Our Own Time," 1.

This is what I think we are trying to prove to ourselves, desperately, because it is desperately needed: In a world of absurdity, we must invent reason; we must create beauty out of nothingness. And because there is murder in this world--and we are the first ones to know it--and we know how hopeless our battle may appear, we have to fight murder and absurdity, and give meaning to the battle if not to our hope.¹⁸⁵

Other services express this idea in a way that is not only hopeful but uplifting:

God in history depends on us. The courage and meaning of the past is in our hands--we have been given the affluence, the ease, the freedom to redeem the past--to enshrine the dead, to keep faith with the beleaguered Jews of the Soviet Union--to guard Israel from attack. Let us not permit the Jewish dream of a good and purposeful life to become an illusion. Our very world dream of peace, human brotherhood and progress is born of that Jewish Dream. Not only our past then is in question by what we do--but the world's future as well.¹⁸⁶

As has been true in so many other services, the belief that we can change the world and make a difference is closely connected to the theme of survival. "To . . . forget what has happened to us, is to forget that we are part of a chain of people who have miraculously survived history. We remember our past to inspire our future."¹⁸⁷ The service at Temple Israel even says Kaddish on behalf of humankind, "lest there be no one left to mourn."¹⁸⁸ The idea that we have survived so far and that future survival is in our hands is very prominent.

¹⁸⁵ Elie Wiesel in Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "A Service for Tisha B'Av" (creative service, Leo Baeck Temple, Los Angeles, CA, n.d.), 16. This reading is also in *GOP*, 588-9.

¹⁸⁶ Rabbi Amiel Wohl, "Service for Tisha B'Av" (creative service, Congregation B'nai Israel, Sacramento, CA, 1971), 3.

¹⁸⁷ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "The Remembrance--Tisha B'Av Trilogy, part II," 1.

¹⁸⁸ Yoel Kahn, "A Commemoration of Historical Destruction--A Contemplation of Possible Destruction in Our Own Time," 10.

This concern for the future is an important backdrop against which to consider how these services view their past. There are many references to historical events in the Tish'ah Be-Av services. Tish'ah Be-Av is not a one time event but a continual event. "Tish'ah Be-Av is not over--it still goes on. Let me tell you of Tish'ah B'av in Kiev. . . ." ¹⁸⁹ The services attempt to place our concerns and contemporary tragedies in the context of other historical tragedies. The destruction of the two Temples and Bar Kochba are commonly mentioned events, and some include the expulsion from Spain as well. Most services add modern events to these historical lists. Thus, one service, after speaking of the destruction of the Second Temple and the failure of the Bar Kochba rebellion, adds the oppression of Soviet Jewry to the list. The reunification of Jerusalem is also mentioned as giving Tish'ah Be-Av a new significance. ¹⁹⁰ Another service places the oppression of Jews in Arab lands as part of the continuum of destruction that began with the two Temples and included Bar Kochba and the Jews of Spain. ¹⁹¹ And several services focus on the Holocaust as the most recent, and worst tragedy of our people. ¹⁹² Interestingly, while Maller's service includes the Holocaust in the chain of tragedies, it is followed by mention of the nuclear threat.

These services thus see events of the modern age as part of the historical cycle of oppression and rebirth. The Holocaust is particularly prominent--almost every service mentions it in some fashion. This is interesting given that there is also a special day in the liturgical calendar

¹⁸⁹ Rabbi Amiel Wohl, "Service for Tisha B'Av," 3.

¹⁹⁰ Rabbi Amiel Wohl, "Service for Tisha B'Av."

¹⁹¹ Rabbi Howard A. Kosovkse, "Service for Tisha B'Av."

¹⁹² Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "A Service for Tisha B'Av"; Rabbi Eugene Levy, "Tisha B'Av Service"; Rabbi James Kaufman, "The Remembrance--Tisha B'Av Trilogy, part II."

devoted to remembrance of the Holocaust. Awareness of the Holocaust is not restricted to one day—it has come to permeate all of our holidays. In an attempt to invest a holiday that traditionally centers on the destruction of the Temple with new significance, the Holocaust becomes especially prominent in Tisha Be-Av services for it is perceived as a tragedy of at least equal proportions in our time. Other potential tragedies are also raised, however, especially in regard to oppressed Jewry and the nuclear threat. Modern day suffering is thus associated with the suffering endured by our ancestors. Why is it so important to liturgists to associate these more recent events with the events of the past? Obviously, part of the reason is found in the need to make a holiday rooted in a past event, removed in significance from the worshippers, more relevant. Several other reasons can be found. First of all, it legitimizes their importance. No one denies that the destruction of the Temple was a cataclysmic event. This same importance is given to oppressed Jewry by association. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, our future survival is made more likely when it is based on our past survival. As we survived destruction and expulsion in the past, so we can survive modern threats to world Jewry and to our very existence. Those events that we select to include as part of our sacred myth are meant to assure us of our ability as a group to overcome the evil in our world and to survive.

This future is largely dependent on human efforts. God does not figure prominently in these services, as is true of so many of the creative services, although there are occasional traditional references to God. Prayers that God will deliver those who are oppressed are part of one

service,¹⁹³ and in another service the philosophy (expressed through Midrash) that the exile from Israel occurred because the people were evil, can even be found.¹⁹⁴ One also finds the idea that God is dependent on humanity (the beginning of note 184), that "God lives because the people Israel still believe that man was created not a curse, but a blessing."¹⁹⁵ And as one would expect, there is also some challenging of God, mostly in the context of the Holocaust as opposed to other tragedies. Yet this challenging is usually followed by an assertion of faith, as is the case in so many other services. For example, a letter to God written by a young Polish girl in 1944 that ends with the words, "God, go to hell" is followed by another reading (the inscription on a cellar wall in Cologne) that affirms, "I believe in God even when He is silent."¹⁹⁶ Generally speaking however, the services are more centered on humanity than on God. The challenge and affirmation of power is directed toward people and not toward God by and large.

In this respect the services are quite different from the service in *GOP*, which is more God-centered (and contains more traditional liturgical texts than most of the creative Tish'ah Be-Av services). *GOP* emphasizes our continuing faith in God, both in the extra readings and interpretations of traditional liturgical texts. The service calls on God to redeem us and answer us. There is less emphasis on human ability to choose, to change the world and influence the future, although this theme is not absent by any means. It should also be pointed out that the service in *GOP* is not for

¹⁹³ Rabbi Howard A. Kosovske, "Service for the Evening of Tisha B'Av," 3.

¹⁹⁴ Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "A Service for Tisha B'Av," 5-9.

¹⁹⁵ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "The Remembrance--Tisha B'Av Trilogy, part II, p.12."

¹⁹⁶ Rabbi Sanford Ragins, "A Service for Tisha B'Av," 14-16.

Tish'ah Be-Av alone; it is a joint service for Tish'ah Be-Av and Yom ha-Sho'ah. This in and of itself reveals an assumption about Tish'ah Be-Av that I am not sure the creative liturgists share. *GOP* views Tish'ah Be-Av from the perspective of the Holocaust, while the creative liturgists place the Holocaust into a historical framework that began with the destruction of the Temple and includes other tragedies. Tish'ah Be-Av in these services thus commemorates the sweep of historical tragedies. Furthermore, while the creative liturgies certainly focus on the Holocaust, they also mention other modern situations. *GOP* is less grounded in the contemporary situation; with the exception of one mention of Hiroshima, the Holocaust is the only modern event mentioned in *GOP*. Even a prayer such as "comforter of Zion,"¹⁹⁷ which refers specifically to the destruction of Jerusalem, may be read differently in light of the emphasis on the Holocaust in the rest of the service. In summary, the lack of historical and contemporary events aside from the destruction of the Temple and the Holocaust, and the de-emphasis of human abilities in favor of stress upon the Divine, give the service in *GOP* a very different feeling and orientation than that possessed by most creative services for Tisha Be-Av.

Yom ha-Sho'ah

Introduction

The chart below indicates 31 Yom ha-Sho'ah services, nine of which were held on Shabbat.

¹⁹⁷ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Gates of Prayer* (New York, 1975), 585.

YOM HASHOAH SERVICES				
1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
0	9	5	6	11

The music selected for these services reflects the common themes associated with Yom ha-Sho'ah, particularly survival and the need to have faith in spite of the evils that surround us. "Ani Ma'amin is the most common song; the "Song of the Partisans," "Eli Eli," "Es Brent," "Am Yisrael Chai" and "Sachaki" also appear frequently. In terms of traditional liturgical texts, *el maley rachamim* and *eleh azkarah* are in most services. Many services also include lighting of six memorial candles, emphasizing the need to remember and memorialize the victims of the Holocaust. Occasionally services assign specific significance to each candle ¹⁹⁸ in the style of Hanukah or Selichot services, although this is rarer.

The same *GOP* service discussed above in reference to Tish'ah Be-Av needs to be compared to Yom ha-Sho'ah as well, for in *GOP* this one service is intended for use on two occasions. The service seems more appropriate to Yom ha-Sho'ah than it does to Tish'ah Be-Av with the exception of readings about restoring Jerusalem which are a little out of place in a Yom ha-Sho'ah service. There are several similarities between the service in *GOP* and the creative Yom ha-Sho'ah services that are not found when comparing *GOP* to the Tish'ah Be-Av services. "Ani Ma'amin" and the "Song of the Partisans" are frequently included in creative services, as they are in *GOP*, and our need to have faith in God as did our ancestors who went through

¹⁹⁸ See for example, Rabbi Elliot Strom, "Service for Yom Hashoa" (creative service, Congregation Shir Ami, Newton, PA, 1981).

the horror is stressed. This will be seen to be very important in creative services. However, several of the same differences as existed between *GOP* and Tish'ah Be-Av are also found when comparing *GOP* to creative Yom ha-Sho'ah services. Because *GOP* contains more traditional liturgy, certain themes, while present, appear to be less strongly emphasized than in the creative services which include more supplementary readings. The question of survival, and particularly the ability of humanity to change and improve is less central in *GOP* than in the creative services, although neither theme is absent. The *GOP* service for Yom ha-Sho'ah is more God-centered than the creative liturgies, both in the supplementary readings and in the use of traditional liturgical texts. These characteristics of creative services will become clear in examining the sources and themes found in the creative Yom ha-Sho'ah services.

Sources

There is a great deal of modern source material utilized in the Yom ha-Sho'ah services. Elie Wiesel is most frequently quoted; a large selection of his books is drawn upon and it is clear that he is viewed by many as the preeminent spokesman for the Holocaust and its significance. Many poems by children can be found in the service, particularly "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," "Fear" and "Birdsong."¹⁹⁹ The children's poems seem to have an element of poignancy and gentleness that is very moving. They express an essential faith in humanity and desire to live in spite of the horror that surrounds them. In "Birdsong" twelve year old Eva Pickova recognizes that

¹⁹⁹ Hana Volavkova, ed., "... I Never Saw Another Butterfly--Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp" (New York, 1978), 33, 45, 54.

in the ghetto "Death wields an icy scythe" yet is able to affirm, "No, no, my God, we want to live! Not watch our numbers melt away. We want to have a better world, we want to work--we must not die!" The willingness to affirm life and faith in the midst of death is an essential characteristic of the Yom ha-Sho'ah services. Selections from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which are commonly found in other services, are present in these services but are slightly less common than other readings. "Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God"²⁰⁰ Hannah Senesh's, "Blessed is the Match"²⁰¹ and the anonymous words inscribed on a cellar in Cologne, Germany ("... I believe in love even when feeling it not. I believe in God even when He is silent) are the sources that are most frequently used to emphasize these themes of affirmation.

Other sources reveal, however, a refusal to shy away from acknowledgment of the horror and pain of the Holocaust. A great deal of Nelly Sachs' work is included in these liturgies. She starkly presents the brutality of the Holocaust in poems such as "O the Chimneys" which is often included:

O the chimneys
On the ingeniously devised habitations of death
When Israel's body drifted as smoke
Through the air--
Was welcomed by a star, a chimney sweep,
A star that turned black
Or was it a ray of sun?
O the chimneys!
Freedom way for Jeremiah and Job's dust--
Who devised for you and laid stone upon stone
The road for refugees of smoke?

²⁰⁰ Zvi Kolitz, "Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God," in Rabbi Sheldon Gordon, "Service of Remembrance for the Six Million" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 13.

²⁰¹ Hannah Senesh, in Rabbi Murray Blackman, "A Holocaust Service" (creative service, Temple Sinai, New Orleans, LA, 1979), 6.

O the habitations of death,
 Invitingly appointed
 For the host who used to be a guest--
 O you fingers
 Laying the threshold
 Like a knife between life and death--
 O you chimneys,
 O you fingers
 And Israel's body as smoke through the air! 202

Yithak Katznelson's "From the Depths of Hell" is another painfully honest poem that is often included. His words, "They, the children of Israel, were the first in doom in disaster. . . . The first were they detained for death; the first into the wagons of slaughter,"²⁰³ like those of Nelly Sachs, confront the worshipper with the horrible reality and implications of the Holocaust. Frequently utilized as well are the words of those who lived through the Holocaust, again serving to acknowledge the painful reality of the ghettos and camps. One also sees in the the services a determination to prevent something like the Holocaust from ever happening again through sources such as Abraham Shlonsky's "A Vow."²⁰⁴ A final frequently found source is Abraham Joshua Heschel's "The Meaning of this Hour." Heschel asserts that in spite of the fact that we wanted God to stop the brutality, the ultimate responsibility must lie with humanity.

The mask of Cain in the face of humanity has come to
 overshadow the likeness of Thee, O God.
 Ashamed and dismayed, we ask: Who is responsible? . . .
 Through centuries Your words, O Lord, cried in the wilderness,
 only to be drowned and distorted by those who were silent in
 the face of evil. . . .

202 Nelly Sachs, "O the Chimneys," in Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Service for Yom HaShoah" (creative service, Temple Israel, Boston, MA, n.d.), 7.

203 Yitzhak Katznelson, "From the Depths of Hell," in Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Service for Yom HaShoah," 8.

204 Abraham Shlonsky, "A Vow" in Rabbi Murray Blackman, "A Holocaust Service," 3.

Where are You O God? Why did You not halt the trains loaded with your people being led to slaughter? Why did You make it so easy to kill?

We have failed to fight for right, for justice, for goodness. As a result we must now fight against injustice, against wrong, against evil.

Where indeed were we then when we first learned to destroy instead of build, to hurt instead of heal? 205

Themes

Although there are poems and readings that attempt to depict the horror of the Holocaust and deal with the themes of responsibility, the key point that most of these services stress is the need to hope, to have faith and to continue to believe in the future because we are able to influence it. In this respect, these services are very similar to Tish'ah Be-Av services. A service entitled "Service of Affirmation" states:

It takes the best we have to give, but it can be done. Mankind can improve. We can live together in peace. We can understand. It takes the best we have to give and more, it takes the blessing of Him who spoke and the world was created. May the determination of mankind be coupled with God's blessing and may we progress on the road to living as brothers with all of humanity. 206

Harvey Fields' midrash for Yom ha-Sho'ah, which voices diverse opinions and challenges through a variety of characters, ends on this note:

May you be blessed Israel
For your faith in man
In spite of man
The word of God continues to be heard.
So does the silence of his dead children. . . .

205 Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Meaning of this Hour," in Alfred Ronald, "A Service of Responsibility" (creative service, Westchester Reform Temple, Scarsdale, NY, 1972), 6.

206 Rabbi Howard A. Simon, "A Service of Affirmation" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 4.

Ani Maamin,
 Whether the Messiah comes,
 Or is late in coming,
 Ani Maamin
 Blessed are the fools
 Who shout their faith.
 Blessed are the fools
 Who go on laughing,
 Who mock the man who mocks the Jew,
 Who help their brothers and sisters
 Singing, over and over and over: ("Ani Ma'amin"). 207

Perhaps because the individual is believed to have the power to influence events and effect change, the question of the bystander is raised in several services. Fields points out the failure of the German people, the Vatican, the world capitals and the Jews in America to do anything to stop the annihilation of the Jews.²⁰⁸ Another service contains a confessional, in the style of a Yom Kippur confessional for the "sin which we committed before You and before them by closing our ears."²⁰⁹ The pain felt as a result of those who stood by and watched is all the more acute because of the belief that underlies these services: if people care and act they can make a difference in the world. The implication, of course, is that if people had cried out the outcome would have been different. However, in seeming contradiction, those who get involved are also depicted as suffering for their involvement as in this answer to Job:

And God answered Job: . . . [O]nly by your own hand can you achieve victory. Yet the good suffer and the best suffer most, because it is the just and the true and the righteous that take

207 Elie Wiesel, in Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, "Echoes of Anguish" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 32.

208 *Ibid.* 4-5.

209 Rabbi Steve L. Jacobs, "Service in Memory of our Martyred Millions" (creative service, Temple Emanu-El, Birmingham, AL, 1984), 6.

upon themselves the task of bringing justice and truth into the world. 210

This however, is not the dominant view.

As one would expect, survival is also a dominant theme of these services, as it is in the Tisha Be-Av services. In a havdalah service, the bittersweet feeling of havdalah is compared to the feeling of the worshippers.

Havdalah is at once joyous and sad. . . . The same dichotomy of emotions is found in any attempt to memorialize the martyrs of the Holocaust. Those who nearly shared their fate tremble. Those of us who know the Holocaust only from a distance, whether of time or place, experience an overwhelming sadness, even frustration and bitterness. All of us shed tears of loss. Yet there is joy, too, in the very fact of life, in the survival of our people, in the awesome capacity to reaffirm our identity in the face of monstrous evil. 211

A similar sentiment is expressed at the end of another service:

. . . [O]ur people have always refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, on being granted life seized it, nurtured it, and, rising above catastrophe, showed humankind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope. 212

Although this particular reading discusses the State of Israel in the context of survival, Israel is mentioned with surprising rarity in these services. While the Holocaust plays a dominant role in Yom ha-Atzma'ut services (as will be seen), Israel is not a common theme in Yom ha-Sho'ah services.

210 Anonymous, in Alfred Ronald, "A Service of Responsibility," 4.

211 Rabbi Lewis Littman, "A Havdalah Service of Memorial" (creative service, Anshe Hessed Congregation, Erie, PA, 1975), 1.

212 Rabbi Murray Blackman, "A Holocaust Service," 12.

Related to survival is the theme of resistance. While resistance is a theme of these services, it is by no means as common as the other themes mentioned to this point. There is one service that is largely devoted to the idea of the Jews fighting back, mostly focusing on Warsaw.²¹³ The Warsaw Ghetto uprising is the most common way in which resistance is brought in; a letter of Mordechai Anielewicz, four days after the start of the uprising is commonly quoted.²¹⁴ Resistance, however, is not always discussed in a military context. Sometimes hasidic stories are used to show willingness to stand up to aggression;²¹⁵ more often the Jews are shown as having faith and maintaining their belief through stories such as one that tells of reciting Kol Nidre in a concentration camp.²¹⁶ In this way the Jews are depicted as resisting by refusing to let their faith be destroyed even in the worst of circumstances. This latter example is as closely tied to the idea of hope and belief in the future as it is to resistance. These stories also emphasize not just the physical, but the spiritual survival of the people, and the continual ability of our ancestors to believe even when circumstances might discourage belief. While this may be resistance, it is not usually emphasized as such in the liturgy. So while the idea of resistance, both physical and spiritual, is present in the services it is not to be found to as large an extent as the themes of hope, faith and belief.

²¹³ Rabbi Daniel Lee Kaplan, "Yom HaShoah Holocaust Memorial" (creative service, Temple Sinai, Sharon, MA, n.d.).

²¹⁴ Mordechai Anielewicz, in Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro, "Out of the Depths" (creative service, n.p., n.d.), 7-9.

²¹⁵ Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Service for Yom Hasho-ah," 10.

²¹⁶ Leon Szalet, "The Survivor," in Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro, "Out of the Depths," 6.

Sacred Myth and the Image of God

In considering the fact that the history of the Holocaust is not constructed in these services to focus on examples of resistance, it is necessary to ask how the Holocaust is integrated into history and what is the nature of the sacred myth that emerges from the creative Yom ha-Sho'ah services? The Holocaust is depicted as fundamentally altering history. This is true to such a great extent that it is retrojected into sacred texts and actually alters them. Key events of the Torah are viewed, in certain services, from a wholly different perspective in a post-Holocaust era. One service focuses wholly on creation, showing how the Holocaust denied the work done on each day of creation.

And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night. . . .
But Lord: what happened to the days and nights of destruction when there was no division? There was only darkness in the sealed railway cars. No sun or moon or stars to help Rachel find her children, to help her weep for them. She wept in darkness. . . . Let the sun and moon and stars rise up again to divide light and darkness. And we will praise you. 217

The actual act of creation is in effect denied by the Holocaust, and God is asked to create again. The Binding of Isaac is also described with a different ending, in the tradition of much midrash which imagines him actually getting slaughtered:

And much later Abraham stood at Buchenwald--but we did not hear the cries of anguish and did not see the smoke rushing out of the chimneys--and Isaac was offered again and again on the altar of an insulted humanity. 218

217 Rabbi Leonard Poller, "The Six Days of Destruction, Meditations Toward Hope" (creative service, Larchmont Temple, Larchmont, NY, n.d.), 2-3.

218 Anonymous, in Alfred Ronald, "Service of Responsibility", 3.

The Holocaust actually becomes part of the text itself, altering the course of history by changing the outcome of key events. Nowhere is this clearer than in the "Scroll of Happenings." (The following text is printed with trope marks in the original.)

And it came to pass In the days of the Great Destruction that the army of night passed through the holy congregation of Nemirov. There were 150 men there and all were killed.

From there it came to the large city of Konstantin. Over 600 very wealthy men lived there. An evil edict was passed against them and 6000 men were killed. . . .

And the army of night descended upon the holy congregation of Vilna, famous for its learning. And it killed thousands upon thousands on the prolonged night of terror. They died cruel and terrible deaths for the Sanctification of the Name. Some were skinned alive and their flesh was thrown to the dogs. . . . Some children were pierced with spears, roasted on the fire and then brought to their mothers to be eaten.

And it came to pass when Moshe descended from the Mount that a pillar of fire consumed the tribes of Israel that stood at the foot of the Mount. And six million of the children of Israel went up in smoke. And all that remained was a pillar of smoke that ascended to the uppermost heaven and can be seen to this very day. 219

The Holocaust is depicted in the language and style of the Torah itself. It becomes a type of sacred text, and is thus as important to who we are and what we do as the other stories of the Torah. The Holocaust also fundamentally alters the most sacred events of our people. The pillar of fire, rather than leading the people, consumes them. Not only do the Children of Israel not enter the promised land, they do not even live to leave Mount Sinai. Through these events, the Holocaust becomes an event equal to creation, the akeda and the traveling through the wilderness. In some ways

219 Rabbi Balfour Brickner, "A Sabbath Service for Yom HaShoah" (creative service, Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, New York, NY, 1984), 7.

it is even greater than they, for it has altered or denied their essentially positive outcomes.

It is clear that the Holocaust is the dominant event not only of the modern age, but of all of history, for these liturgists. "Not even the worst of the Dark Ages could be compared to the destruction and terror of our own times."²²⁰ Nothing can be compared to it, and thus the Holocaust has changed history forever. This may well explain the stress placed on survival. Recognizing that history is totally different now creates a tremendous sense of insecurity and uncertainty. Part of our identity, established by this sense of history, is that we are different than we were before the Holocaust; everything, in fact, is different. The liturgy makes this changed world clearly evident.

While part of the sacred myth is our awareness that the Holocaust has changed our world, an equally strong emphasis is placed on hope for the future. If one looks at the common sources included in these services, many of them emphasize these very themes. Events and texts stressing the need to hope in spite of the horror (often taken from the words of victims) are chosen for inclusion in the liturgy because we then have a reason to believe in the future. They help us avoid being overwhelmed by fear and insecurity. Emphasized as part of the myth is that our people has survived based on hope and faith, more than because of physical resistance. This is key to the way that we view ourselves, for we today can also identify ourselves as a community of hope and faith. As our ancestors survived through these qualities, so too can we use them to assure our survival in a totally changed world. Stressing our ability to hope and survive helps to reassure

²²⁰ Anonymous, "Holocaust Memorial Service" (creative service, n.p., 1977), 1.

worshippers about the future in spite of a wholly changed world. While this has been part of other services, the enormity and incomparability of the Holocaust make it even more essential in these services.

Hope and faith exist towards both humanity and God. The idea that we will believe in God in spite of the fact that God seems to be absent has already been explored as a central theme of these services. Occasionally there are outright denials of God's presence as in a poem which ends with the words: "Art Thou a caring God, O Lord? Wilt Thou answer my questions? I listen but hear no answers, only the wind of eternity blowing past me." ²²¹ There is also occasional mention of the idea that God was eclipsed during the Holocaust. Fields explains his midrash in reference to this idea: "Echoes of Anguish is a reminder, grim and horrible, that when human beings plunge the world into hell of Auschwitz, God is forced into eclipse." ²²² While there are certainly questions and challenges to be found in these services, as in previous services the emphasis is primarily on having faith in spite of these questions. This is nowhere clearer than in one service in which two readings are juxtaposed. A similar juxtaposition was seen in a Tish'ah Be-Av service (footnote 194), and in fact utilizes one of the same readings, a letter to God by a sixteen year old Polish girl (written in 1944) ending with the words, "God, go to hell." In this service the reading immediately following is the end of "Yossel Rakover's Appeal to God" declaring that he believes in spite of all the evidence that he should *not* renounce the Divine. ²²³ *GOP* proclaims a similar message--we have always been sustained by belief in one God, and it is belief in this one God that can

²²¹ Sara Lee Dunn in, Rabbi Steve L. Jacobs, "A Service for our Martyred Millions," 4.

²²² Rabbi Harvey Fields, "Echoes of Anguish," 1.

²²³ Rabbi Murray Blackman, "A Holocaust Service," 4-5.

help us make the decisions to bring wholeness to the world: "He creates; He sustains; He loves; He inspires us with the hope that we can make ourselves one as He is One." ²²⁴ A primary meaning derived from the Holocaust is that we can have faith in God and in humanity. That faith is what distinguishes us and it is that faith that will help us survive a totally altered world.

Yom ha-Atzma'ut

Introduction

Yom ha-Atzma'ut services provide a very interesting and significant perspective on the attitude of Reform Jews toward the State of Israel. The following chart indicates the years in which the 35 services that I studied can be found. Sixteen of these services are Shabbat services; two are Yom Yerushalayim services which are not significantly different from Yom ha-Atzma'ut services. It is not surprising to note that the greatest number of services is found in 1970-1975. Not only was this prior to the publication of *GOP*, but it was a period of heightened Israel consciousness in the Jewish community.

YOM HA-ATZMA'UT SERVICES				
1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
2	18	4	3	8

The music and sources used in the Yom ha-Atzma'ut services celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of Jerusalem and Israel. The most

²²⁴ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *GOP*, 575.

common musical selection in these services is "Hatikva." The Israeli national anthem is thus given somewhat of a religious connotation by the fact that it is in a worship service, often as a closing song. (The very celebration of Israel Independence Day as a religious holiday represents the same act of placing a secular event in a religious context.) Besides "Hatikva," there is a tremendous variety of music, mostly Israeli, that appears in these services. "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" (in Hebrew and English) is quite common; "Am Yisrael Chal," "Meial Pisgat Har Hatzofim," "Ma Navu" and "Bashanah Haba'ah" all appear in at least a few services as well, although variety rather than commonality distinguish these services musically.

Sources

Perhaps the thing that stands out most clearly about these services is the frequent use of biblical text. Biblical texts are a central part of the Yom ha-Atzma'ut creative liturgies, and the specific texts that are chosen are quite revealing. Psalms are frequently utilized, especially Psalms 122, 126 and 137. They all indicate the centrality of Jerusalem; Psalm 122 prays for peace for the city while Psalm 137 speaks of our longing for Jerusalem while in exile. Both Psalm 122 and 126 rejoice in the restoration of the people to Jerusalem--a restoration that is brought about by God. This theme is echoed in the prophetic texts that are often utilized. Ezekiel 37, for example, likens the miraculous resurrection of the dry bones to the restoration of Israel to the land, and is a very commonly used text. Isaiah 43: 5-7, Jeremiah 31:15 and Amos 9:14-15 reiterate this idea--the people will be comforted by restoration, planted in the land and not uprooted again. Zachariah 8:3-5 is a final biblical text that appears quite frequently, and

not only the restoration but the presence of God in the midst of Jerusalem is stressed.

The traditional liturgical texts particular to Yom ha-Atzma'ut creative services are drawn mostly from the daily liturgy (even for services on Shabbat.) One service ends with the prayer, "Bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our land."²²⁵ Another service concludes that restoration began immediately following destruction because "we could not, would not forget our mission as a people." The prayer "Return in mercy to thy city of Jerusalem, and dwell in it as thou has promised, rebuild it soon..." follows, concluding with the observation that "we in our day have witnessed the miracle of Israel restored."²²⁶ Several services also include the prayer, "Sound the great horn for our freedom, lift up the ensign to gather our exiles and gather us from the four corners of the earth" followed by the sounding of the shofar.²²⁷ Another service actually revolves around the sounding of the shofar at several points, such as following the reading of the above prayer and biblical texts such as Isaiah 43 (the words of which have come true in our day according to the service author).²²⁸ Like the biblical texts, traditional liturgical texts are utilized in such a way that they have redemptive connotations.

The other sources that are used are by and large drawn from modern Hebrew poetry. While some selections from Heschel, Wiesel and Zionist

²²⁵ Berthe Schuchat, "The Young Sing at Night" (creative service, Temple Micah, Washington D.C., 1975), 20.

²²⁶ Rabbi William Sajowitz, "Worship Service for Israel Independence Day" (creative service, Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1975), 3.

²²⁷ Rabbi Harry Essrig, "University Synagogue Israel Independence Day Service" (creative service, University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1970), 1.

²²⁸ Rabbi Alan S. Green, "A Sabbath Service for Yom HaAtzmaut" (creative service, Temple Emanu El, Cleveland, OH, 1974), 5.

leaders and thinkers like Ben-Gurion, Ahad Ha'am and Herzl can be found, an overwhelming amount of material is poetic in nature. The variety is tremendous. Works by Shin Shalom, Abraham Shlonsky, Yehuda Karni, Yehiel Mar and Jacob Fichman are most common; the poetry of Leah Goldberg, Uri Tzvi Greenberg and Amir Gilboa as well as many others is also often included. A great deal of the poetry, such as Shlonsky's "Jerusalem is Begirt with Mountains" or Fichman's "In the Old City" simply evokes the sheer beauty and power of Jerusalem, emphasizing the unique, almost indescribable quality of the city.²²⁹ The use of much of this poetry, like the music, evokes a sentimental, idealistic feeling toward Israel and gives the liturgy a lyrical quality. Some of the poetry also expresses views in regard to the relationship between Israel and the other nations, alluding to the hostility of the Arab nations: Shlonsky, after painting a lovely picture of Jerusalem, concludes with the words, "O deer of Israel, how they have plotted to hew down your antlers!" Shin Shalom's poem, "Guard Me, Oh God" begins, "Guard me, Oh God, from hating my brother, Guard me from recalling what, from my earlier youth he did to me..." Not only hostility is alluded to, however. The idea of Israel as a light to the nations can be found as well in Yehuda Karni's "Mount Scopus." "And all Jerusalem was for me like a single coal, kept on the altar^a that each nation and guardian might come and brighten it with tongs, and take from it an ember."

Two of the most commonly quoted poems are David Rokeah's "Zealots of Aspiration" and Nathan Alterman's poem, "The Silver Platter," and it is worth quoting them in their entirety.

²²⁹ Unless otherwise mentioned, most of the poems mentioned or quoted can be found in whole or in part in Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, "Jerusalem of Gold" (creative service, Temple B'rith Kodesh, Rochester, NY, n.d.).

Glory unto those who hope
 For the future is theirs.
 Who stand against the mountain without recoil
 Shall ascend its summit.
 So hopes the river, pushing to the sea,
 For the freeing of its desires in the road of the ocean.
 So hopes the tree, sending a branch toward the sky
 To touch the palm of the sun some day.
 And all who join in the covenant of hope with the universe--
 They are the zealots of aspiration.
 Therefore, forge the future's desires,
 As the waves beat out the rocks of the shore.
 Form dreams of faithfulness.
 The desolation will not vanish from the wilderness before it
 vanishes from the heart.

The use of this poem associates dreaming, hoping and longing with the State of Israel. Only by being "zealots of aspiration" has the founding of the State of Israel been possible; only by "forging the future's desires" will the continued growth and prosperity of the land occur. The ability to reach for the seemingly impossible, as the palm reaches for the sun, will allow us to realize our hopes for the future. This poem very much places our relationship to the State of Israel into an ideal context, focusing on potential and possibility for Israel limited only by the limits of our own hearts and souls.

Nathan Alterman's "The Silver Platter" is very different.

There is peace in the land
 A red sky slowly dims
 Over smoldering frontiers.
 And a nation is gathered
 Scarred but alive. . . .
 To welcome the miracle
 To which none is compared.
 She prepares for the ceremony
 Arising under the moon
 She stands before day-break

Wrapped in festivity and awe.
 When a lad and a maiden
 Approach from afar
 And they march in slow cadence
 And confront the nation
 In their work-clothes and full gear
 Heavy shoes on their feet
 Up the path they
 Silently march.
 Their garb has not been changed
 Nor has water erased
 The traces of the day's hard toil
 And the night's heavy fire.
 Exhausted beyond measure
 Having forsworn repose
 And dripping the dew-drops
 of Hebrew youth
 Speechlessly the two step
 forward and stand motionless
 And there is no sign if they
 are living or slain.
 The nation then asks
 Bathed in tears and in wonder
 "Who are you?"
 And the two reply:
 "We are the silver platter
 Upon which the Jewish state
 was served to you."
 Thus they speak
 And they fall at her feet
 Shrouded in shadows.
 The rest will be told in
 Israel's chronicles. 230

Alterman points out the cost of the miracle in stark terms. The miracle and rejoicing of the nation has an ironic, bitter twist to it as it is unaware of the identity of the two youths. There is a note of condemnation implicit in the idea that the state was served to its citizens on a silver platter--a

230 Nathan Alterman, "The Silver Platter," in Rabbi Paul Citrin, "A Shabbat Service for Yom Ha-Atzmaut" (creative service, Congregation Albert, Albuquerque, NM, 1985), 19-20.

symbol of elegance and luxury. The image of the nation being waited upon, and accepting the victims that are elegantly served to her--the young people --raises the question of whether the acceptance of the cost of survival has been taken for granted. The use of this poem presents a harsh and somber message in services that are otherwise very ideal and romantic. (Interestingly, *GOP* includes the words by Chaim Weizmann, "No state is handed to a people on a silver platter.") 231

Themes

In spite of the frequency with which Alterman's poem is included, the themes of war, struggle and hardship for the most part do not figure prominently in these services. There are often prayers for the fallen, as well as recognition that Israel has always faced hostile enemies, as indicated in sources mentioned above such as Shin Shalom's "Guard Me, Oh God" and Shlonsky's "Jerusalem is Begirt with Mountains." When the struggles that Israel has faced are mentioned, it is to emphasize the triumph and not the struggle itself, as in this reading:

But the Jewish people proved equal to the challenge. When arms had to be lifted up, the Israeli did it with courage and ingenuity. The few triumphed over the many. The men of peace were victorious over the men of the sword. And the spirit of the Jew was uplifted by the heroic exploits of the modern Maccabees. (Choir sings "Who Can Retell?") 232

There are of course exceptions to the general tendencies of the service to ignore the hardships and struggles that have confronted Israel. Golda Meir

231 Central Conference of American Rabbis, *GOP*, 603.

232 Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Yom HaAtzmaut Service" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, n.d.), 4.

is quoted in one service speaking about the threat to the state and the impossibility of returning the land that was gained in 1967.²³³ In another service, the service author has specifically indicated to me that the service was changed from 1973 to 1974 because of the Yom Kippur war. Rabbi Green writes:

"Sound the Great Shofar" was originally composed for Israel's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of Independence in 1973. It was a time of unalloyed rejoicing and optimism. The Yom Kippur War which followed later that year, and trials that continued changed that mood. I found that I had to change portions of that original service to express our more mixed and troubled feelings.²³⁴

Specific changes were made in the introduction, which rather than expressing sheer joy, reflects mixed emotions in the 1974 service:

We assemble with mixed and torn emotions. Our hearts well up to God with thanks for the restoration He has brought to our people in our generation. We rejoice in their achievements. . . . Yet our souls are shaken by the mounting threats of destruction poised against it by enemies as yet unreconciled, who grow in power of wealth and influence. And we turn anew to our Redeemer who has delivered us time and again. . . .²³⁵

Later on in the service, the feelings evoked when Yom Kippur was interrupted are recalled, with the vow that destruction of Israel will not come to pass and a prayer that we can be "united in determination and sacrifice."²³⁶ This service does not deny the beauty or miraculous nature of Israel by any means--quite the contrary in fact (see note 29). But it does recognize in more than a passing way the reality existing at the time of the

²³³ Berthe Schuchat, "The Young Sing at Night," 3-4.

²³⁴ Rabbi Alan S. Green, letter to Betsy Torop, March 14, 1989.

²³⁵ Rabbi Alan S. Green, "Sound the Shofar," 1.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

service and the fact that achievement of the miracle has not been free of strife. For the most part however, the ideal rather than the real is the focus of the Yom ha-Atzma'ut services.

Most of the source material mentioned reflects this ideal quality. The idea that the rebirth of the State of Israel is a foreshadowing of redemption brought about by God is emphasized. The founding of a modern state represents the fruition of years of longing and is considered to be a true miracle. The word "miracle" is often used (see note 32). One service (entitled "Celebrating the Miracle") uses large sections from Israel by Abraham Joshua Heschel who emphasizes not only the miraculous nature of the birth of the State of Israel, but interprets this event as reflecting the hand of God in history.

The dreadful experiences of the past one hundred years, far from having poisoned us with a sense of despair, have on the contrary evoked in us the vigor of hope and of resolve for renewal. The return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel is a fact that fills us with astonishment. Who would have believed it? Who would have expected it? How vain was this expectation considered by people throughout the centuries. . . . And yet numerous events in that process seemed to point to an intimation that history is not always made by man alone.²³⁷

In another service, utilizing sections of Isaiah 40 and 43, David Polish says:

Yet the people could never have reached the moment of victory and fulfillment with these alone, had it not been nourished for centuries by a promise. This promise fed them; this promise warmed them; this promise sustained them. (Isaiah 43: 5-6) . . . Standing over the dishonored grave of our most recent oppressor, we see the fruits of Israel's miraculous rebirth. We

²³⁷ Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, in Rabbi Morris A. Kipper, "A Sabbath Prayer Service Celebrating the Miracle" (creative service, Temple Judea, Coral Gables, FL, 1971), 14.

see the redemption of the land from centuries of desolation and the desert's encroachment. (Isaiah 40: 3-4). 238

These last two readings also indicate another central theme of the Yom ha-Atzma'ut services that has not yet been mentioned--the Holocaust. The Holocaust is mentioned in a large portion of the services. The founding of the State of Israel is particularly significant for the very fact that it follows the horror of the Holocaust.

And in between the vision and the reality there was the Holocaust. A kingdom of evil and perversity beyond anything ever imagined by the mind of man. Never before had the Jewish people been closer to total destruction... yet--
After the gas chambers
There was this small, man-made miracle:
No angels carried us from the fiery furnace,
And yet from the ashes of the crematoria
And the blood saturated land of Europe
A people was reborn
Like a plant taking root
In dry ground. 239

Ultimately, the message of the Holocaust and the meaning of the State of Israel can be seen as interwoven on several levels. Quotes about the Holocaust, and the fact that our faith was maintained in spite of the horror are followed by this statement by Heschel in one service:

The ultimate meaning of Israel must be seen in terms of the vision of the prophets: the redemption of all men. The duty of the Jew is to participate in the process of continuous

238 Rabbi David Polish, "From Slavery to Freedom" (creative service, Beth Emet the Free Synagogue, Evanston, IL, 1972), 4-5.

239 Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Yom HaAtzmaut Service" (creative service, Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1982), 41-2. This service is bound together with two services for Yom Hashoa. It appears as if this is a service to be used separately on Yom HaAtzmaut but it is not completely clear.

redemption, in seeing that justice prevails over power, that awareness of God penetrates human understanding. ²⁴⁰

While the relationship is not explicitly expressed, the connection between Israel and the Holocaust is made undeniably clear: the truth that was denied by the Holocaust--that justice must prevail over power--is to be affirmed by Israel. Secondly, Israel is viewed as the safest haven for Jews who know all too well after the Holocaust that their safety is uncertain anywhere else.

For the Jews the dark ages are not a thing of the past, buried under a strata [sic] of centuries, but a virulent plague, momentarily dormant, which may come to life in any country and day. Israel is the only citadel the Jews have on this planet and if Israel survives it will be solely because of the dedication and fidelity of Jews everywhere. ²⁴¹

As one would expect, Israel is thus closely tied up with the theme of survival of the Jewish people. Ezekiel 37 in which the bones once dead are brought back to life emphasizes this theme. The Holocaust threatened our very survival; Israel confirms and assures it. "For the Reform movement this festival is a testimony to the undying truth that 'The People of Israel lives.'"²⁴² This is a primary theme of these services and the cause for rejoicing.

Sacred Myth and Image of God

Determining the nature of the sacred myth and the connection of Yom ha-Atzma'ut to God will help to summarize these services. Israel is clearly

²⁴⁰ Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, in Rabbi William Sajowitz, "Worship Service for Israel Independence Day," 4-5

²⁴¹ The Association of Reform Jewish Congregations of Greater Washington, "Israel Independence Day Service" (creative service, Temple Shalom, Chevy Chase, MD 1976), 13.

²⁴² Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, "Rejoice in Zion" (creative service, Temple Micah, Washington D.C., 1971), 1.

considered central. It is our land, the land of our history, as expressed in this frequently quoted statement:

Today we turn our thoughts to the land of Israel, the cradle of our faith, a land hallowed by memories of kings and prophets, of poets and sages. In all the ages of our history, and in all the lands of our dispersion, we have remembered it with love and longing. . . .²⁴³

Yet Israel's significance goes beyond this to serving as an foreshadowing of redemption and corroboration of the the words of the prophets and of God. Israel is not treated as a secular, political state, but as fulfillment of an essential religious truth. From this perspective, God is essential and intimately connected to Israel in the role of Redeemer. Events from Israel's past and present are selected to emphasize the miracle and the beauty of the land, and not the hardship and pain associated with it. Worshippers are thus assured about the possibility not only of survival, but of ultimate redemption because of what they have witnessed in the founding of the State of Israel. Articulating the sacred myth of Israel the miracle, the land in which the presence of God has been revealed, convinces us of the possibility of miracles and assures us of God's protection and involvement in the life of the Jewish people. Speaking of Israel in romantic, ideal terms helps us to keep our dreams and hopes for the future alive, for past fulfillment makes future fulfillment all the more likely. The relation between our identity and Israel is even made explicit:

Bless them--even as they have been a blessing to us.
For they have nurtured our pride, and renewed our hopes.
They have gathered in our homeless; they have healed the
bruised and the broken.

²⁴³ Anonymous, "Family Sabbath Evening Service for Israel Independence Day" (creative service, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, MD, n.d), 5.

Their struggles have strengthened us; their sacrifices have humbled us.

Their victories have exalted us; their achievements have enriched us. . . .²⁴⁴

Not only our physical survival, but our spiritual and emotional well-being is connected to Israel's future.

Are these themes different from those expressed in *GOP*? In a certain sense, they are not. One sees the same use of biblical texts emphasizing redemption--Ezekiel 37 and Psalm 107; Psalms 137 and 126 are found in the supplement as well. *GOP* even suggests the inclusion of *hallel* as on other festivals. (*Hallel* is not found in the creative services.) God is described as Redeemer and Deliverer through the texts selected for inclusion, the by the interpretation of traditional liturgical texts. (Perhaps echoing Ezekiel 37, the *gevurot* used praises God who "gives life to the dead."²⁴⁵) Interestingly, there is no mention of the Holocaust which is such a dominant theme in the creative services, nor is there any modern Hebrew poetry.

The supplement that follows the service itself is rather different, however. Notes to the supplement indicate that it is to be used primarily in conjunction with a weekday or Shabbat morning service. The actual Yom ha-Atzma'ut service mentioned above is intended for evening worship, although one could certainly include the supplementary material. In the supplement a more somber approach is seen as the current hostilities that Israel faces, and especially the pains of past exile are emphasized through the use of both ancient and modern texts. The redemption is mentioned, but the pain of

²⁴⁴ Rabbi Bennett F. Miller, "A Folk Service Celebrating Shabbat and Yom HaAtzmaut" (creative service, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ, n.d.), 19.

²⁴⁵ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *GOP*, 599.

a history spent in exile from the land is an even greater theme. God is challenged, as well as praised. Thus it would seem that the specific service for celebrating Israel Independence Day is upbeat and celebratory, acknowledging Israel as realization of the divine promise, and similar to the creative services. However, if one were to use the supplementary material with a morning service, one would be participating in a worship service with a very different mood.

Summary of Modern Festivals

Liturgy for modern festivals, developed in response to events of our era, reveals a great deal about how contemporary Jews view the world and recent history. It is clear from the language of the services that both Israel and the Holocaust are of central importance to contemporary Jewry. Interestingly, while these two central events signify very different things, they both aim to help the worshipper come away with a feeling of hope and possibility for the future. Both events have changed history--Israel in a miraculous way, the Holocaust in a horrible way. Israel is provided as positive proof that we can survive. There is reason to hope and dream, for miracles can occur and God can intervene in the world. The Holocaust challenged our ability to survive; it seemed as if we would perish, as if God was absent. Yet in spite of efforts at annihilation, Jews have been able to persist and continue to grow. The challenge is to continue not only to survive, but to change the world so that injustice and inhumanity will no longer exist. Modern history would seem to tell us that, while difficult, this is not impossible. Tish'ah Be-Av services, dealing with Holocaust and other potential tragedies, emphasize the identical theme. The ritual surrounding all of these holidays attempts to give people hope, thus

empowering them to make an impact on the world and to help bring humanity toward wholeness and redemption.

Conclusion: How Does Creative Holiday Liturgy Order the World for Those Who Worship?

Although it is difficult to summarize ten different holidays, it is possible to make a few general comments about how the community of worshippers views itself based on the creative holiday liturgy. Like the High Holiday liturgy, creative holiday liturgies define worshippers as a community of people who can act to change the world. The world beyond the synagogue is filled with problems and conflicts. The world within the synagogue helps us believe that our effort and commitment can enable us to solve these problems. We can be like Judah Maccabee fighting for religious freedom, or like Esther and work for the future of our people. We can have faith and believe in God, as did our ancestors in spite of the horror that they endured during the Holocaust. And we believe in the possibility of improvement because there was a Judah Maccabee, an Esther, a State of Israel and an Exodus from Egypt.

The holiday liturgy emphasizes something about who we are that was not stressed to such a high degree in previous services. We are defined by our past; it is our history more than anything else that helps us identify ourselves as a community able to meet the challenges of modernity. In this way we define ourselves as special and unique, for the history celebrated by the holidays is ours alone. Our unique history thus indicates to us that we are a people with a special ability--an ability to bring goodness to an imperfect world. This relationship to the past is an important part of communal identity.

... [T]hings exist for us only if we master their patterns, and ritual seems to be above all the way we take possession of the patterns that others before us have handed down, a means of reminding ourselves that those patterns really count, and a ready-made theater for rehearsing them for our own benefit as well as for the next generation whom we socialize into them. ²⁴⁶

The pattern that many of the holidays celebrate--Purim, Chanukah, Yom ha-Atzma'ut and Passover--is one of redemption, victory and triumph. Even holidays with the opposite message, such as Yom ha-Sho'ah or Tish'ah Be-Av, are given a hopeful note by emphasizing our survival and thus the possibility of future redemption. The pattern of our history is thus redemption from oppression; our ancestors were different from others because they were able to help bring about this redemption. We make these patterns count not only by recalling them ritually, but by indicating that through our own efforts we are a group of people who can re-create them in our world. We can apply that pattern of redemption to our own lives. Thus while the communal self-definition is similar to that portrayed by High Holiday services, its source is wholly different here.

In defining ourselves through our liturgy as people with a unique history, we are also defined as a people with a unique relationship to God. This point is not stressed to the degree that it is stressed in the official Reform liturgy, but it is certainly present. God has helped us in the past, and thus there is reason to have faith that this special protection will continue into the future. We have faith in God's protective power, while we are also willing to take action on the basis of the faith that we have in ourselves. Taking part in the holiday celebration is an important part of

²⁴⁶ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, 173.

affirming our special communal identity not only in relation to God, but in relation to a past that provides us with a mandate for the present. What is said in the following in connection to the Seder could apply to all of the holidays and summarizes the role of holiday ritual in giving the worshipper a sense of self and a sense of one's self in relation to the world:

The sage Hillel [says]: The beginning of redemption is redemption. The celebration is already freedom. The memory of Passover transfigures, it is an act which is already an accomplishment. The Seder does not just promise the Messiah, it is the first act of the great Messianic drama. . . .²⁴⁷

Through holiday observance worshippers come to see themselves as participants in this drama, changed by it and with the ability to help determine its outcome.

²⁴⁷ Rabbi James Lee Kaufman, "A Passover Haggadah," 17.

Chapter Five: Creative Life Cycle Ceremonies

The 226 creative life cycle ceremonies to be considered in this chapter are different in several important ways from the creative worship services previously considered. The creation of these services is compelled not by the liturgical calendar but by a personal and significant event in the life of a particular family. Furthermore, the services reflect much greater involvement by the laity in both creation and execution than do other creative services. Life cycle ceremonies also raise some unique questions-- questions that were not applicable to other categories of worship services. It will be important to consider how particular ceremonies reflect the feelings and emotions attached to a critical moment in the life of an individual. Another area to explore is the degree to which the creative services vary to meet the unique needs and experiences that are a part of the different stages of one's life. In general, attention to the relationship between the liturgical text and the individual will be greater in this chapter than in previous chapters because the services grow out of the experiences and feelings of the individual as he/she goes through different stages of development. Services from every major life cycle event will be examined in the order that they typically occur: birth, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, marriage and death. Conversion and divorce will be considered at the end, in a separate category, for while they are life cycle events, they are not part of everyone's life. By way of summarizing life cycle services in general, the image of God portrayed in these services will be examined in the attempt to determine how it relates to the way that the community sees and values itself.

The services in the 1961 Rabbi's Manual will be used as the basis for comparing the "normative" Reform service with the creative services. Some reference will be made to the 1988 manual as well (although it was published after the period being studied), in an attempt to see to what extent the creative services incorporated elements that eventually became part of the standard ritual.

Birth Ceremonies

The 51 ceremonies marking the birth and early life of a child are mostly written and compiled by parents, sometimes with the help of rabbis. I have no birth ceremonies written prior to the early seventies, and most were written in the late seventies and eighties.

Birth and Early Childhood	
Birth Ceremonies	
Girls	24
Boys	11
Both	3
Early Childhood Ceremonies	
Pidyon Haben	4
Kiddush Peter Rechem	3
Adoption	1
Weaning	2
Naming of Older Children	1
Other	2

Birth Ceremonies for Girls

It is not surprising that the largest category of birth ceremonies is comprised of services to mark the birth of a daughter. The fact that there is no traditional ceremony to celebrate this occasion leaves a void that many, concerned with equality between male and female, are anxious to fill. For many years there was no official Reform ceremony either. The 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*¹ had no complete covenant ceremony for the birth of a girl. It only contained a prayer for naming a daughter in the synagogue. Thus, this was an area in which there was plenty of room for liturgical creativity. What is interesting is the tremendous variety that exists in this group of services. The birth ceremonies for girls are given a wide range of names. Brit HaNerot (Covenant of the Candles)² and Brit Bat (Covenant Ceremony for a Daughter)³ are the most common. Other names are also found, however, including Simchat Bat (Celebrating the Birth of a Daughter),⁴ Brit Adut [sic] (Covenant of Witnessing)⁵ and Seder Brit Ohel Shel Sarah Imelnu (Service for Entry into the Covenant of the Tent of Sarah our Mother).⁶ Another source of diversity in these services is found in the use of Hebrew blessings. Since the traditional blessings said at the circumcision are obviously not appropriate, there are a variety of other blessings utilized instead. One frequently found formulation is Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehachnisah levrito

¹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (Philadelphia, PA, 1961), 16.

² Rabbi Paul Swerdlow, "Brit HaNerot--A Ceremony Upon the Birth of a Girl" (n.p., 1973).

³ Rabbi Charles P. Sherman, "Brit Bat Yisrael--Covenant for a Daughter of Israel" (Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK, 1979).

⁴ Cindi and Lloyd Orensten, "Simchat Bat" (n.p., 1982).

⁵ Perry-Marx, "Brit Adut" (n.p., 1983).

⁶ Rabbi Edward S. Treister, "Seder Brit Ohel Shel Sarah Imelnu--A Service for Entry into the Covenant of the Tent of Sarah Our Mother" (Montreal, 1978).

shei am Yisrael (Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has blessed us with mitzvot and has commanded us to initiate our daughter into the covenant of the people of Israel).⁷ This is almost identical to the blessing utilized in the new *Rabbi's Manual*.⁸ Another very common blessing is Baruch atah Adonai, mesameach horim im hayeladim (Blessed are you Adonai, who causes parents to rejoice with their children).⁹ Some ceremonies alter the traditional blessing said after the circumcision by simply adding Sarah and changing the gender reference of the Hebrew.¹⁰

It is also interesting to note that some ceremonies take Hebrew blessings from other contexts and apply them to the birth ceremony for daughters. Two blessings used in this way both express a reverence for life and the process of creation: Baruch atah Adonai yotzer ha'adam (Blessed are you Adonai, Creator of humanity.)¹¹ and Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam oseh ma'asei vereishit (Blessed are you, Adonai, Creator of the mystery of creation.)¹² Sometimes completely new blessings are fashioned, expressing similar ideas. This reflects the attempt of individuals to creatively express their feelings by using the traditional liturgical formula, and is the first significant example of innovative use of Hebrew in any of these services. Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vitzivanu al kiddush hachayim (Blessed is the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, by whose mitzvot we are

⁷ Orensten, "Simchat Bat," 1.

⁸ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (New York, NY, 1988), 20.

⁹ Shelly and Janet Marder, "Brit Ceremony" (n.p., 1983), 1.

¹⁰ Marder, "Brit Ceremony," 3.

¹¹ Perry-Marx, "Brit Adul," 2.

¹² Bob and Carla Horowitz, "Naming Ceremony" (New Haven, CT, 1977), 2.

hallowed, who commands us to sanctify life) ¹³ and Baruch atah Adonai, hame'ir la'olam kulo b'chvodo (Blessed are You Adonai, whose presence gives light to all the world) ¹⁴ are both examples of this original formulation and use of Hebrew blessings.

The diversity is not only reflected in the names and blessings of these ceremonies, but in the types of ceremonies that are held for the birth of a daughter. There are many symbols and rituals taken from other contexts and applied to the birth ceremonies. This reflects the search for visible and physical ways to welcome a daughter into the covenant. While the history and power of circumcision speaks for itself, it is difficult to find a tangible symbol of equal force to use in a ceremony for a daughter. One ritual that is used is that of washing the feet. The women that wrote "Brit Rehitza" explain the ceremony in this fashion:

The idea of water . . . proved to be a compelling one. We wanted something ancient and Jewish . . . something physical and something meaningful vis a vis the event at hand: a welcoming into the covenant. . . . In addition to the covenant with Abraham . . . a covenant is also made with Noah after the flood. Surely, we would want to welcome the baby girl into that covenant as well, a covenant that potentially involves all of humanity. . . .

Water. Washing. Welcoming . . . Someone remembered that when Abraham was recovering from his circumcision, he was visited by three angels of the Lord. . . . Abraham greeted these strangers with the gracious Middle Eastern sign of hospitality--he gave them water to wash their feet. What better way, then, for us to welcome our new members in the family of people and the family of Jews?

Feet washing is gentle, loving, and ancient. It is also tangible and earthy: there is touching and splashing and the cry of the baby when first shocked by cold water. Through this act,

¹³ Rabbi Kenneth Weiss, "The Covenant of Life--A Brit Ceremony for Girls" (n.p., n.d.), 1.

¹⁴ Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, "Untitled" (n.p., n.d.), 2.

we hoped to help create a meaningful and memorable rite of passage.¹⁵

The ceremony itself involves readings and midrashim about the human body, particularly the feet, Abraham washing the feet of the strangers and Noah. The blessing Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam zocher habrit (Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who is mindful of the covenant) is found following the quoting of Genesis 9: 9, 10, 14. There is a naming and of course, the washing of the feet, with the blessing: Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam zocher habrit berechitzat reglayim (Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who is mindful of the covenant through the washing of the feet).¹⁶ Feet washing is integrated into other ceremonies as well, although it may not be the central symbol.¹⁷ While part of some ceremonies, feet washing is not the dominant act that is utilized in birth ceremonies for girls.

The most common ritual act incorporated into these ceremonies is the lighting of candles. One of the earliest services to utilize this symbolism is written by Rabbi Paul Swerdlow. He explains the meaning of the ceremony and the strong desire that existed for a birth ceremony for girls:

The three elements which appear . . . are the three levels of identity. First the child is given an identity as a member of the Jewish People by the symbolism of candles for girls (and by circumcision for boys). The wine which is shared with the baby and the parents represents the identity of a family. Finally the personal identity is given by the naming. . . . Once the ceremony was completed, I began to write articles specifically on the ceremony. . . . Requests came pouring in from all corners of the

¹⁵ Rebecca Trachtenberg-Alpert et al., "The Covenant of Washing," *Menorah* (April/May, 1983): 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 11-12.

¹⁷ Perry-Marx, "Brit Adut," 1-2. Interestingly, the blessing that is used with the washing is not a special blessing for that act, but the *shehecheyanu*.

United States, Canada and several other countries. I am very proud of this breakthrough. While there were several attempts to prepare ceremonies at home for their daughters, to the best of my knowledge this represents the first attempt to create a new ceremony for the entire Jewish people.¹⁸

There are several interesting things about Swerdlow's comments. First, the reaction to his service reveals the degree to which people had been striving to find a meaningful ceremony to welcome girls into the covenant. Second, it is worth noting that candles are not merely utilized as a pleasing and meaningful Jewish symbol, but are in fact seen as a symbol of the covenant similar to circumcision. The basis for the covenantal association given to the candles is not clear. In his introduction, entitled "Laws Concerning Brit HaNerot," Swerdlow states that:

... [T]he girl enters (the covenant) through the symbolism of the lighting of candles. Women and children, as well as men, according to Deuteronomy 29: 9-14, were participants in the original making of the covenant between God and Israel. . . . Just as the Ner Tamid reminds us of God's gift of Torah and the Sabbath candles remind us of God's gift of the Sabbath, so the Brit HaNerot candles remind us of God's gift of life. Three candles represent the three participants in the birth of a child—mother, father, God.¹⁹

There is no explanation for the assertion that the girl enters the covenant through the symbol of candles. It certainly could be connected to the idea of Shabbat as a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. This is not

¹⁸ Rabbi Paul Swerdlow, letter to Betsy Torop (March 14, 1989) in reference to "Brit HaNerot-- A Ceremony upon the Birth of a Girl," (Collegetown, PA, 1973). He indicates that the ceremony was written while he was rabbi of a synagogue affiliated with the Conservative movement. Because he is a Reform rabbi and the ceremony was circulated well beyond his community, however, it is eligible for inclusion here.

¹⁹ Rabbi Paul Swerdlow, "Laws Concerning Brit HaNerot" in "Brit HaNerot--A Ceremony upon the Birth of a Girl," 1.

specifically stated, however, and the Brit HaNerot candles are in fact distinguished from the Shabbat candles.

As the candles are used in most services, however, they do not seem to have a specific covenantal meaning. Rather, they seem to be a symbol that most people find significant and suggestive; the imagery associated with light has a beauty that suggests a wide range of meanings:

Light is a symbol of the joy of Jewish festivals, a symbol of the warmth and peace of Shabbat, a symbol of life. With these candles we keep the flame of our heritage alive throughout the generations. Each generation illumines the path of life for the next.²⁰

People who participate in the ceremony each light a candle as they read various parts of the service. While in the above reading, light is associated with holidays and life, in another reading it is associated with God and Torah:

Adonai, we thank you for the light you have brought into our lives, for love, for birth, for our daughter Naomi Shayne. May she come to know you and to study Your ways. May Your Torah be a light unto her eyes and a lamp unto her feet. May she be blessed always with the Divine Presence, so that she casts Your light wherever she goes.²¹

Thus it would appear that in most services the lighting of candles is used because of its pleasing imagery and associations rather than as a covenantal symbol.

Another symbol that is found in these services is the talit, which is wrapped around the baby. The meaning given to this act is varied. In one service, following the washing of the baby's feet (connected to Abraham and

²⁰ Marder, "Brit Ceremony," 2.

²¹ Orensten, "Simchat Bat," 1.

used as a form of welcoming as well as a symbol of Torah), she is wrapped in a talit:

We will wrap you with this special *Tallit*; may you find your faith and your community as warm as the womb from which you came. May its fringes always remind you that every one of us is attached to one whole fabric of our people.²²

The talit also serves to connect the child to previous generations: "As I wrap my daughter in this talit which belonged to her great-grandfather Charles, so may her life be wrapped in righteousness."²³ Using the talit, like the inclusion of candles, is a tangible way to integrate images and ideas of importance into the ceremony. There are of course ceremonies that do not make any attempt to utilize unique physical symbols. For the most part, however, the diversity of symbols and blessings drawn upon is the most distinguishing feature of the birth ceremonies created for daughters.

Most creative birth services for girls have the essential traditional liturgical texts found in a Brit Milah: *baruch haba*, some pronouncement of the name (often using at least part of the traditional text) and a statement expressing the traditional hope that the child will enjoy the blessings of "Torah, marriage and good deeds" are included in most ceremonies. *Kiddush* is said with some reference made to the kiddush cup used at the parents' wedding. This is one example of the often expressed sentiment that the birth of a child is seen as a completion or fulfillment of the marital bond. *Shehecheyanu* and the Priestly Blessing are in all of the services and it is not uncommon to find the use of Elijah's chair and the inclusion of a

²² Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, "Simchat Bat," 4. While this service is for a girl, the author indicated that he has adapted it for "generic" use. Overall, however, the use of new symbols and customs like wrapping the baby in a talit are found in birth ceremonies for girls and not for boys.

²³ Marder, "Brit Ceremony," 3.

misheberach as well. These are the essential liturgical texts found in the birth services in the two rabbis' manuals. The "Covenant Service for a Daughter" found in the 1988 *Rabbi's Manual* is similar in its use of traditional texts (and additional readings) to the Brit Milah service, without, of course, the material particular to circumcision. This same similarity between the birth ceremonies for girls and the Brit Milah ceremonies will be seen in the creative liturgies.

In addition to a common set of traditional liturgical texts, there is also a common body of source material that is drawn upon by those writing birth ceremonies for girls. The text from Song of Songs Rabbah (also found in the new *Rabbi's Manual*) stressing that children are the guarantors of Torah into the future is very popular.²⁴ A reading adapted from Martin Buber and stressing the uniqueness of each individual is commonly found as well:

Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique. It is the duty of every person in Israel to know and consider that she is unique in her particular character and that there has never been anyone like her before; for if there had been someone like her there would have been no need for her to come into the world. Every single person is a new thing in the world and is called upon to fulfill her particularity.²⁵

As will be seen throughout the life cycle services, the emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual is a common theme. The qualities that are looked for in a child are described in an adaptation of Douglas MacArthur's "Build me a Son" that is part of many ceremonies:

²⁴ Song of Songs Rabbah, in Rabbi Charles Sherman, "Brit Bat Yisrael," 1.

²⁵ Martin Buber, in Rabbi Bruce Gottlieb, "Naming Ceremony for Shoshanah Chayah Gottlieb" (Temple Beth Shalom, Toms River, NJ, 1984), 3.

Build us a daughter, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when she is weak and brave enough to face herself when she is afraid: one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat but humble and gentle in victory. . . . Grant her the insight to know herself and the wisdom to know you. . . . Build us a daughter, O Lord, whose heart will be clear, whose goals will be high: a daughter who will master herself before she seeks to master others: one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep: one who will read into the future yet never forget the past. . . .²⁶

This reading is often adapted to "build me a granddaughter" or "build me a Jew." A final reading that is used fairly often, although not as frequently as the others mentioned, is by Kahlil Gibran. It too stresses the theme of individuality.

Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts. . . .
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are
set forth.²⁷

These readings, and the symbols and rituals described above, reveal the general themes commonly found in these services. As one would expect there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the miracle and joy associated with the birth of a child. Having a child is viewed as the fulfillment of the love between husband and wife and a beautiful, joyous occasion celebrating life. There are many readings in which parents express their hopes for the child, as in the "build me a daughter" reading quoted above. These readings often center around the wish that their child learn to be compassionate,

²⁶ Douglas MacArthur, in Rabbi Bruce Gottlieb, "Naming Ceremony," 2.

²⁷ Rabbi Abraham Ingber, "Brit HaNerot Ceremony" (Cincinnati, 1984), 3-4.

kind and caring for others. As seen in the Kahlil Gibran reading, there is also emphasis placed on allowing children to be independent, helping them to reach their potential, and hoping that they have the strength to act on their own. Hopes are also expressed in relation to the future of the child as a Jew. There is a desire expressed by many that their children will carry on the Jewish heritage and live a Jewish life enriched by Torah and tradition. The idea of covenant is strongly affirmed; most services are not just namings but ceremonies welcoming the baby into the covenant. One might be surprised about the degree to which themes related to covenant and tradition are stressed. However, it is perhaps to be expected that parents who write a birth service for their child will be more Jewishly involved and active than average, and thus their hopes for their child are likely to be connected to central Jewish concepts and values.

What is most remarkable about these ceremonies, however, is not the themes they express. These themes in many ways grow naturally out of the feelings and emotions attached to having a child. What stands out is the diversity of ritual acts and blessings that the ceremonies contain, and the attempt by many to make their ceremony, through texts and symbols, equal in significance and power to a Brit Milah. This does not appear to be a concern of the "Covenant Service for a Daughter" found in the new rabbi's manual.

Brit Milah

Not only are there many fewer birth ceremonies for boys, but in general, the creative Brit Milah services are not radically different from the services in the rabbis' manual. They merely add extra readings such as those described above or perhaps alter the quantity or arrangement of the

traditional liturgical texts.²⁸ (Interestingly, about half of the Brit Milah services that I have were written by faculty and students at HUC-JIR for their own sons.) Furthermore, the source material drawn upon and the traditional liturgical texts utilized in Brit Milah services are very similar to those found in birth ceremonies for girls. It appears to be the existence of a personalized ceremony more than the particular content of that ceremony that distinguishes the Brit Milah services. A personalized service created for one's own child is meaningful even if the contents are not radically different from those of the standard Reform service. This question of "personalized" liturgy will be one that we will return to.

I have only one example of the kind of creativity and novel use of symbolism in Brit Milah that is seen in the birth ceremonies for girls. In this ceremony, symbols from the parents' wedding are incorporated: the promises of the ketubah are read and the personal covenant between husband and wife is expanded to include the son. The baby is wrapped with a talit three times to symbol the three times the bride and groom circled each other at their wedding. In order to symbolically connect the child to the generations that preceded him, the baby is given the fringe cut from the talit of his deceased great-grandfather: "As you grasp this fringe, you accept his name and the spirit of his life."²⁹ Again the themes of children as the fulfillment of one's marriage and the importance of carrying on the Jewish tradition are emphasized. For the most part, however, creativity in ceremonies for baby boys is not found in Brit Milah services, but in other ceremonies for infants and young children.

²⁸ See for example, Stephen and Jacqueline Moch, "God Gave a Beloved One" (n.p., 1979).

²⁹ Rabbi Arthur and Laurie Gross Schaefer, "Brit Milah" (n.p., 1985), 2, 5.

Other Ceremonies Related to Birth and Early Childhood.

One rabbi has developed a completely new ceremony for baby boys called Simchat Ben. It is the public celebration of a newborn son, and is explained in the following manner:

"Simchat Ben" does not replace Brit . . . [or] pidyon ha-ben. . . . [It] derives from a wonderful custom, the "mi-she-berakh" blessing. . . . Where the "Simchat Ben" differs from the "mi-she-berakh" is that an entire family is honored with the first aliyah of the Torah service and a brief ceremony is held to honor them and their newborn child. This ceremony consists of three elements; the shehechaynu blessing for family happiness, the mi-she-berakh blessing for community rejoicing, and a taste of honey for the baby, prior to the Torah reading, so that the first "taste" of Torah will be a sweet one . . . It should be noted that a "Simchat Bat" can be held for a newborn daughter in the exact same manner. . . .³⁰

The ceremony takes place in the context of a Shabbat service that is unique only in the extra readings relating to children that it contains. The motivation for the ceremony is not exactly clear. It does however solve the problem faced by rabbis (among others) who may want or need to involve the entire community in their joyful occasion, but still desire the actual circumcision to be in an intimate setting and not before a large crowd. I have no indication that this ceremony was used by anyone other than this one family; it does not seem to have grown beyond them to become a common celebration.

Several people, however, have attempted to formulate modern Pidyon Haben ceremonies. The meaning given to this ceremony is varied, although it

³⁰ Rabbi Earl Kaplan, "Simchat Ben for Michael Lawrence Kaplan" (University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1978), 1.

usually focuses on the individual potential of the child and dedication to Jewish life and tradition. In one service, there is emphasis placed upon the possibility of a unique role for the child, albeit a role different from that of a priest.

"Which would you rather do? Dedicate your first born son to the priesthood or redeem him with five shekels so he can lead an ordinary life?"

Neither! I don't want him to be a priest for they are no longer needed by the Jewish people. But I don't want him to be just an ordinary man either. I hope he will someday become a leader and teacher of men. Perhaps even a rabbi.³¹

As part of the ceremony, money is given to a scholarship fund at the Temple, symbolizing the traditional redemption price. This is a common aspect of the Pidyon Haben ceremonies; another service indicates that the parents made contributions to eighteen different causes. This latter service contains an interpretation of Pidyon Haben that is wholly different from Maller's:

We ask you, our community, as representatives of Israel to witness and help us redeem our son from the determined service of God to the free development of his own potential. . . . In the words of the tradition we ask: Which would you prefer, to give us your firstborn son, or to redeem him through the five pieces of money which the Torah requires?

In our own words we ask: to choose whether now you wish to raise your son and take upon yourselves all the responsibilities of being Jewish parents, raising Jewish children, and helping them find their path within our tradition.³²

Pidyon Haben for this family is thus a time to affirm the independence of the child. He is free to determine his own relationship to God, "redeemed"

³¹ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "A Modern Pidyon Ha Ben" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1972), 1.

³² Rabbi Arthur and Laurie Gross-Schaefer, "Redemption of the First Born" (n.p., 1985), 5.

from a way of life that would force him to think and act in a certain way. The ceremony also allows parents to dwell on the birth of their child, and the special nature of the first-born, as well as to affirm their own commitment to raising their child as a responsible Jew.

These particular ceremonies are for boys. By definition Pidyon Haben is a male-centered ceremony. Recognizing the problems, as well as the significance of Pidyon Haben, the suggestion was made by Rabbis Norman Cohen and Mark S. Golub for a Kiddush Peter Rechem ceremony. This would be a ritual for first-born boys and girls and would not involve the out-dated symbolism of a priest.

The genius of the Pidyon HaBen ceremony is that it weds the birth of parenthood to the birth of the Jewish People. It concretizes the idea that the survival of the Jewish People continues to be dependent upon the commitment of future generation. . . . At the same moment that two persons rejoice in the gift of life granted to them by God, the couple relives the initial moment of communal commitment by linking the gift of children to the service of God. . . .

Clearly at a time when so many Reform Jews are seeking to introduce additional Jewish symbolism into their homes and synagogues . . . a ceremony with such significance on both the personal and communal levels should be considered for inclusion into current Reform Jewish life. . . .

The challenge facing Reform Judaism, therefore, is that of adopting a new ceremony which embodies the original meaning of the Redemption of the First Born Son ceremony, which retains as much of the traditional form of the ceremony as possible, and which modifies the ceremony so as to keep it consistent with the rest of the intellectual and emotional insights of Reform life. . . . Kiddush Peter Rechem attempts to satisfy these three criteria.³³

³³ Rabbis Mark S. Golub and Norman Cohen, "An Alternative to Pidyon HaBen," *CCAR Journal* (Winter, 1973): 71-2.

The brief ceremony, written for Golub's daughter, includes the reading of Torah texts relevant to the status of the first-born and readings about parenthood and raising the child as a devoted Jew. The parents are asked if they are willing to commit the child to Torah, chupah and good deeds, and they contribute eighteen silver dollars as a sign of the first contribution of the child. The ceremony is thus an opportunity to affirm the future commitment of the child to Judaism and the Jewish community. I have one other example of this particular ceremony being held for a child, although interestingly it is called Pidyon Haben! ³⁴

Another example of a Kiddush Peter Rechem is completely different: it is service for a disabled child. The service, although for a boy, is not a circumcision. It is very much like the services for daughters utilizing candles and similar blessings and readings. The main difference is that there is a frank recognition of the mixed emotions attached to the occasion:

A new life has been kindled in our lives. We have been given the gift of a new life. However different our son may be from our dreams of a child, he is the fruit of our love, conceived and nurtured within me, and we welcome him to our family. . . . We had anticipated that this occasion would be one of great joy instead it is mixed with sadness. Yet it has been the strength of our people throughout history to find joy in times of sorrow and hope in the face of adversity. May that tradition guide us as we rear our son. ³⁵

The need to acknowledge the disability of the child in a ritual way is interesting, as is the reaching back to the ancient idea of Kiddush Peter

³⁴ Golub and Cohen, "Kiddush Peter Rechem," in Rod and Phyllis Raskin, "Pidyon HaBen" (n.p., 1979).

³⁵ Rabbi Martin S. Weiner, Rabbi John Rosove, Nina Rifkind, Steven F. Shatz "Kiddush Peter Rechem--A Service for the Disabled Child" (San Francisco, n.d.).

Rechem, rather than simply calling the ceremony a "naming" (which, in effect, it is).

In the case of all of the Pidyon Haben and Kiddush Peter Rechem services, one sees the effort to utilize ancient ceremonies and concepts to emphasize both the commitment of the child and the parents to the Jewish tradition and the individual potential of the child. The fact that this is done in a separate ceremony in some cases, rather than as a part of the original birth ceremony (or in addition to it), might reflect the desire of the parents for yet another opportunity to articulate their hopes and dreams for the child in a ritual context. It may also reflect the growing tendency among Reform Jews to recapture previously discarded traditions, and as Golub and Cohen note, "to introduce additional symbolism into their homes" (note 33). The message of these ceremonies, however, is not radically different from the themes of birth ceremonies; the message is simply expressed through a different set of symbols, with a slightly different emphasis. It should be noted, however, that the development of ceremonies such as these is not a major trend in the Reform movement today, as evidenced by the small number of such ceremonies.

A final ceremony that is worth mentioning briefly is a weaning ceremony. Unlike the Pidyon Haben services, which are modern interpretations of an ancient ceremony, the weaning services represent a completely new ceremony marking an important event in the life of both mother and child. The two ceremonies that I have both mention the celebration by Abraham and Sarah of Isaac's weaning, and the custom in Eastern Europe of having someone else feed the child his or her first food to announce the weaning. (Both ceremonies have someone do just this.) Both have Hebrew and English blessings such as this one: "Blessed are You God,

Ruler of the Universe, who has enabled me to nurse." ³⁶ In addition to various readings about sustenance, the service just quoted has the mother share her feelings about breast feeding and weaning. The other service has the breaking of a baby bottle at the end! ³⁷ Rituals for weaning a child are one of the few examples seen so far of the creation of totally new ceremonies. It is worth noting again that it is in relation to birth and childhood that there seems to be unusual creativity in ritual expression.

Summary

It is possible that the creativity and use of new symbols in birth ceremonies is a reflection of the powerful emotions attached to the birth of a child. Parents are anxious to search for new rites, new words and additional opportunities to express their happiness and voice the multiple hopes that are brought to the surface with the child's birth. This is obviously most true when the tradition provides little support or context for celebration, as with the birth of a daughter. Individuals seem to be looking for a tangible Jewish symbol, equal in power to circumcision, to express the depth of feeling associated with the birth of a daughter and their joy at her entrance into the covenant. While Brit Milah ceremonies lack these new blessings and rituals, the very existence of a personal ceremony seems to give the occasion a unique power and significance to the family. The personal nature of the ceremonies and the incorporation of meaningful Jewish symbols and blessings is a clear attempt to acknowledge ritually the extraordinary feelings and emotions attached to birth. These

³⁶ Jeffrey Winter and Sally Jo Brown-Winter, "Weaning Ceremony" (n.p., 1980), 2.

³⁷ Fern Amper and Eli Scheap, "Weaning Ceremony" (n.p., 1983).

ceremonies do not necessarily represent rebellion against the standard ritual. Rather, the normative ritual does not appear to express the depth of feeling nor forge the personal connection to the ceremony that those who write their own services seem to desire.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Introduction

As in the case of Brit Milah, it is the mere fact that a personalized service exists that is most significant. This characteristic will be the guiding principle in the examination of these services, above and beyond the specific content and structure of the services themselves. The 70 services are both Bar and Bat Mitzvah services, and they take place on Friday night and Saturday morning. The services on Friday night were divided into Bar and Bat Mitzvah in an attempt to ascertain whether or not Friday night services were primarily reserved for Bat Mitzvah. This turns out not be the case. Friday Bar/Bat Mitzvah appears to be determined by the custom of the congregation and is unrelated to the gender of the child. As will be discussed below, there are few differences between Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

Havdalah Bar/Bat Mitzvah services are found as well. Beginning with 1970, the services are fairly equally distributed throughout the next fifteen years.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Services: Table I	
Bar Mitzvah	35
Bat Mitzvah	19
B'nai Mitzvah	5

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Services: Table 1b	
Generic	2
Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah	3
Torah Service, Readings/Prayers	6

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Services: Table II	
Friday evening	12 (Bar) 8 (Bat)
Saturday morning	28
<u>Havdalah</u>	14
Unknown	2

Of the 65 services, 25 of them were written at Temple Akiva in Culver City, CA with Rabbi Allen S. Maller. At this particular synagogue, ninety percent of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah services use "a custom booklet."³⁸ The large number of havdalah services is an interesting phenomenon, most likely connected to the rising importance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah party. A late service allows for a more convenient connection between the service and the party.³⁹ Moreover, it makes the Bar/Bat Mitzvah a completely private ceremony for havdalah is not a general community celebration like other Shabbat services. Thus, people attend the worship service by invitation only. Havdalah Bar/Bat Mitzvahs are only one indication of the widespread trend toward privatization and personalization that is seen not only in

³⁸ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, personal correspondence to Betsy Torop (March, 1989).

³⁹ See Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, "The Havdalah Bar Mitzvah -- A Responsum" *CCAR Journal* (Summer, 1974): 57-61 for a discussion of this trend.

creative Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, but in creative life cycle liturgy in general.

For the most part, there is no difference between Bar and Bat Mitzvah. There are a few indications, however, that even in the mid-seventies the Bat Mitzvah ceremony was not accorded the same status as the Bar Mitzvah ceremony. One rabbi has a service called B'not Torah for the girls:

At the end of the school year our young ladies who have completed the same requirements as our B'nei Mitzvah (four years of Hebrew studies and Religious School) have a class ceremony called B'not Torah. . . . They lead worship and read the sedra. Their parents bless them, and essentially, the Rabbis have little part in the service other than a brief charge and the reading of the Kaddish.⁴⁰

Since the girls have completed the same requirements as the boys, it is unclear why a class service rather than individual ceremonies is the practice of that synagogue. In another synagogue, if Bat Mitzvah happens on Friday night (which it does not always) then instead of passing the Torah from generation to generation, a set of candlesticks is passed on.⁴¹ In spite of these examples, the distinction between Bar and Bat Mitzvah is certainly not the norm. As a final introductory comment prior to examining the meaning and manifestations of the personalization of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, it is necessary to briefly discuss their structure and content as Shabbat services.

Generally speaking, the services are not that different from the Shabbat services discussed in Chapter Two. For the most part, the

⁴⁰ Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher, "B'not Torah" (Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington, DE, 1974).

⁴¹ Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "Alternate Ceremony of the Generations for Bat Mitzvah at a Friday Evening Service" (n.p., n.d.). While the exact date is unclear, the ceremony uses page references from *GOP*, indicating that it was written after 1975.

traditional liturgical texts are not dominant. While there is a slightly greater use of traditional liturgical texts than is found in creative Shabbat liturgy overall, there is no question that the traditional liturgical texts are secondary to the songs and readings that convey the feelings and ideas of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The source material is clearly more important to the compilers of these services, and it often bears no relationship to the traditional liturgical texts that surround it. (Very little of the material in most services is actually written by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. As with creative Shabbat services it is more accurate to say that these services are "compiled" rather than "written.") The source material is varied and wide ranging. Kahlil Gibran, Edmond Fleg, Anne Frank, various American poets, Jack Reimer, and statements by various Jewish leaders and thinkers (David Ben-Gurion, Ben Zion Bokser, Abraham Joshua Heschel) are all to be found. No particular source is dominant overall, although in looking at the services of a particular synagogue one can clearly see that a common body of material is utilized. While there are more Jewish than non-Jewish sources, selections from the works of non-Jews are by no means lacking.

The music is mostly modern Jewish music: "Eli, Eli," "Hiney Ma Tov" and "Bashanah Haba'ah" are three commonly found examples. Some services have music from Fiddler on the Roof: "Sunrise, Sunset" and particularly "Sabbath Prayer." Non-Jewish music such as "Circle Game," "Turn, Turn" and "Morning has Broken" is also found (although to a lesser extent than Jewish music). As with the source material, no particular song is dominant overall. In general, the services emphasize the themes of community, the need to reach out to others and particularly the themes of individual growth and potential. While this is a very brief overview, it should be clear that for the most part the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services represent a simplified

version of some of the themes and tendencies found in creative Shabbat services as a whole.

The Personalization and Privatization of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah services are highly personalized. This is reflected in a myriad of ways and is apparent even upon briefly looking at the services. The introduction to one service reads: "A special service *commissioned* by Jeannie and William Frumkin for the Bar Mitzvah of their son Jeffrey" (emphasis added).⁴² It is not at all uncommon to find pictures of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the cover of the booklet.⁴³ Personal statements by the parents to the child can frequently be found at the beginning of the services:

Love is a wonderful, precious thing. We have tried to lavish you with loving care and concern because you are so dear to all of us. We want you to grow up as a happy, well adjusted person in all the best traditions of our faith.⁴⁴

Occasionally the words of a prayer are even changed to apply directly to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child, as in this translation of the *v'ahavta*:

You shall love the Lord your God. . . . On this day, our brother is entering into a new period of his life. . . . He shall teach the words of God diligently to his children; he shall speak of them when he is sitting in his home or elsewhere, when he lies down and when he rises. . . . He shall inscribe them on the doorposts of his house and on his gates as our people have done throughout the generations. . . .⁴⁵

⁴² Rabbi Abraham J. Klausner, "A Sabbath Bar Mitzvah Service" (Temple Emanuel, Yonkers, NY, 1977).

⁴³ Dick and Norma Sharpe, "B'not Mitzvah" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1983).

⁴⁴ Merv and Ida Freedman, "Bat Mitzvah of Jodi Leigh Freedman" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1982), introductory letter to daughter.

⁴⁵ The Gartenberg Family, "Bar Mitzvah of Marc Richard Gartenberg" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1976), 7.

Another service appears to be centered around the interests of the child. The cover has a picture of a guitar player on it; there is a great deal of music in the service (mostly modern American music) and the credits indicate that the music was "performed" by two individuals who appear to be outside of the Bar Mitzvah family.⁴⁶ One assumes that music was a particular hobby of the Bar Mitzvah. The services themselves are often titled "Bar Mitzvah of . . ." rather than "Shabbat Worship." The service booklets are viewed as souvenirs; guests are often invited to take them as a "remembrance of the occasion."⁴⁷ Furthermore, most services contain a paragraph thanking the guests for coming to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, highlighting yet another fact about the occasion that makes it a very private and personal one: in many synagogues, the congregation is present expressly for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and not for Shabbat worship. Their presence emphasizes that the ceremony is private and personal rather than communal in nature, for it is the private celebration of the family and not the communal celebration of Shabbat that brings people to the synagogue:

Large congregations find themselves with a different *bar* or *bat mitzvah* every Saturday morning, with a majority of the congregation composed of the celebrating family's friends and relatives, but otherwise complete strangers to the habits and social network of the host synagogue. . . . Shabbat morning becomes not worship at all, but a programmed *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, designed to reinforce individual Family Systems. . . .⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The Steckler Family, "Bar Mitzvah of Randall Ian Steckler" (Temple Solel, Scottsdale, AZ, 1976), inside front cover.

⁴⁷ Marv and Ida Freedman, "Bat Mitzvah of Jodi Leigh Freedman," introductory letter to guests.

⁴⁸ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer--Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C., 1988), 93.

It is worth considering the reasons for this trend toward personalization and privatization. It would appear that in creating a service for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, a sense of ownership is developed; a connection is forged to the that particular worship service that is not felt toward Shabbat worship in general. The same trend was seen with birth ceremonies. The private ceremonies have a certain power and significance for families that the standard liturgy does not seem to possess for them. For a variety of reasons, the family and the child may not feel a part of the standard Shabbat ritual. In creating a service the family also creates an emotional bond to "their" service that they do not feel to the normative liturgy. One rabbi emphasizes the importance of this connection to the service:

Innovation is an integral part of Reform Judaism, and in departing from the traditional aspects of the Bar Mitzvah service we have attempted to institute change not for its own sake, but rather that the import of the day might be felt in the hearts of all who join with us in worship this evening. It was our particular goal that Rafi, who, after all, plays a central role in this celebration, should feel that his role was central not by definition, but by his own participation and involvement in the service itself.⁴⁹

This statement reveals a direct repudiation of certain traditional aspects of Bar Mitzvah. First of all, the role of the Bar Mitzvah child is not "central." Furthermore, his status does traditionally exist by definition--by simple virtue of the fact that he turns thirteen. Yet the significance of reaching the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not meaningful in and of itself, nor does marking this occasion as part of communal Shabbat worship seem to make it any more significant. By participation and personalization, however,

⁴⁹ Rabbi Eric A. Silver, "Bar Mitzvah of Raphael Stern," (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1974), 1.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah can become an important life cycle event, and as will be indicated later on, it in fact has become as important in the life cycle process as a wedding or a funeral. Bar/Bat Mitzvah becomes significant because it provides the opportunity for the family as a whole to express its feelings and reinforce the familial bond, not because it provides the opportunity to be involved in the communal celebration of Shabbat. This issue of personalized life cycle liturgy will be discussed again in summarizing life cycle ceremonies as a whole.

The role of the family should not be underestimated. Through creating the service, Bar/Bat Mitzvah becomes a family event. It is a time for the family to celebrate its Jewishness, as much as it is a rite of passage for the child. Several services state this outright. "We wish to dedicate this book and express a special thank you to Rabbi Maller . . . for giving our family a true positive feeling for Judaism."⁵⁰ Another service voices a similar sentiment: "Marc's [Bar Mitzvah] is special to us since we all participated in its preparation to a far greater degree than ever before. Marc's Bar Mitzvah represents our familial celebration of our Jewishness."⁵¹ Compiling the service makes the family feel Jewish and makes the occasion familial as well as individual. For example, in one instance Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the time for the father (as well as the son) to consider his own Jewish life and commitment. Speaking in reference to his son he says:

You see, unless I live a life that is worthy of his reverence, I make it almost impossible for him to live a Jewish life. So

⁵⁰ Stanley and Beverly Berlowitz, "B'not Mitzvah--Andee and Nikki Berlowitz" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1982), 1.

⁵¹ The Gartenberg Family, "Bar Mitzvah of Marc Richard Gartenberg," 2.

many young people abandon Judaism because the Jewish models that they see in their parents are not worthy of reverence. And so, in many cases, it is the parents who make it impossible for the young to obey the Fifth Commandment.

My message to parents is: Every day ask yourselves this question: 'What is there about me that deserves the reverence of my child?' ⁵²

One service utilizes a quote by Richard Rubenstein that actually calls Bar Mitzvah a rite of passage for adults:

... [I]t is also the occasion of the parent's entry into middle age. Parents are as much in need of a rite of passage as are children. They often enjoy Bar Mitzvah more than their children... ⁵³

It is worth briefly mentioning that one rabbi (who works as a family counselor) says that one should view all life cycle events from a familial rather than an individual perspective because these events so strongly influence and involve the entire family. Based on his own experience, he says that the increased familial involvement in Bar/Bat Mitzvah that occurs in working on a creative service helps to focus the family and thus alleviates the natural stress and strain that he feels is part of all life cycle events. As a result, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah becomes a time for family affirmation rather than family strain. ⁵⁴

Creative Bar/Bat Mitzvah services clearly do provide an opportunity to affirm familial closeness. Most services have a parents' prayer that reinforces the familial bond as parents voice their hopes for their child and

⁵² Anonymous, "Sabbath Morning Service--B'nai Mitzvah of Susan Gerstenfeld and Zia Modabber" (Temple Judea, n.p., 1975), 5.

⁵³ Richard Rubenstein, in *The Franklin Family*, "Bar Mitzvah of Jonathan Adam Franklin" (Congregation of Liberal Judaism, Orlando, FL, 1975), 1.

⁵⁴ Edwin H. Friedman, "Systems and Ceremonies: A Family View of Rites of Passage," in Elizabeth Carter and Monica McGoldrick, eds., *The Family Life Cycle: A Framework for Family Therapy* (New York, 1980), 429-460.

their gratitude at being present for the joyous occasion. Like the prayers at birth ceremonies, many of them thank God for the blessings of parenthood and express gratitude at being able to see their son/daughter become Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life which You gave us, thus sharing with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us. Praise to You, O Lord, for keeping us alive, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day.⁵⁵

Many of the services at Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA contain a prayer that thanks God for family and for the love and closeness that exist within it:

We thank You, Oh God, for our family and for what we mean and bring to one another. We are grateful for the bonds of loyalty and affection which sustain us, and which keep us close to one another no matter how far apart we may be.

We thank you for implanting within us a deep need for each other, for giving us the capacity to love and to care, and for enabling us to share our simchas together.

Help us to be modest in our demands of one another, but generous in our giving to each other. May we never measure how much love or encouragement we offer, may we never count the times we forgive. Rather may we always be grateful that we have one another and that we are able to express our love in acts of kindness. . . .

Bless our families with health, happiness and contentment. Above all, grant us the wisdom to build a joyous and peaceful home in which the spirit of the Jewish tradition, and pride in the heritage of Israel, will always abide.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The Baskin Family, "Bat Mitzvah of Lynn Baskin" (Temple Solel, Scottsdale, AZ, 1975), 9.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, in Joel and Linda Forman, "Bar Mitzvah of David Alon Forman" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1983), 4.

Through creating the service and celebrating with friends and family, Bar/Bat Mitzvah becomes an occasion for the family to experience a closeness and togetherness that they may not typically feel.

The familial theme is also emphasized in the frequently found ceremony of physically passing the Torah from generation to generation. While usually no specific text is indicated, in one ceremony for the passing of the Torah, the parent is instructed to say either personal words, or the following as he or she hands the Torah to the child:

We are very proud of you today, not only because of the inner growth that we know has taken place as you prepared for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but because it demonstrates great promise as you take this first step to affirm your personhood as a young Jew/Jewess. We pray that you will continue in the path of Torah through your teen years, fulfilling your part in the chain of tradition so that our family will be a blessing into the next generation.⁵⁷

The Jewish tradition, of which the Bar Mitzvah is a part, is symbolized by family members representing each generation. Jewish tradition and history is thus given a personal, familial perspective. In the closing words to the above selection, the chain of tradition is specifically stressed in reference to the particular family as opposed to the Jewish people as a whole. Through the ceremony of passing the Torah from generation to generation, Torah becomes a focal point for family unity. One ceremony expresses this clearly with the words, "We hold fast to our Torah, releasing it only long enough to pass it on to our children, that it may become part of them as it has become part of us."⁵⁸ This theme of becoming part of a chain of

⁵⁷ Rabbi Nathan M. Landman, "Ceremony of the Generations" (n.p., n.d.), 2.

⁵⁸ Rabbi Philip M. Posner, "Torah Service for Bar or Bas Mitzvah" (Temple Beth El, Riverside, CA, n.d.), 1.

tradition is one of the many themes and meanings associated with Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is viewed as a life cycle event of major significance (see page 26). One service explains: "A Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks a Jewish child's coming of age religiously. It is milestone which ranks in importance with a birth or a marriage."⁵⁹ While this may be true to the family, it certainly is not true traditionally. In spite of this emphasis, however, the meaning ascribed to Bar/Bat Mitzvah is at times rather vague, as if the families are not wholly certain as to exactly why it is so important. As one would expect, part of the meaning of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is found in the new level of responsibility that is expected of the child following this rite of passage.

Today, your participation in our Sabbath service demonstrates an interest in and dedication to Judaism. You stand prepared to teach us Torah, and to accept a new level of moral responsibility as part of family and community. Working together, as guardians of a spiritually enriched civilization, we have many obligations to fulfill. From you we seek a continuing involvement in Jewish education, an awareness and response to world-wide Jewish concerns, and a respect for the needs of the American Jewish community. . . .⁶⁰

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is also taken as a sign of the growth and development of the child. Bar/Bat Mitzvah does not create a sudden shift in status, but is rather a milestone on the path to maturity. Sometimes this growth is expressed in terms of one's involvement in the Jewish community:

⁵⁹ The Shapiro Family, "Bar Mitzvah of Jeremy Fred Shapiro" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1983), inside front cover.

⁶⁰ Rabbi Merle Singer, "Bar Mitzvah" (Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, FL, 1972), 2.

The Bat Mitzvah marks an important step in the spiritual growth of the child. It, along with the knowledge gained in religious school, leads to participation in and living as a Jew within the congregation and the community.⁶¹

In other examples, growth as a person, not as a Jew is the focus:

Today our daughter becomes a Bat Mitzvah, an important step in her path to maturity. . . .

So God, we wish You would take her by the hand and teach her the things she will have to know. . . .

Teach her to have faith in her own ideals, even if everyone else tells her she is wrong. . . .

Teach her to stand and fight if she thinks she is right. . . .

Teach her to listen to everyone, but to filter all she hears through a screen of truth, and to take only the good that comes through.

And finally, as she passes each trial of growth, let her maintain her love for us. For we love her so.⁶²

In this reading, growing to meet one's potential and having the courage to stand up for oneself as an individual is stressed more than the development of the child into a committed Jew. Other services emphasize both the Jewish and non-Jewish themes related to growth.

This is the time for the Bat Mitzvah to strengthen her allegiance to her faith and her people.

This is the time for her to embark on a path leading to mature attitudes toward religious responsibilities. . . .

This is the time for her to reaffirm her affection and respect for her family.

This is the time for her to resolve to develop her personal potential as a human being.⁶³

⁶¹ The Bulgatz and Bardin Families, "B'not Mitzvah of Heidi Bulgatz and Andrea Bardin" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1982), 3.

⁶² Anonymous, in The Elias Family, "Bat Mitzvah of Stephanie Lynn Elias" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1983), 3.

⁶³ The Berlowitz Family, "B'not Mitzvah of Andee and Nikki Berlowitz," 2.

This final reading highlights the mixture of themes related to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Religious maturation, development of individual potential and familial closeness are all things that Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrate.

Yet it seems as if the primary significance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah to these families is not found in any of the specific meanings ascribed to the occasion in these readings. The fact of the celebration is more important than the contents of the service, or the stated significance of the occasion. The ceremony is an affirmation by both the parent and child of a connection to Judaism. This is revealed most clearly through the words of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah children themselves.

How good it is to be in the Temple today with my friends and my family. As I stand here looking out at everyone, I reflect on the past and wonder what the future will be. This day means a great deal to me, and to be Jewish means even more. May my prayers be acceptable and be worthy of being remembered.⁶⁴

Another Bat Mitzvah writes: "Being Jewish is . . . Believing in only one God, Having more holidays than others, Saying oh-vey a lot, *Not knowing all of the prayers--but still feeling the energy*" (emphasis added).⁶⁵ In both of these readings it is the emotion attached to being Jewish and having a Bat Mitzvah that is so important. Being with friends and family, and "feeling the energy" is the key to having a meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Being Jewish and becoming Bat Mitzvah, "means a great deal" but any specific meaning is left undefined. The personalized services, the emphasis on family unity and the words of parents to their children indicate that the teenagers quoted above may speak for their parents as well. The creative Bar/Bat Mitzvah

⁶⁴ Lisa Newmark, "Bat Mitzvah of Lisa Newmark" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1975), 1.

⁶⁵ Jennifer Leigh Goldstein, "Bat Mitzvah of Jennifer Leigh Goldstein" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, 1985), 14.

services help families feel a connection to Judaism, even though the nature and meaning of that connection is left very vague.

In this sense, the ritual of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is very much "performative"--establishing rather than just describing a state of being. Writing the service and participating in the ceremony establish a connection to Judaism for the family that they may not have felt before:

Nearly every rite of passage brings an institutional fact into existence, and nearly every worship service features some statement or other in which people say things to establish a fact about themselves--a fact, moreover, that did not exist before they said it.⁶⁶

While Hoffman cites the examples of specific "ritual moments" such as wedding vows and baptismal statements, it seems as if in the case of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the words of the service as a whole serve to establish a very basic fact. Through the service the entire family says, in effect, "We are Jewish. We feel good about being Jews and about being part of this chain of tradition. Our child is progressing along the path to being a good person and Jew." While they were certainly Jews before the service, they may not have always felt this identity with a great deal of assurance. Writing the creative Bar/Bat Mitzvah service enables a family to make this affirmation more easily than does participation in normative Shabbat worship, for it is the expression of their feelings and a product of their own efforts. They can assert their own feelings about their family, their Judaism and Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Participating in a regular service would not necessarily establish their connection to Judaism with the same degree of confidence. A service that they compile, a "personalized" service provides

⁶⁶ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer--Not For Clergy Only*, 233. See chapter one, page three for an introduction to the concept of words as performatives.

them with a way to clearly and directly identify themselves as a proud and committed Jewish family.

Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah

A brief discussion about adult Bar/Bat mitzvah is worthwhile, although I have only a few creative services for this occasion. (Given the growing occurrence of Bar/Bat Mitzvah for adults it seems rather peculiar that I have seen only a few creative services.) There is no question, however, that adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah is very much a growing phenomenon. Interestingly, it seems to have a similar role in the life of an adult that it does in the life of a child. Bar/Bat Mitzvah provides an opportunity for adults to profess their Jewish identity and connection to the community. One B'not Mitzvah service contains several readings about the contribution of Jewish women, thus affirming the role of the B'not Mitzvah (and women in general) as active and worthwhile members of the community.⁶⁷ Another service is composed of personal readings (loosely connected to the liturgical texts) in which people talk about their upbringing and current Jewish life. Their feelings about the adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony are placed in the context of their personal family histories, resulting in strong statements of Jewish affirmation and pride.

My mother and all the other family members in her generation fled from Judaism as soon as they could. One of the results of that flight was that my own childhood was completely devoid of any formal Jewish education. . . . I did not set foot in a synagogue until I was a college student. . . . Since then there has been a slow, gradual growth of awareness on my part of

⁶⁷ Anonymous, "Adult B'nos Mitzvah Service" (Tiferes Israel Congregation, Norristown, PA, 1973), 3, 12.

what I missed as a child. . . . I embarked upon the course of study which led to my presence here on the bimah tonight. . . . This night, then, represents a major step in the renewal of Judaism for me and my extended family.⁶⁸

This idea of Bar/Bat Mitzvah as an adult representing renewal of one's Judaism is not at all far removed from what the ceremony symbolizes for children and their families. It is interesting that the meaning of the ceremony is similar for adults and children although they are at completely different stages of life.

Confirmation

The Confirmation services consist largely of the writings of the Confirmands themselves. This is one immediately obvious characteristic that distinguishes these services from Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. Since these two life cycle events occur within three years of each other, it will be important to consider the ways in which Confirmation differs from Bar/Bat Mitzvah. As the chart below indicates, the greatest number of services is to be found in the seventies, especially the early seventies, the period in which liturgical creativity was most common. However, perhaps more than other categories of creative services, Confirmation services have been steadily produced throughout this twenty year time period, and even prior to it.

Confirmation Services: Table I				
1965-69	1970-75	1976-80	1981-85	Undated
11	26	21	12	9

⁶⁸ Anonymous, in Rabbi Allen Freehling, "A Moment of Renewal and a Time for Jubilee" (University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA, 1980), 9.

Confirmation Services: Table II	
Erev Shavuot	28
Shavuot Morning	21
Weekday/Shabbat	13
Unknown	17

As is revealed in Table II, most of the 79 services take place on Shavuot. Another question that will thus need to be considered is how the themes of Shavuot are expressed in the Confirmation services. This is especially significant since, as was discussed in Chapter Four, there appear to be virtually no non-Confirmation creative services for Shavuot.

Structure and Source Material

Most of the Confirmation services are based on the traditional liturgical structure, but the traditional liturgical texts are clearly secondary to other source material. This is even more true of these services than it is of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. In the earlier years there is very little liturgical text. The *amidah* is often absent or greatly abbreviated.⁶⁹ In later years the quantity of traditional liturgical text increases, but it is still largely overwhelmed by the material written by Confirmands. While this may reflect the priorities of those compiling the services, it would also seem as if a practical concern comes into consideration. The service compilers are trying to make sure that the

⁶⁹ See for example, Rabbi Morton C. Fierman "Confirmation Services" (Temple Beth Shalom of Orange County, Santa Ana, CA, n.d.). Although not dated, it is clearly fairly early.

creative work of every Confirmand is included. Unless the Confirmation class is very small, this supplementary material is bound to overwhelm the traditional liturgical texts. The breadth of material also makes it more difficult to successfully integrate the readings into the traditional liturgical structure. It is as if the traditional liturgical texts are part of the service because their inclusion is expected; it is clear that the thoughts of the Confirmands (or the rabbi compiling a Confirmation service) form the centerpiece of the liturgy.

There are certain elements fairly common to the creative Confirmation services. Most services contain a reading of the Ten Commandments (if a Torah reading is specified.) Sometimes the reading is done in a more creative fashion, as in one synagogue that asks some of the Confirmands to write reactions and thoughts about each commandment. (Whether this is done in addition to or as a replacement for the reading from the scroll is unclear.)⁷⁰ Interestingly, reading from the Book of Ruth is not a regular part of these services. It is present in some, but not a majority of the services. A very common ritual that takes place in Confirmation services is a "floral offering." This ritual is seen less frequently in later years, although it is certainly still present. The structure and procedure of the offering is not exactly clear, nor is its origin. It seems to involve placing flowers upon the *bimah*, in front of the ark or in the ark itself. Whether all of the Confirmands do this, or just the girls, is also not clear, although it would not be surprising if it was more associated with the girls. In one case it is indicated that the girls approach the ark carrying flowers,

⁷⁰ Rabbi Gary Mandelblatt, "Judaism through our Eyes" (Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1977), 13-17.

while the boys carry Torah scrolls. This service is fairly early, however, and it is possible that this differentiation did not continue.⁷¹

The floral ceremony is given many different meanings. In quite a few cases it is tied to the offering of first fruits on Shavuot:

Shavuot is known also as the Day of the First Fruits. It reminds us of the harvest that our ancestors brought to the Holy Temple in ancient days. Today we present these blossoms as the offerings of our hearts, as the first fruits of the knowledge we have received. . . . Take these, O Lord, the harvest of our tender years, as tokens of our loyalty to Judaism.⁷²

Part of this reading (not quoted) compares the growth and flourishing of the flower to the growth and development of the Confirmands. This is another common symbolism associated with the floral offering. The theme of growth and development, which is also emphasized in Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, is highlighted by the following reading associated with the floral offering (in this service home-grown vegetables are placed on the *bimah* instead of flowers):

I am a seed. I was planted by the love of my mother and father. I was nourished by the light of the sun and by the strength of the earth, and I developed through schooling. I am a seedling. I have emerged from the world of darkness and seen the real importance of life. I have begun to grow and to learn about myself and other like me.⁷³

The above reading is one of a series of readings associated with the offering, others of which are devoted to nature and appreciation of the bounty of God's world. This too is a meaning attached to the floral offering: "As we place these flowers upon the altar, we share with you a symbol of

⁷¹ Rabbi Ely E. Pilchik, "Of Law and Love--An Original Confirmation Cantata" (Temple B'nai Jeshurun, Essex County, NJ, 1965), 2.

⁷² Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, "Our Temple" (Temple Beth-El, San Antonio, TX, 1981), 2-3.

⁷³ Anonymous, "Confirmation" (n.p., 1971), 6-7.

the wonder of life, of nature, of beauty and of God."⁷⁴ The development of the floral offering as part of Confirmation is noteworthy because Confirmation has no symbol or ceremony intrinsic to it, as does Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Brit Milah. The floral offering appears to be an attempt to provide this symbol, as the authors of birth ceremonies for girls strive for a physical and tangible symbol to incorporate into their ceremonies. The floral offering seems to have become an accepted ritual and integral part of Confirmation services, carried out in a formal and stately fashion.

The question of the formality or informality of the Confirmation services is an interesting one. The services in the earlier years appear to be quite formal, dominated by organs, formal music and lofty language. While this formality lessens over the years, it by no means disappears. Most Confirmation services have processional and recessional. In one service, following an introductory reading comparing the Confirmands to the first fruits of our hands, the rabbi reads: "We now call upon the 1981 Confirmation Class of Temple Beth-El to come forward. We, your Rabbis, your teachers, your families, and your friends, await your entrance."⁷⁵ The Confirmands then enter to choir and organ music. Many services have choirs and instruments, and almost all have presentations as part of the service: the Confirmands present a "class gift" and the synagogue presents awards to certain Confirmands. The choreography of the service is carefully orchestrated. One service thanks a particular individual for teaching the Confirmands to "orate" and "project" and for being "a terrific coach."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Anonymous, "Confirmation Service" (Congregation Beth Shalom, East Liverpool, OH, 1972), 7.

⁷⁵ Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, "Our Temple," 2.

⁷⁶ Rabbi William Sajowitz, "Ties to the Heart" (Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1981), front cover.

Another service acknowledges: "The Confirmation service was prepared and arranged by students of the Confirmation class *under the direction of...*" (emphasis added).⁷⁷ These elements not only add to the solemnity and stylized nature of the ceremonies, but are very reminiscent of high school graduations which seem to have influenced the form and structure of these services in several ways.

Interestingly, in at least one synagogue there seems to have been a rebellion against this carefully orchestrated formality. In one 1972 service, the Confirmands explain that the Confirmation class had been changed to be less formal and more discussion-oriented. Closer, more personal interaction between the students and the rabbi was facilitated, and an effort was made to have the class leave the traditional classroom setting. This move to informality was mirrored in the service as well.

For our Confirmation Service we are not using the traditional prayerbook; rather, each of us has contributed and written parts for this service. We are not wearing the traditional robes that all other classes wore. We will not be presenting a floral offering to the Temple, but rather we are offering ourselves for service to the Temple. Perhaps it seems to you that we have done more casting away than keeping. We built upon those real elements, those meaningful and truly Jewish concepts bequested [sic] to us by past Confirmation classes and services.⁷⁸

In a later service in the same synagogue, the Confirmands begin by proclaiming, "We want our Confirmation to be a 'service,' not a 'show.'"⁷⁹ In general, however, Confirmation retains a fairly strong element of

⁷⁷ Rabbi Scott B. Saulson, "The Hands of Time" (Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Baltimore, MD, 1980), "Order of the Service."

⁷⁸ Rabbi Kenneth J. Weiss, "A Time to Break Down, and A Time to Build Up; A Time to Keep and a Time to Cast Away" (Temple Sinai, Glendale, CA, 1972), 4.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Kenneth J. Weiss "Confirmation Service" (Temple Sinai, Glendale, CA, 1976), 1.

formality. While the degree of formality greatly depends on the nature and tradition of each synagogue, as a whole there is more pomp associated with the creative Confirmation services than with any other category of services.

While the structure and staging of the services may be quite stately, this is not always characteristic of the content of the services, because a large majority of the material is written by teenagers. The material is often written in a fairly simple, casual style as one would expect. Nor does the material adapted from other sources match the formal style of the services. The source material that is drawn from other places is quite similar to the type of material used in other creative services, which is more intimate than lofty in nature. There is no secondary source that is common to a large number of services. There is, however, a fair amount of material from non-Jewish sources, a feature that is true of the music as well.

There is more non-Jewish music in the Confirmation services than in any other category of services. There is a tremendous diversity of musical styles and selections in the creative Confirmation services. In the earlier years, it was popular in some synagogues to include cantatas--a combination of traditional music and narrative set to music, utilizing solo and choral readings. One cantata, for example, was written by Rabbi Ira Eisenstein and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein on the theme "What is Torah?"

Torah . . . Torah . . . what's that? . . . what's the Torah? Is it a book? . . . not exactly . . . Is it a law? . . . not exactly . . . Is it a story? . . . more than that . . . Torah is a book, yes, it's an idea, a code, a law, a vision, a history . . . a way of life. . . .⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Rabbi Ira Eisenstein and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, "What is Torah?" in Dr. Edgar E. Siskin, "Confirmation Service" (North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL, 1966), 27.

Sometimes a majority of the service would take the form of a cantata on a particular theme. One synagogue seems to have a tradition of doing original cantatas on a different theme every year. For example, one year the theme was "Mitzvah and Mensch:"

Speaker: Mitzvah means commandment. A commandment from God set down in His Torah.

Speaking Chorus: What do you mean a commandment from God? Is God some kind of general or something? Is God a sergeant ordering man: Do right?

In a kind of way. In a way of a kind; God is a six-star general. A sort of a sergeant with 613 orders.

Singing Chorus: V'shomru b'ne Yisroel es hamitzvos, la'asos es hamitzvos l'dorosom bris olam beni u'ven bne Yisrael os hi l'olam.⁸¹

This cantata combines formal music and rather colloquial language. Other cantatas are more completely formal and stylized. While the origin of the cantata as a Confirmation service is unclear, its popularity seems to have lessened. The existence of formal organ and choral music, however, is still to be found in Confirmation services in recent years, especially for processional and recessional.

In spite of the continued presence of formal arrangements, other styles of music have become increasingly popular. Modern Jewish music such as "Hiney Ma Tov," "Eli, Eli" and "Ani Ma'amin" is frequently included in Confirmation services, for example. As was indicated above, there is also a fair amount of modern American music, more so than in most other types of services. Simon and Garfunkel, Styx, Harry Chapin, Pete Seeger, the Beatles, Chicago and Bob Dylan are among the musical sources utilized. The inclusion of this music is very much an influence of the teenagers who

⁸¹ Rabbi Ely E. Pilchik, "Mensch and Mitzvah--An Original Confirmation Cantata" (Temple B'nai Jeshurun, Short Hills, NJ, 1969), 6.

largely write and compile the services. (The Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, however, do not contain modern music to this degree.) This diversity of music is not only seen in the totality of services, but is often found within one particular service. It would not be unusual in one service to find, for example, formal organ and choir music for the processional, "Eli, Eli" after the *barechu* and Simon and Garfunkel's "Sounds of Silence" before silent prayer.

As a final comment about the structure of these services, some of them indicate the process by which the service was compiled and this is worth noting. Whereas many Bar/Bat Mitzvah services seem to be family projects, perhaps advised by the rabbi, Confirmation services are usually the work of a creative service committee, headed either by the rabbi or by a teacher.

The service of this day is an original service written by members of the Confirmation Class. Early in the year a number of class members calling themselves the Creative Service Group, began meeting regularly in order to study the composition of a religious service. The service presented in this booklet is the result of the cooperative efforts of this group. It speaks of the prayerful aspirations of the Confirmation Class.⁸²

This seems to reflect a fairly typical process, and it would appear in many cases that the Confirmands were given a fair degree of latitude in arranging the service. In a few instances, the rabbi actually compiles the service based on the discussions and writings of the Confirmands.⁸³ Yet in either case, the thoughts and ideas of the Confirmands are paramount and this is a distinguishing feature of these services. The significant characteristic of

⁸² Rabbi Edgar E. Siskin, "Confirmation Service," 36.

⁸³ Rabbi Kenneth J. Weiss, "Confirmation Service" (Temple Sinai, Glendale, CA, 1979), 1.

the Confirmation services, pertaining to source material and structure, is that they are a direct reflection of the ideas and involvement of the Confirmands.

The Relationship Between Shavuot and Confirmation

Shavuot is not a central theme of the Confirmation. The main connection to the holiday is found in the reading of the Ten Commandments and perhaps in a reading or two that may be included in the service. The mention of Shavuot usually occurs in a perfunctory fashion and is clearly less important than other themes. Sometimes readings about Shavuot are taken from *GOP*. A few services include a festival version of *kedushat hayom*, although no other traditional liturgical texts particular to the holiday (such as *hallel*) are included. In a few synagogues it appears to be customary to say *yizkor* and in at least one synagogue the Confirmands write a creative *yizkor* service.⁸⁴ As was mentioned earlier, the floral offering is often tied to Shavuot by relating it to the offering of first fruits. By far the most common integration of Shavuot, however, is in connection to the acceptance of Torah which Shavuot marks. There are various readings in which the acceptance of Torah is related to the themes of Confirmation and the challenge facing the Confirmands.

On Shavuot, we--theConfirmands--stand at our Sinai. We are being offered a precious gift: our heritage, that has been the creation of generations of Jewish experience. Will we respond as did those ancient Israelites?

According to our tradition, at Sinai, the Israelites heard the words of Torah and answered: "Na'aseh V'nishma . . . we

⁸⁴ See, for example, Rabbi Gary Mandelblatt, "Judaism through our Eyes" (Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1977), 18-20.

will do and we will obey." We, the young people of today, are more skeptical. We are more likely to say: "We'll think about it." During the past few years, we have "thought about it." We have explored a wide variety of meanings that Jews--past and present--have found in their heritage. We have chosen to make our own affirmation based on the knowledge and understanding we have achieved.⁸⁵

The theme of receiving and responding to Torah in each generation is expressed clearly in this reading in which Torah is described as the basis of the mandate facing the Confirmands:

On this festival of Shavuot, on this occasion of Confirmation, we offer these words of thanks for the many blessings which are ours. . . . O Lord, though we are sated with treasures beyond number, may we never become callous to the summons of heaven, to the call of Sinai reaching across time: BE HOLY AS I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM HOLY. May we respond to the message of Torah and to the urgency of its demands that we may construct a world in consonance with Your will.⁸⁶

Yet, while services may contain a few readings at the beginning or in the Torah service relating the giving of Torah to Confirmation, Shavuot can by no means be considered a central theme of the services. The services are clearly celebrating Confirmation and not Shavuot.

Themes

In the earlier years, the Confirmation services very much reflect contemporary events. (This focus on specific societal ills is not at all typical of services in later years.) Prayers such as this one are commonly found in the earlier services:

⁸⁵ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Prayers and Meditations for Shavuot and Confirmation" (Beth David Reform Congregation, Philadelphia, PA, n.d.), 6.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Stephen Weisberg, "Confirmation Service" (Temple Beth-El & Center, San Pedro, CA, 1968), 4.

O Lord our God, we live in a world that has become filled with the horror of war, the ugliness of racism and the sickness of children estranged from their parents. Help us, O Lord, to find the strength and stamina to work for a healthier, more beautiful world.⁸⁷

This one service contains many prayers such as this, stressing the feeling that the world is tumultuous and disturbed, and praying for the ability to bring peace and justice. (Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech is also included in this service.) Another service has a reading that explores whether forbidding a landlord to rent to black people is a restriction of his freedom of choice.⁸⁸ A service in 1970 begins with a lengthy description of recent strife, specifically highlighting the relationship between contemporary events and youth:

I don't have to tell any of you here this Shavuot evening that we live in difficult times. How pitiful that so much of our world's trouble affects and afflicts our young people. Not more than a month ago, after the tragedy at Kent State, one Governor called our kids fascists. Another Governor appealed for a blood bath--and got it. A Vice-President denounced dissenters as effete snobs and traitors, while a President call dissenters 'bums.' I would suggest that our young people are our best hope for salvation. . . . Who is it who has stood up and shouted no against the madness of Cambodia? The youngsters. Who is it who has taken the issue of pollution away from the rhetoric of politicians and turned it into a people's movement for for decent action? The youngsters. Who is it who has compelled America to examine her values and the meaning of our individual and national lives? Our youngsters.⁸⁹

Societal change and turmoil was so evident and overwhelming during these years and so strongly connected to the younger generation that it is not

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 7.

⁸⁸ Rabbi Arthur J. Kolatch, "Confirmation Service" (Temple Beth El, Bakersfield, CA, 1968), 5-6.

⁸⁹ Rabbi Richard Lehrman, "Confirmation Service" (Temple Sinai, n.p., 1970), 2.

surprising that reflection on these revolutionary events is a large part of the earlier Confirmation services. As one would expect, in later, less turbulent years, the focus is no longer centered on world problems. Community, unity and friendship are stressed instead. This will be discussed at greater length further on.

Of course, this was an era of transformation not only in society at large, but in the realm of religion:

Our civilization is in ferment. Change is inherent in our lives, our institutions, yes, even in our commitments to Religion, its values, institutions and practices. Some of these changes will be apparent in this Service of Confirmation.⁹⁰

This service contains challenges and expressions of doubt and disillusionment by the Confirmands in regard to God, Judaism and even Confirmation.

This pageant we are involved in on this day, does not have any religious meaning to me, but this is my personal feeling. I know that some people in the class feel that this service is what it should be and that is up to them. But I cannot go through this service without saying what I think, because it would be against my values.⁹¹

This is in keeping with the general decline of faith and lack of confidence in institutional religion seen during these years. What is surprising, in fact, is that there is not a greater expression of negative feelings regarding God and Judaism. Rather than voicing hostility, Confirmands generally assert their right to develop their own beliefs, as will be discussed shortly.

⁹⁰ Rabbi David H. Wice, "Confirmation Service" (Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, PA, 1970), 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 19.

Another very interesting reflection of contemporary reality can be seen in the feelings that are expressed by Confirmands toward their families. The earlier services go out of their way to emphasize the "generation gap" between parents and children through responsive readings such as this one:

R: Our music, our fashions, our speech may divide us.

C: Our hopes for a better world unite us.

R: We have a need to rebel against authority of any kind.

C: We do not believe that the world can endure without some kind of authority.

R: We are not afraid of marchers, demonstrators and protestors.

C: For us hope lies in stability, in peace, in quiet and democratic discussions. . . .⁹²

This service (which was written by the rabbi and not the Confirmands) centers on the conflicts between parents and children, and expresses the desire to find common ground and develop mutual respect. In some instances Confirmands are not at all hesitant about voicing their unhappiness with their parents:

A lot of people, even those close to me don't know what I'm really like. My own mother and father don't know me. They seem to think of me as a shy person. But here is the kind of person I really am. . . .⁹³

Another reader chastises his parents for telling him to be Jewish but being unwilling to take the effort to drive him to Temple.

The message we get at times is: "We want you to be Jewish; we want you to have a full Jewish life, but we can't get you to Temple. Be Jewish at home."

⁹² Dr. Joseph R. Narot, "From Generation to Generation" (Temple Israel of Greater Miami, Miami, FL, 1969), 5-6.

⁹³ Rabbi Kenneth J. Weiss, "Confirmation Service" (1979), 6.

Sure, go to Temple, that sounds like fun. "Here's the bus route I mapped for you." "We're two miles closer to the Temple--walk." ⁹⁴

Other services frankly appeal to parents to listen to their children. The following is a continuation of the reading quoted above (footnote 87):

They (the Confirmands) will compel us in different fashions--through sights and sound, both traditional and modern--through the spoken word . . . and through silence. You may not always agree with them--or with the way they do things but know that they mean what they say, and they say what they mean . . . which is what Shavuot is all about. ⁹⁵

There is no hesitation about acknowledging the parent-child conflict that was so dominant during these years. As with other contemporary events, to ignore the distance between parents and children would have been to ignore a central part of the reality of the confirmand's life.

While there continues to be an acknowledgement of the tension that exists between Confirmands and their parents, the readings in the later year are more conciliatory and appreciative of the warmth of family even while acknowledging the presence of conflict.

Parents are something special. They . . . help us in time of need...encourage us in whatever we do. They even let us argue with them only to let us discover in the end they were right. Sometimes they understand (or try to understand) all of the problems we teenagers face. . . . When they finish telling us how they did things when they were our age, they smile knowingly when I say, "Times have changed." That's probably what they said to their parents who were also special people. Times haven't changed. ⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 11.

⁹⁵ Rabbi Richard Lehrman, "Confirmation Service," 1.

⁹⁶ Anonymous, in Rabbi William Sajowitz, "The Beauty of Tradition" (Temple Emanuel of South Hills, Pittsburgh, PA, 1983), 14.

Familial unity is stressed in the following reading by the reversal of the theme of parent-child conflict. Rather than focusing on the need of the parent to understand the child, the child seeks to understand his/her parents:

... [T]hey are a part of me, because now I exist, my own person. I cannot choose my parents--I am born to them and am part of them. At birth, all I have is a pre-determined family, a history that I become a part of--a background. MY ONLY IDENTITY IS MY FAMILY'S; my only self is theirs. They are a part of me; to understand myself, I must understand them.⁹⁷

The themes of challenging parents and celebrating familial ties are present throughout the Confirmation services. The difference between the earlier and later years is that in the earlier years the challenge is emphasized while in the later years the closeness is emphasized.

By emphasizing the need for parents to understand the new and different attitudes and behaviors of their children, the theme of individuality emerges as a major focus of these services. The whole concept of having the Confirmation class write the service emphasizes the importance of individuality, for it provides the Confirmands with the opportunity to express their personal feelings. Many readings focus on self-discovery or identity. They address the confusion felt by the Confirmands about their own feelings and opinions, their attempt to sort out their views and the assertion of their rights to fashion their own beliefs. The theme of individuality is expressed in several different ways. The title of one Confirmation service, quoted several times is "Stop the Charadel Take off the Mask! No More Games!" and stresses the need for everyone to be open and

⁹⁷ Jennifer Lewis, in Rabbi Michael P. Sternfield, "Centennial Service for Confirmation" (Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA, 1976), 7.

honest about who he/she is.⁹⁸ In some cases, the importance of individuality is stressed in contrast to a world that stifles personal creative expression.

Groups such as we have here in the temple, clubs, social gatherings and discussion groups lead to the appreciation of individuality. Perhaps, the most important effect this Confirmation class has had on my life lies in the fact that during it, I had an opportunity to express my ideas and to listen to others. . . .

The world is getting more regimented as time goes on and therefore individuality suffers. If we form small groups for the preservation of individuality, then we will remain fully human even in an era of automation. But if we don't see the shrouds of over-organization mounting in our schools, society and the world, it will be too late to revive individual worth because, by then, there will be no individuality.⁹⁹

The emphasis is not solely on individuality however. Individuality within a group context is often praised, especially in the later years.

Our presentation is one that was created individually. We have gathered our individual beliefs, dreams and emotions concerning our lives--in the hope of expressing to you our thoughts as a group. We all feel that it is very important that people allow themselves to be individuals within large groups. This freedom to be yourself, however, should contribute to the general good of society and should not be a distraction.¹⁰⁰

A dual emphasis on both individuality and community is thus seen. While the individuality of the person and his or her personal feelings and opinions remains a dominant theme, over the years community is increasingly emphasized in Confirmation services, as it is in Shabbat and holiday services. Many services have readings about friends and the importance of

⁹⁸ Rabbi Kenneth J. Weiss, "Confirmation Service" (1979).

⁹⁹ Becky Rudnick, in Rabbi Arthur J. Kolatch, "Confirmation Service," 10-11.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous, in Rabbi Murray Saltzman, "A Circle-- Confirmation Cantata" (Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Baltimore, MD, 1980), 1.

special friends. Some classes even center the theme of these services around this subject. The friendship among the Confirmation class members is often specifically stressed.

During the past years, I have made some very special friends.
 Friends with whom I will always share something that is
 important. Our Judaism ...
 Friends
 Special friends ...
 Friends without whom
 I would not be
 Me.
 We've shared many things
 From crying ... to laughing ...
 Oh, the teachers we've tormented,
 and the turmoil we've created ...
 These are special memories that will never be forgotten. ¹⁰¹

Sometimes the readings are almost like yearbook inscriptions: "My Confirmation class has become a special friend to me. As the poem says 'our little gang is breaking up' and I know that our friendships have become strong enough so that we will never lose touch."¹⁰² These readings attempt to emphasize that the Confirmation class is a true community and not just a collection of individuals.

Another attempt to build community can be seen in consecration services which some synagogues hold several days prior to Confirmation. In one synagogue consecration is held for the Confirmands alone, after dark, in a candle lit sanctuary with the Confirmands sitting on the *bimah*.¹⁰³ It would seem as if this is an attempt to bring the class together for a

¹⁰¹ Amy Pinkus, in Rabbi Earl Kaplan, "Growing Together: Growing as Friends" (Temple Beth Israel, Pomona, CA, 1985), 19.

¹⁰² Roberta Warshaw, "Treasures of Life" (Temple Beth Israel, Pomona, CA, 1983), 10.

¹⁰³ Rabbi Martin Weiner, "Consecration of Confirmands" (Congregation Sherith Israel, San Francisco, CA, 1976).

meaningful moment prior to Confirmation. Perhaps spending this time together in prayer and reflection gives them a feeling of closeness and intimacy prior to the larger, more formal Confirmation service. The same goal of building community may result from a ceremony initiating Confirmation studies.¹⁰⁴ This emphasis on community points to a key difference between Confirmation in Bar/Bat Mitzvah. While Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an individual or family event, Confirmation is a celebration by a community of peers.

Meaning of Judaism and Confirmation

The theme of individuality discussed above is very much reflected in the views expressed by the Confirmands toward Judaism and Confirmation itself. There is strong emphasis placed on the idea that Judaism allows for freedom of choice and individual expression:

Jewish theology can be compared to a large supermarket, containing many ideas and beliefs. Each of us is free to enter and to make his own personal choice, without any necessity for agreement with the next person. At the same time, there are ideas outside the scope of Jewish belief, which are not part of our theology. And so there are limits, but very broad ones.¹⁰⁵

The value of individuality is read into sacred texts: "For us as Jews, the Torah has served to stress the importance of the individual within the group."¹⁰⁶ Judaism is interpreted not only as allowing freedom of choice, but demanding it.

We have come here tonight to affirm our identity as Jews, but acceptance of the faith of our fathers does not release us from

¹⁰⁴ Rabbi Dena Feingold, "A Ceremony for the Initiation of Confirmation Studies" (n.p., 1982).

¹⁰⁵ Rabbi William J. Leffler, "Confirmation" (Temple, Adath Israel, Lexington, KY, 1975), 2.

¹⁰⁶ Becky Rudnick, in Rabbi Arthur J. Kolatch, "Confirmation Service," 11.

the obligation to make all the other choices in our lives. On the contrary, Judaism allows, even demands, the exercise of our freedom, to take willingly our responsibility. . . . We have no choice but to be free. ¹⁰⁷

The stress placed on the idea that Confirmands are now faced with the need to choose among the multiple options that Judaism places before them represents the merging of two significant themes. The assertion of individuality is important, as has already been pointed out. Yet Confirmation is also a time of affirming one's commitment to Judaism. By emphasizing that Judaism encourages individual choice the Confirmands can be committed to Judaism without compromising their feelings about the need for self-expression.

In general, Confirmation is seen as an opportunity to affirm one's commitment to Judaism and Jewish values:

We dedicate ourselves to God, the Torah, and the Jewish people. We consecrate our lives to all humankind, to all people who believe in peace. We shall try with all that is within us to fulfill the moral law of our tradition, and to pursue the path of righteousness ordained by our Creator. With awareness of the ideals of Judaism, and attuned to God's demands for us in our day, we recite the watchword of our faith, as have our fathers since ancient days: (Recitation of *shema*). ¹⁰⁸

This reading is a formal affirmation by the Confirmands recited at the end of the service. (While this too is part of some services it is not overly common.) The theme of commitment to Judaism is expressed in another service entitled "From 99 to 100% Sure." While prior to Confirmation the Confirmands said that they were only 99% sure of their identity, following Confirmation they emphasize that they are 100% certain. Thus they affirm

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous, "Confirmation Service" (n.p., 1972), 2.

¹⁰⁸ Rabbi Allan Rosenberg, "Confirmation Service" (Temple Emanu-El, Waterford, CT, 1981), 19.

their position as a complete and dedicated part of the Jewish people.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes Confirmation is viewed as the beginning of the Confirmands' obligation to act as responsible members of the community, in a fashion similar to the significance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

Shavu'ot morning, and we are standing before our families and friends, participating in the ritual of Confirmation. Confirmation is different from graduation. This Jewish ritual which we have gathered to celebrate, symbolizes our having engaged in a learning process, and indicated our readiness to assume the responsibilities of members of the Jewish community. . . . When situations arise that challenge our religious identity, we know, that because of our religious education, we will respond as committed Jews.¹¹⁰

Based on this interpretation, it is not clear how Confirmation is different from Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It would appear that Confirmation is yet another stage of growth, another "beginning" of responsibility.

O God, our Confirmation class stands here today, having reached another plateau in our life. Although young in years, today, with this service, we take our place in the Jewish religion and Jewish community. For this opportunity, we thank You, our God.¹¹¹

As is also true of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Confirmands' position, not only as responsible members of the community, but as a part of the chain of tradition is stressed:

This Shavuot, you will link yourselves to this four thousand year old tradition. You will confirm your membership in the

¹⁰⁹ Rabbi William J. Leffler, "From 99 to 100% Sure" (Temple Adath Israel, Lexington, KY, 1977), 1.

¹¹⁰ Rabbi Scott B. Saulson, "The Hands of Time," 1.

¹¹¹ Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, "Hear Our Prayer" (Temple Beth-El, San Antonio, TX, 1985), 2.

Jewish people and affirm your desire to perpetuate the heritage which is ours. May God be with you then and always. ¹¹²

One rabbi even developed a special "chain of tradition ceremony" in which members of previous Confirmation classes come together and symbolize their connection to each other by joining links in a metal chain. ¹¹³ This seems to be a counterpart to the ceremony of passing the Torah down the generations in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. Yet even while emphasizing this chain of tradition, some also assert the uniqueness of the individuals in the Confirmation class: "As the newest link in that chain, these boys and girls of the Class of 1975 bring a special zeal that bespeaks their enthusiasm for a new era." ¹¹⁴

Thus, in spite of the statements of commitment to the Jewish community and affirmations of Jewish identity, there is still a strong assertion of individuality that underlies these claims:

We hope that you will have faith in us, your children. Please do not expect us to be carbon copies of the past. By this service we are saying we will not cut ourselves off from our roots. We will choose the fundamental values of Judaism, the values of love and learning, of justice and peace. As we mature, we will express these values in our own way, drawing on forms from the past and creating new forms that could become traditions for the future. ¹¹⁵

The desire to live a life as a Jew is present, but the insistence that one's life is guided by personal choices and decisions as much as by parental guidance can also be strongly felt. Just as individuality is important even

¹¹² Rabbi Charles P. Sherman, "Shabbat Eve Service of Consecration of Confirmands" (Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK, 1978), 13.

¹¹³ Rabbi Jacob P. Rudin, "The Chain of Tradition" (Temple Beth El, Great Neck, NY, n.d.).

¹¹⁴ Dr. Richard C. Hertz, "Confirmation Exercises" (Temple Beth El, Birmingham, MI, 1975), 1.

¹¹⁵ Rabbi Henry Cohen, "Prayers and Meditations for Shavuot and Confirmation," 7.

while community is stressed, so does it remain significant even when Confirmands affirm their commitment to Jewish values and tradition.

Summary

This last point helps to provide some insight into the significance of Confirmation, how it reflects the particular point in the life cycle at which the Confirmands are found, and how it is different from Bar/Bat Mitzvah. As was pointed out above, Confirmation services are filled with statements about "beginning to be responsible Jews and members of the Jewish community" as are Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. Yet these statements have different implications for Confirmands. First of all, they are closer to being true for fifteen and sixteen year-olds than thirteen year-olds. Secondly, the age at which Confirmation occurs is an age at which independent identity and behavior is of paramount importance to the teenager. They are anxious to assert their independence as freethinking and responsible individuals and Jews. At thirteen this is just beginning to be so, however at fifteen this is much more true. While Bar/Bat Mitzvah still focuses on the family unit, Confirmation focuses on the individual and the peer group reflecting the contemplation of greater distance between the teenager and his/her family that is part of those years. The many readings about hopes and dreams also highlight the degree to which Confirmands are focused on future independence and potential. In this respect, the assertion of an independent connection to Judaism and the recognition of impending Jewish responsibility is more meaningful than it is for a thirteen year-old, and a more accurate reflection of the confirmands' stage in life. To some extent this language is also performative in nature. By proclaiming in a ritual context that they are unique people, entitled to their own opinions and

with their own forms of commitment to Judaism, the Confirmands are doing more than describing reality. They are establishing their identities as independent people in the minds of the community at large through expressing their own feelings and thoughts at the time of their Confirmation, just as Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a time for families to establish themselves as proud identified Jewish families.

It should also be pointed out, however, that to some extent these services have a quasi-secular feel to them. It would appear that the beginning of Jewish adulthood is not uppermost in the minds of the Confirmands, but rather adulthood in general. The independence and identity of the teenager as a person in transition to adulthood seems to be as important as his or her identity as a Jew. At times the contemplation of Jewish identity appears almost incidental; many of the readings written by Confirmands concern their search for identity and their dreams for the future with no regard to anything Jewish. Thus, in some ways, Confirmation is a rite of passage for teenagers almost similar to graduation or leaving for college, in spite of claims to the contrary. This point should not be pushed too far; the quotations from Confirmation services clearly point to consideration of Jewish themes. However, Confirmation services also have stronger connections to general concerns about independence, growth, maturation and self-awareness than is true of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In this respect, Confirmation is somewhat different from Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and this difference is a reflection of the change that occurs in adolescents during the two to three years that separate these two life cycle events.

Marriage

Of the seventeen services examined, six are regular wedding ceremonies, two are ceremonies for weddings with special circumstances, seven are reconsecration or anniversary ceremonies and two are prayers prior to marriage. Creative wedding ceremonies are not significantly different from the standard Reform ceremonies. Those elements that the manuals change and interpret are similar to the elements that the authors of the creative services struggle with. As with Bar/Bat Mitzvah and birth services it is the desire for a personalized service that motivates individuals to create wedding ceremonies, rather than the need to reinterpret the nature and structure of the wedding ceremony itself.

Weddings

Many of the traditional elements of the wedding ceremony are present in the creative services, although some are altered or reinterpreted. This is particularly true of *birkat erusin* and the *sheva brachot* as will be seen. One element that is not a part of most creative services (or the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*) is the reading of the ketubah. (The ketubah is reintroduced as an option in the 1988 manual, however.) Most services begin with *baruch haba, mi adir* and *ivdu Adonai*. Usually there is no *birkat erusin* at all, as is also the case in the three ceremonies in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*. (Again, the option for a traditional Hebrew *birkat erusin* with interpretive English is reintroduced in the 1988 manual.) As a result, in some of the creative services only one cup of wine is used (as is also the case in the services in the 1961 manual). Sometimes very loose interpretations of *birkat erusin* are given, providing a prayer at the point where *birkat erusin* usually comes in the service, but unrelated to the traditional content of *birkat erusin*.

One example is a prayer asking God to bless the marriage, followed by *kiddush*.

Source of Holiness: Be with this bride and groom as they dedicate their lives to one another. Sustain them in a life of sharing, united by bonds of honor and respect. Strengthen them as they partake together of life's sweetness and its bitterness. And may the cup from which they drink together ever be consecrated to Your service, as we say . . . *kiddush*.¹¹⁶

This service does not contain the traditional blessing said as part of *birkat erusin* (mekadeish amo Yisrael al y'dei chupa v'kidushin). Another service, while lacking *kiddush* does have an interpretive version of *birkat erusin* (slightly closer to the traditional text than the one quoted above) ending with the traditional blessing:

Blessed Is God, who Was, Is and Will Be, the Supreme Goodness of the universe, by whose power we establish commandments, in particular, the commandment of marriage. We abide by the laws of matrimony and faithfulness, thus sanctifying the existence of God and the people of Israel by means of the hupah and the marriage ceremony. . . . (blessing).¹¹⁷

Other ceremonies place the traditional blessing quoted above after the exchange of rings retaining nothing else from *birkat erusin*. The creative services thus choose a whole range of options for what to do with *birkat erusin* as indeed does the 1988 *Rabbi's Manual*.

All of the services have the traditional formula for the exchange of rings. Several have additional vows as well. In one service the vows are very much like the vows in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*, with the exception of the fact that the promise to "protect, whether in good fortune or adversity"

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, "Wedding Service" (n.p., n.d.), 1.

¹¹⁷ Rabbi David B. Kaplan, "Marriage Ceremony" (n.p., n.d.), 2.

is removed.¹¹⁸ While these vows speak about a "life hallowed by the faith of Israel" some vows make no reference to anything Jewish:

Do you _____ of your own free will and consent, take _____ to be your husband, promising to respect his existence as a unique individual striving toward fulfillment even as you would love, honor and cherish him throughout life?¹¹⁹

Clearly the exchange of vows common in non-Jewish wedding ceremonies has influenced Jewish wedding ceremonies, as seen in both the rabbis' manuals and the creative services, although it has not supplanted the traditional exchange.

All services also have the *sheva brachot*, although as is true with *birkat erusin*, there are a number of different versions and translations. Most have the complete version in Hebrew, unlike the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual* which only has four of the seven in most services. While a complete Hebrew text is provided in the manual, a complete English text is not. The most common change in translation is in the fifth blessing, although it is not the only alteration. In the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual* this is one of the blessings left out, while in the 1988 edition the Hebrew and English text is changed to eliminate reference to the "barren women." Rather than focusing on the imagery of barren women, the "rejoicing of Zion" is usually referred to in the creative services in reference to the bride and groom. One service uses these words:

Zion rejoices in the continuing unity of the Jewish people as this bride and groom consecrate themselves to each other and

¹¹⁸ Rabbi Paul Swerdlow, "Wedding Ceremony" (n.p., 1974), 2. See also Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (1961), 30.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous, "Sally Priesand's Wedding Ceremony" (n.p., n.d.), 1.

to Zion. Praised are You, Lord, who causes Zion to rejoice with her children. 120

Another service provides this interpretation:

As God rejoices over Israel, so may man and woman rejoice over each other. As Zion shall not be barren and forsaken, so Israel where ever they are scattered, shall be fruitful and multiply. 121

In one case a wholly new blessing is created, completely unrelated to the Hebrew:

Praised is God by whose eternal power all people have been given the burden of freedom to form their identity--freedom to develop their inner being through love and labor--freedom to bear the decisions which make them responsible. 122

A final part of the ceremony that is present in each creative service is the breaking of the glass. In one service the following explanation is given:

The breaking of the glass reminds us that where there is joy, there is also toil. Man was commanded to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, yet also he rejoices in Godliness and marriage. Thus may your labors bring you joy and comfort, and your struggles bring you peace. As the glass is shattered, may all the barriers between you be broken down and harm and adversity be ground out. 123

In another ceremony, however, there is an explicit refusal to attach any symbolism to the breaking of the glass:

The glass is broken not as a symbol of any of the myriad of explanations which are frequently used to explain it. It is

120 Rabbi Fred Reiner, "Wedding Ceremony" (n.p., n.d.), 2.

121 Rabbi David B. Kaplan, "Wedding Ceremony," 4.

122 Anonymous, "Sally Priesand's Wedding Ceremony," 3.

123 Rabbi David B. Kaplan, "Wedding Ceremony," 6.

enough that it is an ancient and beautiful custom which continues to particularize the Jewish marriage ceremony. ¹²⁴

Most services however, merely state that the glass is broken, neither interpreting this act nor refusing to do so!

In looking at the use of traditional liturgical texts as a whole, there are few major innovations. While there are differences between the standard Reform service and the creative services--the use of fuller (albeit interpretive) *sheva brachot* and the inclusion of an interpretive *birkat erusin* in some services--these differences are not so significant that they appear to be the motivation for creating a special ceremony. It would thus seem as if the desire to have a ceremony of one's own is the impetus for the creation of these services.

Because there are few new elements in the services, the focus to this point has been the use and interpretation of the traditional liturgical texts. There is one service, however, that utilizes the symbols of candles and flowers in a unique way. Upon entering the chupah the bride and groom each light a candle. Later on in the service, they use their candles to light a third candle:

When the two of you entered the Chupah, you did so as two separate individuals. Symbolic of your separateness, you each lit a candle. I would like you to allow these two candles to continue to burn because marriage does not end your individuality. Instead, where your two individual lights, your two souls touch, there is created a third entity, the couple. An entity which will always burn brighter and stand higher and be more important than either individual. . . . I call upon you to let your individual flames flow together that the couple be created. ¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Rabbi Ronne and Irene Friedman, "Wedding Ceremony" (n.p., n.d.), 9.

¹²⁵ Rabbi Paul Swedlow, "Wedding Ceremony" (n.p., 1974), 5-6.

The flower is used as a symbol of the new relationship between the bride and groom and their parents. Rather than looking to their parents to satisfy their basic needs, the bride and groom look to each other:

A few minutes ago, the two of you exchanged gold bands. Gold is the symbol of value. By giving each other the bands of gold, you are saying to each other and to all of us, that for all of your basic needs, whether they be physical or financial, social, psychological or emotional, you will look to each other. By this commitment, you ended the relationship of gold which you once had with your parents. In its place a new relationship begins. A relationship of love which can be best be represented by the flower which I hold in my hand. The flower is a symbol of beauty. The beauty of who you have been to them all of these years...Now go in love to begin a relationship of beauty with each of your parents in turn. (A flower is presented to mother of bride and groom.) 126

This is an attempt, similar to that made in some of the birth ceremonies, to find new symbols and rituals to integrate into a familiar ceremony.

Other elements of uniqueness are found in ceremonies geared to novel situations such as this one:

This service was written to meet the needs of a couple whose marriages had been ended by the death of their respective spouses by cancer within the last three years. They were married a year ago by a judge so as not to offend their adult children or the memory of their previous marriages. Having re-established their own sense of family, their desire to share the mitzvah of marriage with their friends and family moved them to make both a public and religious declaration of their new relationship. 127

126 *Ibid*, p. 8.

127 Rabbi Jeffrey L. Ballon, "Service of Reaffirmation of the Wedding Vows" (Lauderhill, FL, 1985), 1.

While legally this is a service of reaffirmation, the service is their first Jewish wedding. It appears to be conducted as a basic Jewish wedding (I only have a brief outline of the ceremony), with the exception of the introduction which focuses on their unique situation. The guests are seated in the round, in "a circle of love" and the ceremony begins with the lighting of the menorah by the children and spouses of the bride and groom (although this service took place three weeks before the start of Hanukah). Readings appropriate to the occasion accompany the lighting of each candle, as the rabbi explains:

Just as the eight candles of the hannukiah are kindled in order that we can emphasize certain basic themes of Chanukah, so too here we emphasize triumph over adversity, light over darkness and the presence of God's spirit in the midst of what might have been dark times. ¹²⁸

While it is not Hanukah, the basic themes of Hanukah are alluded to in one of the readings in relationship (loosely) to the couple:

By lighting these last candles the eight candles remind us of the ancient time when the miracle of light reflected courage and inspiration for our people and our God. As we begin to reaffirm that ancient vision and this newer love, we pray that the light of your love will so shine that it will bring fulfillment and joy to all those who surround you and who share with you these special moments. ¹²⁹

Although this is the only example that I have of a ceremony such as this, one wonders whether the diversity of family structures and situations in this day and age has influenced the wedding ceremony in other ways.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 1.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

A final and very unique ceremony is called a "Covenant of Affirmation." While connected to marriage, it does not appear to be a legal wedding ceremony:

The "Covenant of Affirmation" is intended as an experiential or existential alternative or prelude to the Jewish marriage service. . . . It seeks to intertwine elements common to both the Jewish and Christian traditions in theology and practice and to help persons bound in the covenant to raise to consciousness criteria that may contribute to a lasting and satisfying as well as spiritually ennobling marriage.

Primarily the covenant is utilized with couples who initially ask for a mixed marriage. . . . [T]he couple may integrate the Covenant of Affirmation into their own creative wedding services. . . . Often the couple may use the covenant as a study tool to help probe the inner feelings surrounding diverse religious views and ethical ideals and to assist them in developing creative marriage vows. Finally, the Covenant of Affirmation has been designed for use for some couples as an alternative liberal conversion service. 130

The ceremony emphasizes the different ways in which God can be found.

Both the Jew and the non-Jew affirm the traditions and beliefs of the other:

The one affirming Judaism for the first time: I believe and you believe that Judaism for us will become a special faith that will voice our deepest hopes, echo our most cherished aspirations, and nurture our highest shared ideals and ambitions.

The one who is Jewish at the time of affirmation: I promise to respect you for who you are, to help you explore and discover your own creative individuality. I treasure your willingness to meet me on the path toward the Garden of God's Delight. 131

This represents the attempt to deal with the question of intermarriage through ritual, if not through an actual wedding ceremony. This would

130 Rabbi Joseph H. Levine, "The Covenant of Affirmation" (n.p., 1985), introductory remarks.

131 *Ibid.* 1.

appear to be a unique approach. I have no other material at all related to intermarriage, although it would be interesting to know if those rabbis who do perform intermarriage make changes to the wedding ceremony, and how they do so, or if they create new ceremonies. While one assumes that many rabbis do make certain changes, they may not be written down since it is not customary to place the wedding service into the hands of those who attend.

With the exception of these last three ceremonies, the weddings that have been examined are very similar in structure and ideology to the standard Reform wedding ceremonies. Their creation seems to have been motivated not by a conflict or disagreement with the usual Reform approach, but with the desire to have their own personal wedding ceremony. Marriage is yet one more example of an occasion when individuals want to feel a special, unique relationship to the ceremony. It would appear that for some people a stronger connection is felt to a ritual that is created specifically for them (or by them), rather than to the traditional ritual used for the Jewish community at large.

Reconsecration Services

Three of the reconsecration ceremonies are part of Shabbat services, while two are completely separate occasions like the original wedding. (I also have two anniversary prayers that one assumes are to be part of Shabbat worship.) Most contain at least some part of the *sheva brachot* and the traditional *harei atah/at* formula that is found in the actual wedding ceremony. Some include other elements such as *baruch haba*. Of those reconsecrations that are completely separate occasions, one is virtually

Identical to a wedding.¹³² The other includes a re-exchange of rings with the traditional blessings, but does not follow the traditional structure. Instead, new elements and readings are incorporated. The vows written into the ketubah are read again, and candles are lit with the blessing Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vitzivanu lehadlik nerot shel ahavah (Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of love). In addition, readings making reference to the fulfillment of dreams, and the birth of children are incorporated. The introduction to the ceremony explains the purpose and idea of reconsecration:

Ten years ago today your marriage ceremony began with this passage from the Song of Songs. This evening we reconsecrate that marriage and begin again with the same words. Beginning again...is entirely consistent with Jewish tradition. Reconsecration is a constant in Jewish history and in the lives of our people. We consecrate anew places of worship and study, a new home, a newly born child. Our sages consecrated the sacred texts anew each time they completed a tractate of study. . . . The reconsecration of a marriage is an occasion of joy and thanksgiving. It recalls the bliss of the first couple: Adam and Eve; their consecration one to another; and anticipates the time to come. . . .¹³³

Reconsecration appears to be a time to celebrate love and togetherness. Through incorporating elements from the first ceremony, the original joy and excitement of the wedding is recaptured.

When the reconsecration is for more than one couple, and is part of a Shabbat service, an additional feature appears. The reconsecration becomes

¹³² Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon, "Reconsecration Service" (n.p., n.d.).

¹³³ Rabbi Joseph H. Levine, "Reconsecration Ceremony" (n.p., 1985), 1.

a communal as well as a personal event. In one ceremony (held on Shabbat Shuva), the entire worship service revolves around themes of love and marriage and thus the whole community is united in this celebration.¹³⁴ The actual reconsecration takes elements from the wedding ceremony. The couples stand on the *bimah* under a chupah while *mi adir* is sung; there is a reconsecration of vows and "brachot" are said. (The exact nature of these "brachot" is not specified in the text, but one would assume that they are part of the *sheva brachot* or the closing blessing of *birkat erusin*.) Prior to going to the *bimah* the couples quietly exchange vows (a text is provided). This too highlights both the personal and the communal nature of the event. While the exchange of vows is a private act between the two members of the couple, many others are engaged in the same act at the same time. Thus the individual couples are forged into a larger community.

This communal element is equally reinforced in a ceremony held on the rabbi's fortieth wedding anniversary. He invited over one hundred couples whom he had married to join him in the reconsecration of his marriage which took place as part of a regular Shabbat service from *UPB*. Selections from the *sheva brachot* and the exchange of rings form the heart of the reconsecration. At the end, the congregation says to all of the couples:

We share in the joy of your blessing, and pray that our Heavenly father will shower you with grace and goodness, with health and fulfillment. We share in the wonder of love whose glow lights up this hour, and join with you in the beauty of it as we affirm together: I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Rabbi Charles P. Sherman, "Reconsecration of Marriage Service" (Temple Israel, Tulsa, OK, 1985).

¹³⁵ Rabbi Alan S. Green, "Marriage Reconsecration Service for Sabbath" (Temple Emanu El, Cleveland, OH, 1974), 8.

The original wedding ceremonies discussed above are very personal occasions. The reconsecration ceremonies provide a way to relive the emotions felt at that very personal event by speaking the same words and hearing the same blessings. The ceremony reestablishes the original moments when couples first consecrated themselves to each other. When the ceremony takes place as part of communal worship, however, the private element is lessened. The individual celebration becomes communal as others share in this personal event, not just as onlookers, but as participants.

Death

I have very little printed material for use at a funeral or the days immediately following, perhaps because, as with weddings, it is not customary for those attending to have a copy of the service. I have a collection of readings for shiva,¹³⁶ and another service that is quite similar to a basic funeral service but is printed in order to be passed out to mourners. The rabbi appears to be striving to include the congregation in the service, contrary to the traditional practice.¹³⁷ One interesting service exists to be used in the case of miscarriage.¹³⁸ The service contains some texts typically found in the funeral ceremony as well as statements and explanations by the rabbi. The rabbi points out that the embryo could never have developed into a child ("... conceived where it was, [it] was never meant to be") and that its death prevented further harm to the mother

¹³⁶ Rabbi Stephen Pearce, "Ships: An Anthology for Shiva Calls" (Temple Isaiah of Forest Hills, Forest Hills, NY, n.d.).

¹³⁷ Rabbi Albert Goldman, "Chapel Funeral Service" (n.p., n.d.).

¹³⁸ Rabbi Norman Cohen, "An Expression of Consolation" (Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH, n.d.).

whose life, if endangered, takes priority over the life of the unborn child. He tells the parents that their responsibility is to grow strong so that they can "participate in the life-giving process which is our partnership with the Almighty. Blessed is the Lord, our God, who reenacts continually the work of creation."¹³⁹ While the motivation behind this service is a good one, the readings raise some questionable ideas. One wonders how the parents would react to being told, in essence, that the loss of the embryo was all for the best. Creative ritual for events as difficult and painful as this, while potentially very valuable, needs to be developed with the extreme caution and sensitivity.

In spite of the lack of printed material for funeral services (beyond the three items just mentioned), it is possible that ritual creativity is still occurring, albeit in different fashions. One rabbi writes:

I know that there is much creative use of the liturgy we inherit. I think of the burial service I did for a stillborn infant. In addition to a judicious choice of readings in the service, we closed the service with a healing circle for the parents. We moved several yards from the grave, asked the parents to stand in the middle of the circle and gave the opportunity to offer blessings, support and comfort and hugs. No printed liturgy will convey that, but it certainly is a creative use of the occasion. I suspect most of our colleagues have similar tales to tell.¹⁴⁰

It certainly seems entirely plausible that creativity of this type exists, and is perhaps even common. Yet it is interesting that the greatest lack of printed creative liturgy is in the area of death--an occasion related to sadness and loss. The same lack will be seen below in relation to divorce.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 3.

¹⁴⁰ Rabbi Louis A. Rieser, letter to Betsy Torop, March 10, 1989.

Perhaps at times of sorrow, tradition and familiarity are more comforting than innovation.

Occasional Life Cycle Ceremonies

The life cycle ceremonies discussed in most of this chapter are ceremonies that are part of the standard life cycle of each Jew. There are life cycle ceremonies, however, such as conversion and divorce, that are only relevant for certain people. While important, they warrant separate treatment for they are not typically part of the normative life cycle.

Conversion

I only have five conversion ceremonies, none of which are dated. Their contents and orientation are not significantly different from the ceremony in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*. (The service in the 1988 manual contains some changes and additional readings, but it is not radically different from the service in the 1961 manual.) They all contain a recitation of the *shema*, the granting of a new name, and five questions of faith found in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*.¹⁴¹ Most include a reference to Ruth as well. They exclude the *aleinu* (as does the 1988 *Rabbi's Manual*) which is found in the service in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*, but add a few additional readings. Two common texts are utilized: one from midrash Tanchuma that proclaims that gerim are most beloved to God, and one from the Talmud that says that a ger/gioret should be asked why he/she wishes to become a Jew since the Jews are persecuted and harassed, and should be accepted upon

¹⁴¹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (1961), 18. The 1988 version of the manual retains these five questions and adds a sixth question concerning commitment to study.

indicating that he/she wishes to become a Jew in spite of this suffering. Interestingly, while the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual* makes no mention of the suffering of the Jews, the 1988 version does have a few references to persecution and martyrdom,¹⁴² perhaps reflecting the emphasis on survival that grew to be so strong during the 27 years between the two manuals. What is unique about these services however, is not so much their content, but the occasions to which they are connected.

The creation of these ceremonies appears to be motivated by the desire to connect the conversion to a significant Jewish event. In one case, the occasion is Shabbat, and the conversion occurs prior to lighting the candles:

We come into the sanctuary just prior to the Sabbath service to welcome Gerim into the Jewish people. We do this both for you and for us. For you, so that the Sabbath feeling of joy and holiness may be your first experience as a Jew. For us, so that the Household of Israel may be represented as you become a Jew, and may take pride in your being one of us.¹⁴³

Another conversion ceremony is held during the Torah service. The rabbi hands the Torah to the ger, saying, "This is our Torah; and from this moment it is yours also." The ger responds with the words, "I accept this Torah as if I were standing this day at the foot of Mount Sinai."¹⁴⁴ While the 1988 *Rabbi's Manual* has the ger/giorat hold the Torah while reading the *shema*, the 1961 manual does not (although the service does take place before the open ark). This creative ceremony appears to be motivated by the

¹⁴² Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (1988), 200, 205.

¹⁴³ Anonymous, "Kabbalat Ger Conversion Service" (n.p., n.d.), 1.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, "Temple Service for Welcoming Gerim" (n.p., n.d.), 1.

desire to connect the conversion to Torah in a public and direct way. A final ceremony connects the conversion to havdalah:

We stand here before the open ark . . . to witness Havdalat Ger, the decision of _____ to separate from his (her) past and to identify with the faith and fate of our people. Our tradition teaches us that we must make a Havdalah, a differentiation between the Holy and the profane; between what is right and wrong. . . . You have studied our Tradition and found courage to separate yourself from your childhood religion and to identify yourself with Judaism. ¹⁴⁵

While the theme of separation is certainly appropriate for a conversion, the specific formulation here suggests a certain comparison between Judaism and the religion from which the ger comes that may not be intended! In any case, the attempt to connect conversion to significant Jewish symbols and events is potentially very meaningful for the ger and the community. It is interesting that there are not more creative conversion services of this or any type given the recent emphasis placed on Outreach by the Reform movement. The reason for this lack is unclear, but it is possible that since the ceremony is not always a public one, the individual creative efforts of rabbis may be more spontaneous and less formal than a written service.

Divorce

I have only one ceremony connected to divorce accompanied by a get. While the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual* has no divorce ceremony at all, the 1988 *Rabbi's Manual* does include a "ritual of release" in which each partner formally releases the other from the marriage bond. ¹⁴⁶ The ceremony

¹⁴⁵ Rabbi Allen S. Maller, "Havdalat Ger Conversion Service" (Temple Akiva, Culver City, CA, n.d.), 1.

¹⁴⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (1988), 97-104.

written by Rabbi Leigh Lerner in 1981¹⁴⁷ is somewhat different, however, than the ritual included in the *Rabbi's Manual*. It begins with the words "*bruchim haba'im*" in a clear parallel to the wedding ceremony. Although formulated differently, like the ritual in the *Rabbi's Manual* it contains the hope that any anger and hurt resulting from the divorce will pass. It contains no formal statement of release. An innovative element of this ceremony concerns the get. The parties participate in cutting the get in half, as traditionally a piece is cut from the get "toward the end that both man and woman recognize their mutual share in the dissolution of marital bonds."¹⁴⁸ In the *Rabbi's Manual* the rabbis separates the two halves of the get.

The text of the get is based on Rabindranath Tagore. The Reform get in the *Rabbi's Manual* is a rather straightforward statement of release marking the dissolution of the marriage.¹⁴⁹ In Lerner's ceremony he tells the man and woman that the two signatures on the get are a reminder that "your lives have touched and may touch again. May it be for shalom." The actual text expresses the desire for strength to overcome adversity and the ability to cope with life's sorrows:

I turn to the source of life and love: Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them. Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it. . .

The ceremony and the signing of the get are to take place before witnesses, and both are designed for either the couple, or the husband or wife alone.

¹⁴⁷ Rabbi Leigh Lerner, "Liberal Jewish Divorce Ceremony" (n.p., 1981).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* guide to use.

¹⁴⁹ Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Rabbi's Manual* (1988), 99.

While it is possible that it is a coincidence that I do not have more divorce ceremonies, I tend to think that this is not the case. It would seem more likely that new divorce rituals are not being created. From a ritual perspective, divorce does not seem to be a concern for most rabbis. Given its inclusion in the newest *Rabbi's Manual*, it will be interesting to see whether this changes in the future.

Conclusion: The Image of God and Communal Self-Definition as Seen In Creative Life Cycle Ceremonies

The way that God is portrayed in these services is directly related to the way that the community values and defines itself. The God language utilized in these services support Hoffman's thesis that God language in our time refers to an immanent God, present in the warmth of community.¹⁵⁰ While speaking of God in immanent terms may be difficult for the High Holiday liturgist, life cycle events present the perfect opportunity to speak of God as present in human relationships. Not only do the authors of these creative services clearly view God as present in the miracle of love and family, but the tradition also makes God an active partner in both birth and marriage. Authors of creative life cycle services often express their own feelings in relation to this traditional emphasis.

A new daughter of Israel has come, and with her comes a need for blessing. The miracle of life, oft-repeated, still gives us pause. We remember the work of creation, as we witness creation anew. We recognize God's presence, and our own partnership with the Holy One. We recall the message of Torah: that we, created in God's image, were created to be creators.

¹⁵⁰ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Art of Public Prayer*, 173.

We see our role now, not only creating, but nurturing that which we created. A child is born, blessed be God! ¹⁵¹

Similar sentiments are expressed in marriage and reconsecration services, utilizing traditional texts:

Rabbi Yosef ben Halafta was asked "What has your God been doing since creating this world?" He replied, "God has been matching couples in marriage."

The perfect mate is truly a gift of God.

Who are real lovers?

Those who have one heart in two bodies.

There are three in every marriage--husband, wife, and God.

If a husband and wife are worthy, the Divine Presence abides with them.

Grant, O Lord, that the love which unites bride and bridegroom may be renewed through acts of rededication.

For your gifts of love, freedom and family joy, we praise You and exclaim: The eternal will reign forever and ever. ¹⁵²

The feeling that the birth of a child and the love between husband and wife are wondrous events is frequently expressed, and is supported by the tradition which depicts God as integrally involved with birth and marriage. Thus weaving this theme into the ceremonies is quite natural.

While God is seen as intimately involved in birth and marriage, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation are by no means devoid of the mention of the Divine. The teenagers speak of God in various ways, and although doubts and questions are raised, they express a basic belief in God and some sense of connection to the Divine Presence in the world. While God is not the central focus of these services, when God is mentioned it tends to be in certain specific contexts. In the case of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, God is primarily mentioned in parents' prayers and prayers relating to family. The prayer

¹⁵¹ Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, "Simchat Bat," 1.

¹⁵² Rabbi Charles P. Sherman, "Reconsecration of Marriage Service," 5.

for family quoted above (footnote 55) as part of Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, attributes the care and love that exists within the family to God. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is another opportunity for parents to thank God for their child:

Eternal Father!
 Our lives are in Your hands,
 Our souls in Your keeping,
 Humbly do I thank You this day
 For my son.
 You have shielded him during infancy
 In his growing years, You strengthened him.
 Now You have brought him in gladness
 To the threshold of adult life.
 He stands before You
 To be linked to the faith of our fathers,
 And I voice my gratitude
 In words ancient and hallowed: (Recite *shehecheyanu*). 153

Confirmation services voice similar thoughts. God leads the individual to each new stage of life, and is present in each step on the road to maturity:

O God, our Confirmation class stands here today, having reached another plateau in our life. Although young in years, today, with this service, we take our place in the Jewish religion and Jewish community. For this opportunity, we thank You, our God. . . . We thank You for the guidance You have given us. We are grateful to You for our parents. . . . 154

Later on the parents read silently, "I am truly grateful to God for this moment in time, and for all the earlier years and events that have brought me here." 155 While Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation do not bring the same sense of miraculous wonder that is present in birth and marriage, God is thanked for bringing parents and children to all of these occasions, and as present in the parent-child relationship. A sense of the Divine Presence

153 Rabbi Abraham J. Klausner, "A Sabbath Bar Mitzvah Service," 29.

154 Rabbi Samuel M. Stahl, "Hear Our Prayer," 2.

155 *Ibid.* 9.

pervades the celebration in obvious (with birth or marriage) or subtle (Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation) ways. In this sense, the life cycle services are more God centered than any other category of services. This provides significant insight into the communal self-definition that emerges from the celebration of life cycle events.

Worshippers view themselves as a special group, uniquely connected to each other and to God as they celebrate the different stages of life of members of their community. Because it is in connection with life cycle celebrations that the Divine Presence is felt most strongly, these ceremonies help worshippers see themselves as part of a unique religious community to a higher degree than do other rituals. The life cycle events give the community as a whole a sense of assurance and confidence not only concerning its present vitality, but in relation to the possibility of future perpetuation. Life cycle ceremonies, more than other observances, celebrate the existence and the future of relationships, family and community, and thus they reassure us about our ability to survive even if this is not explicitly stated. In an era in which individuals all too often feel disconnected and uncertain about their future, the sense of intimacy and togetherness created by these services not only help form community, but give the community a sense of meaning and purpose. By reinforcing the sense of community and thus an awareness of the presence of God, the creative life cycle ceremonies help the community see its existence as meaningful and unique--holy.

Paradoxically, the personalization of the services may help to create this shared sense of purpose and feeling of community. There is a special intimacy created when the worship is a direct reflection of the feelings and emotions of the primary family celebrating. There is a sense that the

ceremony is more meaningful because it is intrinsically connected to the family and is not simply "what is usually done." (This was seen above very clearly in the case of Bar/Bat Mitzvah families who spoke of their increased feelings of Jewishness as a result of their involvement with the ceremony.) Participants in the ceremony feel closer to each other by virtue of this process. I would suggest that it is possible that the closeness of the family draws those celebrating with the family together as well, creating a bond that unites the celebrants into a community.

The question that needs to be considered, however, is what exactly is the nature of this community? The privatization and personalization of life cycle ceremonies helps to fashion communities, but in many ways these communities are isolated and temporary. While feeling a sense of connection to the family and to those attending the celebration, it is unlikely that the worshippers feel a bond to the synagogue or to the Jewish people as a whole by participating in these rituals. In this respect, creative life cycle ceremonies represent a fracturing of the Jewish community into an increasingly growing number of sub-communities. While the individuals involved may benefit emotionally and spiritually, the consequences for the synagogue and for the broader Jewish community may be serious. While privatization is most evident in the creative life cycle liturgies, it is a trend that is, at some level, part of the production of all creative liturgy and will need to be considered at greater length in the conclusion.

Conclusion

While the 850 creative services represent a wide range of approaches and were written for many different occasions, it is possible to draw some conclusions about creative liturgy based on this body of material. There are three general areas in which summary comments are warranted. First, the relationship between creative liturgy and the standard Reform liturgy needs to be addressed. To what degree is creative liturgy a rebellion against the standard liturgy and to what degree is it in keeping with the theology and approach of the normative prayerbooks? Second, as reflected in these services, what is the identity of the Reform Jews who worship from creative liturgy? And finally, it is worth assessing the creative liturgy movement both in terms of its contributions to Reform worship and in terms of the problems that it presents.

Creative liturgy is clearly written as an alternative to the standard liturgy, but it does not appear to be a rebellion against it. This is particularly true in the later years. While the development of the creative liturgy movement may have begun in opposition to *UPB*, the primary motivation for creative liturgy today cannot be found in extreme dissatisfaction with the normative liturgy. Many of the themes of the creative services exist in *GOP*, *GOP* and other recent CCAR publications. They are simply expressed more strongly in the creative liturgy. The differences between the creative services and the regular prayerbooks are thus often differences of emphasis and not of opinion. This may account for the fact that the production of creative liturgy has declined since the publication of *GOP*. Since the differences between the creative services and *GOP* are less radical than was the case with *UPB*, the need for creative

liturgy has lessened. The one area in which differences between the standard and creative liturgy are still clearly evident is in the area of High Holiday liturgy. While *GOR* has accepted the essential perspective and imagery of the High Holidays, the creative services by and large have not. The greatest difference between the creative services and the standard Reform liturgy is seen in these services.

While creative services may not represent active rebellion, there are clear differences of philosophy between the creative liturgies and standard Reform prayerbooks. The normative liturgy operates within the traditional framework; authors of creative services do not feel bound by this structure. They are more concerned with introducing new themes than reinterpreting old ones, and thus their attachment to traditional liturgical texts and structures is quite flexible. It would appear that the texts chosen for inclusion in creative services are often chosen for their emotional or nostalgic appeal, rather than for their theological significance. This is particularly evident in the creative High Holiday services and the creative Seders. It should also be pointed out that this is changing: creative services have become more traditional in recent years. This return to tradition may also explain some of the decline in the use of creative services in recent years.

Based on the quantity of creative services in each category, the liturgical occasions of primary importance for creative liturgists clearly emerge. They are different in certain ways from the priorities of the Reform movement as reflected in the Reform liturgy. The High Holidays still occupy a central role in the liturgical calendar. Passover is the most significant holiday, while the other "festivals" are among the least important. Hanukah has a certain prominence, although one suspects, that

the emphasis on Hanukah is not based on theological premises but on the issues surrounding the role of Christmas in the society at large. The modern holidays of Yom ha-Sho'ah and Yom ha-Atzma'ut have come to at least equal the traditional holidays in importance. Like Passover, they emphasize the themes of suffering, redemption and survival. Life cycle events are a major opportunity for liturgical creativity, particularly those pertaining to children. While there is much liturgical creativity for Shabbat services, most of the liturgy does not focus on Shabbat but on other themes. It seems likely that Shabbat is not a significant holiday in the lives of most people; the creative services help bring worshippers to the synagogue by focusing on a broad variety of other themes that are important to them.

It is clear from this brief overview that creative liturgy reflects a complete re-orientation of the liturgical calendar. While the official liturgy of the Reform movement largely follows the traditional liturgical cycle and groupings of holidays, such is not the case with the creative services. When liturgy does not exist that appropriately emphasizes the issues and occasions of importance to rabbis and worshippers, such as in the case of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is created. New liturgical structures are created for holidays such as Purim. The liturgical occasions that are stressed are those that reflect the key concerns and needs of worshippers, regardless of their importance in the liturgical calendar.

Realizing this, it is possible to draw some conclusions about those who worship from creative services. It is clear from these services that worshippers are struggling to find meaning and purpose in a world that has become increasingly complicated and turbulent. In this respect, the events of the past twenty years cannot be divorced from the rise of creative liturgy. The desire for liturgy that is contemporary, in the very immediate

sense, is a major motivation for the development of creative liturgy. The societal changes that have occurred have presented a whole new set of obstacles and challenges, and creative services often attempt to help the worshipper cope with these challenges. Creative liturgists struggle with the specifics of contemporary society in a way that the standard liturgy does not, perhaps because it cannot. Those who write creative services do not have to worry about the service being relevant next year; authors of official prayerbooks do.

The struggle to find meaning in the world very much centers around humanity; human effort and responsibility is paramount in these services. As has been stressed throughout this thesis, a major difference between creative services and the normative prayerbooks is that God is much less the focus of the creative services. I think that this is directly related to the emphasis placed on the perception that the world today is chaotic and turbulent. These characteristics are seen to represent a challenge to the existence of the omnipotent, omnibenevolent God of the traditional liturgy. Our experience of the world and our understanding of the nature of God are difficult to integrate. Given the seemingly irreconcilable tension, God is often removed from the liturgy. In speaking of contemporary events God--who is uncontrollable and unfathomable--is de-emphasized. Instead, human action and responsibility--which we can understand and determine--is depicted as the key to the better world.

It is important to realize, however, that God is de-emphasized but not denied. While the traditional God concept is often absent from these services, a new concept of a more intimate God is frequently developed as a substitute. The fact that we have the ability to act for good in the world is attributed to God. God is primarily mentioned in a context where

affirmation is possible--in the realm of community and relationships. We may not see how a transcendent God can be acting in a world that we do not understand or feel able to control. Liturgists and worshippers do seem willing to acknowledge the Divine Presence when they can recognize it as positive. Community, love and friendships are not only keenly desired but they provide the strongest evidence of God's existence in the creative services.

The struggle to reconcile our view of the world and our beliefs about God is revealed in the emphasis placed on the Holocaust. The Holocaust is clearly a significant part of the consciousness of American Jewry. It is not reserved for mention on Yom ha-Sho'ah or even as part of *yizkor* services. It has permeated every major occasion with the exception of life cycle events, and reveals a preoccupation with survival. Mention of the Holocaust is often accompanied by challenges to God. But the challenge is rarely carried to the extreme. The emphasis usually shifts fairly quickly to affirmation based on the fact that we have survived and that we exist today as a community. This survival is often attributed, at least in part, to our faith in God. The existence of a powerful, omnibenevolent God is often denied when considering the Holocaust and yet, this denial is not the central focus of our remembrance. Instead, our survival--the context from which we can affirm God--is stressed. The services de-emphasize those facts that lead to denial of God (especially God as traditionally conceived) and emphasize those things that can lead us to believe in and affirm some form of Divine Presence. As a result, the fact that we have survived and come together as a community is seen as proof of the existence of God and is the major reason for celebration and joy in these services.

When looking at how they relate to the world at large, and to God, it is clear that the individuals who worship from these services are searching for a sense of direction and a feeling of security. They want a way to make the world meaningful, and the liturgy conveys the message that they can create meaning in the world by acting to change it. They want a way to belong, and the services stress that the community formed by the worshippers represents the warmth and comfort that people desire. The act of coming together to worship is viewed as leading to the existence of community, which may be a major motivation for the individual to attend services. The fact that the community to which the individual belongs is part of a people that has survived gives this belonging an added dimension of meaning. The feeling of survival reinforces the communal bond. Furthermore, because they are part of a very unique people--a people that has survived in spite of persecution and hardship, worshippers are convinced of the ethical imperatives that face them. Survival leads to a moral obligation to the world at large; it provides the individual with a sense of community and belonging.

It should be noted, however, that while survival is stressed, the purpose of survival is rather vague. The fact of our existence, rather than the quality of that existence is celebrated. With little discussion of God, Torah or mitzvot, the question of our obligation as Jews and not just as human beings is quite unclear, especially in any realm beyond the ethical. From this perspective, the Jewish identity of worshippers that emerges from the creative services is rather vague. Beyond moral obligations (which are incumbent upon us as human beings as well as Jews) the mandate of the community to which we are glad to belong and whose survival we celebrate is undefined.

Having summarized the creative services in terms of their relation to the standard liturgy and in terms of the picture of the worshipper that emerges from them, it is possible to assess the creative liturgy movement as a whole. There are several positive elements to be found in the production of creative liturgy. In a movement committed to reform, innovation and change, the willingness to engage in experimentation has to be seen as essential. As long as the Reform movement is willing to struggle with tension between *keva* and *kavanah*, then the efforts of creative liturgists are a valuable contribution to this ongoing effort. This is particularly true since creative liturgy has the ability to respond to specific events in the world in the way that the normative liturgy does not. Furthermore, creative liturgy can also respond to events in the life of the individual or the community with greater ease. A ceremony for an older child affirming Judaism for the first time, a birth ceremony for a disabled child or a wedding that occurs in a non-traditional framework are all examples of situations that have resulted in novel rituals. The ability to respond to these and other circumstances is one of the great strengths of the creative liturgy movement. While liturgies such as these are not commonly found in the material that I studied, further work in this area is a potentially central part of the future of the creative liturgy movement.

Creative liturgy also has a central role to play in terms of the relationship between the official representatives of the movement and the general community. The creation of liturgy from "below," in addition to the production of official liturgy, keeps the line between the official leadership and the community at large fluid; creative liturgy provides an indication of what the community at large may be thinking or feeling and can be a crucial resource in the creation of official liturgy. Although it

cannot be denied that the production of official texts clearly lessens creative endeavors, the cessation of creative liturgy would be detrimental to the movement. Not only is there an important value in diversity, but it is a reality in our community (as *GOP* in fact acknowledges). While the movement strives for a degree of uniformity, creative liturgy reflects the varied views, concerns and philosophies that are truly found in the community at large. The production of an increasingly large number of official prayerbooks and liturgies is not going to be able to encompass this diversity, nor should it try to. Finally, creative liturgy can represent the honest attempt of rabbis to struggle with issues relating to God, prayer and communal worship--a struggle that should not be stifled.

It is in regard to this last point in particular, however, that the detriments of the creative liturgy movement can be most clearly seen. It cannot be denied that the quality of much of the creative liturgy is poor. Not every rabbi is a liturgist; in fact, very few seem to possess the skill, sensitivity and insight needed to construct a meaningful worship service. Much of what is written is awkward, prosaic and ungrammatical. Sensitivity to the language and aesthetics of prayer is frequently nonexistent, and the services themselves are often carelessly compiled and shoddy in appearance. The problems of creative liturgy are not only evident when considering the liturgists; the very fact of creative liturgy presents some serious drawbacks. We lose an important opportunity to develop significant and lasting values about God and prayer in using services that are new each week and thrown away after being used once. In using a service that can be discarded, contradicted or ignored the next week we convey the message that prayer and worship are of transitory importance and not grounded in essential beliefs.

The greatest danger inherent in the creative liturgy movement, however, is the increased personalization and privatization that it engenders. It is in fact this very desire for personalization that motivates the production of much creative liturgy, however, it is a goal that has very serious repercussions. Individuals and communities appear to find it meaningful to speak of "my" Bar Mitzvah service or "our" Seder, but in reality, liturgy should not be the possession of any one individual or group. It reflects the shared experience of the Jewish people. Creative liturgy in essence breaks the Jewish people into increasingly smaller sub-groups. Of course, one must acknowledge that sub-groups exist in the Jewish people as a whole, and even in the Reform community. As mentioned above, diversity is a reality in our community and should be acknowledged and even celebrated to some extent. Yet creative services contribute to the development of even smaller, more isolated communities. It is primarily in reference to survival that individual communities seem to see themselves as connected to the entire Jewish people. Generally, however, the communities who worship from creative services seem to have little connection to anyone beyond the members of their small group, and they often lack a clear sense of purpose and identity. The consequences of this trend for the Reform movement are grave, and in my opinion, not of a positive nature.

In summary, while creative liturgy has made a significant contribution to the liturgy of the Reform movement, it has also had a negative impact. Awareness of both the benefits and dangers of creative liturgy can perhaps guide future liturgists. At its worst, creative liturgy is gimmicky, mediocre and haphazard. It represents a narrowing of concerns to the detriment of the entire Jewish community. At its best, creative liturgy

can be sensitive, poetic and moving. It represents the willingness of rabbis to help their congregations worship in a style and manner that is meaningful and relevant, and can respond to an ever-changing world and Jewish community. It can give worshippers a new image of themselves, the world and their relationship to God. To the degree that liturgists strive to achieve these goals, creative liturgy has made and can continue to make a significant contribution to the liturgy of the Reform movement.

Bibliographical Essay

The conceptual approach that was taken in studying the creative services was based upon the work of Lawrence A. Hoffman. Hoffman's writings provided the basic understanding of the nature of liturgy, ritual and worship that was essential for analyzing creative services. *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington, IN, 1987) was valuable from two important perspectives. It suggests a general way to approach liturgy by asserting that textual analysis of liturgical texts is not sufficient if one wishes to gain a complete understanding of the process of worship. More specifically, this work outlines specific questions that one can ask in the attempt to gain a broader, more "holistic" understanding of the worship experience. These questions were used as a basis for examining the creative services. *The Art of Public Prayer--Not for Clergy Only* (Washington D.C., 1988) builds on some of the conclusions reached in the former book. Its focus, however, is on the contemporary situation--the characteristics of worship in today's world and the challenges confronting churches and synagogues in the area of public prayer. In addition to providing insight into the nature of worship in contemporary society, Hoffman proposes a way to bring about change in the worship patterns of churches and synagogues. His discussion of the language of worship, the image of God and the description of the way that people today view worship and feel the Divine Presence proved particularly helpful in analyzing the language and understanding the values found in the creative services.

In Chapter One of this thesis a basic introduction to certain issues was presented in order to provide a context for the examination of the creative services. In addition to Hoffman, Ronald Grimes, *Beginnings in*

Ritual Studies (Washington D.C., 1982) and Barbara Hargrove, *The Sociology of Religion* (Arlington Heights, IL, 1979) acquainted me with the basic language of ritual study and provided a general understanding of the definition and purpose of ritual. Another critical area of investigation was religious life in America. Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London, 1982) is a comprehensive study of religious life as it has developed and changed in America. The chapters on the twentieth century were utilized, with a particular focus on the events of the sixties and seventies. While Ahlstrom provides a general, conceptual understanding of the trends and characteristics of America, I also read specific studies and polls in an attempt to gain an understanding of specific religious behaviors and beliefs. Jackson W. Carroll, et. al., *Religion in America--1950 to the Present* (San Francisco, 1979) and George Gallup, Jr., ed., *Religion in America--1984: The Gallup Report, No. 222* (Princeton, March, 1984) were useful in this regard.

The work of Martin E. Marty, Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney was used to gain a further understanding of the nature of religion in America in general, and insight into the Protestant and Catholic mainline establishment in particular. Roof and McKinney, *American Mainline Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1987) is an up-to-date view of the religious mainline establishment, focusing on how it has changed in the past twenty years as well as the directions in which it might develop in the future. Several of the articles in Mary Douglas and Steven Tipton, eds., *Religion and America--Spiritual Life in a Secular Age* (Boston, 1982) add to this picture. Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago, 1976) also looks at the state of contemporary religion in America by focusing on the patterns of religious behavior of various groups. Finally, Wade Clark Roof edited a special edition

of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* entitled *Religion in America Today* (Philadelphia, July, 1985) that centers on recent trends and characteristics in a wide range of religions, as well as some of the features that typify religion in America today.

While all of these works focus on the religious establishment in general, some of the specific developments within Catholicism warranted additional exploration. Andrew M. Greeley, *American Catholics since the Council* (Chicago, 1985) and Bernard Botte, *From Silence to Participation--An Insider's View of Liturgical Renewal* (Washington D.C., 1988) were particularly useful in understanding the process of change and areas of dissension within the Catholic church.

I also paid particular attention to the area of experimental religions. Some of the above works by Marty, Roof and McKinney deal with this issue. Robert N. Bellah and Charles Y. Glock have done significant work in the area of new religions. Their book, *The New Religious Consciousness* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976) studies many different alternative religious groups in the San Francisco area, and includes several essays about the increased attraction of these groups as well as the response of mainline religion. Robert Wuthnow, who studied under Glock and Bellah and participated in the study that formed the basis of their book has also done research in the area of new religions. *Experimentation in American Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978) takes a sociological approach to the exploration of different forms of religious experimentation, looking at the relationship between the counterculture and mainline religion as well. Because the sixties was such a critical era for religion in America and a period of tremendous change, another special edition of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political*

and Social Science was helpful: James M. Gustafson, ed., *The Sixties: Radical Change in American Religion* (Philadelphia, 1970).

The final part of Chapter One involved a discussion of the development of prayerbooks in the Reform movement. Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity* (New York, 1988) provided the essential background for this discussion as well as the basic understanding of developments in Reform Judaism in recent years. Several other works were also important. Eric Lewis Friedland, *The Historical and Theological Development of the Non-Orthodox Prayerbooks in the United States* (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1967) was helpful in the specific analysis of early Reform prayerbooks. Two editions of the *CCAR Journal/Journal of Reform Judaism* assisted in the analysis of *UPB* and *GOP* which was critical for understanding the creative liturgy movement. Daniel Jeremy Silver, *CCAR Journal--A Special Issue on Worship and Liturgy* (New York, 1971) focused on *UPB* and the state of worship in Reform synagogues at that time; the benefits and detriments of *GOP* were examined in Samuel M. Stahl, ed., "Gates of Prayer: Ten Years Later--A Symposium," *Journal of Reform Judaism*, 131 (Fall, 1985): 13-61.

In Chapters Two through Five, the basic resources utilized were the creative services themselves. The services were primarily acquired from four sources. A number of years ago the Klau library (HUC-JIR, Cincinnati) attempted to establish a collection of creative services. While this project has not been maintained in recent years, they do have a significant body of material which I utilized. In addition, a Rabbinical Resource Center was established a number of years ago by rabbinical students, primarily for students' use. It has a wide range of material on many subjects, including

HUC-JIR, Cincinnati
Faculty Meeting, May 4, 2011-05-04

Agenda

1. Deans' Report
2. Accreditation
3. Laptops in class
4. Local registrars?
5. Honoring retiring faculty members
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. ~~Borrowed and Blue Business~~

creative services. I drew upon these services as well as the services that are officially part of the library's collection.

I also utilized material from two private collections. Lawrence A. Hoffman has a collection of a diverse body of material, mostly composed of services that people have sent him over the years. Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, director of the Joint Commission of Religious Living, has encouraged rabbis to send him the creative services that they have compiled over the years and has a substantial body of material. In visiting both New York and Boston I added a great deal of their material to my own.

Finally, many of the services were acquired from individual rabbis. The *CCAR Newsletter* for many years included a column in which rabbis could list services that they had compiled for specific occasions. I wrote to all of these rabbis (approximately 150) as well as to other individuals who are known to be active in the area of creative liturgy. Over 50% of the rabbis responded by sending the material that I had requested as well as other services that they felt would be of interest. This material formed a substantial portion of the services that I studied.

Upon completion of this thesis the services (totaling over one thousand in number) will be donated to the Klau library, in accordance with a conversation with David Gilner, a member of the library staff. They will be put on microfilm in order to remain a part of the library's permanent collection. The services themselves will be added to the Rabbinical Resource Center in order to be of direct use to students who are interested in developing creative liturgies.