

T'filah Talk:

A Year Long Course for Teens and
Their Parents to Study Tough Issues
Through T'filah.

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ברוך אתה יהוה אלוהינו מלך העולם המבדיל בין קודש לחל.

Blessed are you Adonai our God, ruler of the universe who separates holy from ordinary.

-Havdalah Liturgy

The Purpose:

Separation is a major theme in Jewish liturgy. We thank God for separating dark from light in both the evening and morning prayers. We thank God for separating the holy from the ordinary in the Havdalah service. And we thank God for separating Shabbat from the rest of the week during the *Kabalat* Shabbat service. However, Jewish liturgy is not only concerned with the theme of separation, but also with the idea of connection—both among people and between God and people. Our liturgy reflects the tensions between connection and separation which many people experience in their own lives.

Our liturgy also reflects the tension between freedom and limitation. For example, we recite *Mi Chamocha* which celebrates our freedom, and then directly after we recite *Hashkiveinu* which acknowledges our limitations in the world and asks God to protect us. Like the dichotomy between separation and connectedness, our tradition's concern over freedom and limitation mirrors many of the feelings we must deal with.

The themes of separation, connection, freedom and limitation are particularly poignant in the maturation process of young adults. Often, the teenage years often focus on the struggle between separation and connection, freedom and limitation. This curriculum guide is designed to allow students (teens and parents) to study the Shabbat liturgy together. Within this liturgy, the students will find these four themes: separation, connection, freedom and limitation. Lastly, students will be able to see how these themes

play out in real life situations, allowing families to discuss teen issues through open and honest conversations. The purpose of this curriculum, therefore, is to provide families with the opportunity to study Shabbat liturgy, to discuss the issues of separation, connection, limitation and freedom and finally to apply these themes to their own lives as the teen approaches adulthood.

Why teach this to high school students and their families?

As a child enters his/her teen years, he/she is faced with a new variety of challenges often stemming from the struggle between separation and connection and between freedom and limitation. These themes are not new to the Jewish people or to Jewish liturgy.

High school students are capable of discussing text in a way in which they could not comprehend in elementary school or middle school. At this age, students are able to analyze Jewish liturgy and participate in mature discussions about the themes found within the liturgy. They are also old enough to grasp the connection between these themes and their own lives. This maturity will lead to a discussion of how these themes play out in their lives when interacting with friends and family.

Often, parents are also struggling with the ideas of separation, connection, freedom and limitation in regards to their children and their relationship with their children. Parents are often unsure when to limit their children and when to give them the freedom to make their own choices. Just as it is important for the child to understand how the parent is feeling, so too it is important for the child to understand how the

parent feels. In order to do that, both parent and child must wrestle with his/her own ideas of freedom and limitations.

What students will learn:

*Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the tension between the themes of separation and connection.**

The concepts of both separation and connection can be found in various blessings throughout the Shabbat liturgy. But what do I mean by “separation”? Separation is the idea of dividing or severing. In liturgy, it is the idea of grouping blessings into sections and dividing that section from the section before and after. This type of separation is found during every prayer service within the concept of the Chatzi Kaddish. This prayer is designed to distinguish between sections within the tfilah. Ma’ariv Aravim and Yotzer Or also speak of separation between dark and light (day and night.) Finally, during Havdalah we understand the separation between the holy and the ordinary.

The notion of connection is also found within the same service. Connection is the relationship or bond that is felt between two people or things. When two prayers have a connection they are united in a similar theme or idea. During Friday evening tfilah we recite L’cha Dodi which connects us to Shabbat by welcoming in the Shabbat bride. Ahavat Olam is another prayer which acknowledges the connection, the bond, and the love we have with God. During the Torah service we are reminded of the connection we have with all other Jews since Jews all over the world are reading the same Torah portion each week. The Amida reminds us of our intimate and personal connection with God.

* All italicized sentences are Enduring Understandings

Finally during Havdalah we are connected back to the beginning of Shabbat when drinking the wine.

The concepts of separation and connection are direct opposites. However, both themes are found within the Shabbat liturgy. When we pray we want to feel connected to prayer, to God and to the world. Yet, at the same time we want to separate sections of prayer, we want to separate the times of day and seasons and we want to separate the holy from the ordinary. Jewish prayer is a constant struggle between the desire to feel connected to something and the desire to categorize our life. It mirrors our own reality.

Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the tension between the themes of limitation and freedom.

People throughout time have struggled to understand the concept of freedom. Do people have the power to choose their own autonomy? Do people have the power to give other people freedom? Or is it that God has the power to provide freedom to people? Regardless of which of these you find most compelling, I believe it is universal that people seek freedom.

The concept of freedom is most apparent during Mi Chamocha as we celebrate our own freedom on a daily and weekly basis. The exodus from Egypt becomes one of the central themes of our Shabbat prayer experience and is a constant reminder of our freedom. In addition we are reminded of our own freedom during the Amida when reciting a prayer of freedom. (It is interesting that this prayer of freedom is only found in the Reform movement, a movement that stood with the black community during the civil

rights movement and continues to stand with people all over the world who struggle for their freedom.)

Yet as people strive for freedom and independence, they also strive to have a sense of limitations. As children learn and mature they begin to learn what they consider to be right and wrong and then set limitations for themselves. These boundaries which they build for themselves, are drawn from the subconscious. Limitations are also set by family, friends, society and the government. Our environment sets social and legal limitations in our lives. At the same time, we are also reminded of our own personal limitations as human beings.

In the Amida we recite a prayer asking God to forgive us for all we have done wrong. We are reminding ourselves of the internal struggle to do right with the understanding that at times we lose that struggle. But on another level, t'filah teaches us about our limitations as human beings. Both the *Mi Sheberach* and the *Mourner's Kaddish* remind us of our own human limitations. A teen might feel that his/her parents set the limitation, however, t'filah makes it clear that God enforces our own human limitations. When we ask for the things we need and thank God for all that we have during the *Amida*, we are reminded that God has made us human and given us limits.

The struggle between freedom and limitation is a struggle that occurs on multiple levels. First there is the pull between wanting independence to do and say whatever we want and the understanding that we need our own internal limitations to this freedom. A second understanding is between the freedom we long for as human beings and the limitations we have as human beings. The struggle as interpreted either way is found throughout the Shabbat liturgy.

Studying Shabbat liturgy can engage us in discussing real life issues.

Often when Shabbat liturgy is studied in a classroom it is in order to inform students of the meaning behind what he/she is saying during *t'filah*. If the study goes beyond that, it is to teach the student the history of these blessings and prayers. However, I believe that there is more a student can learn while studying Shabbat liturgy.

The Shabbat liturgy is rich with the same themes teens and parents find within their own life everyday. A teen is struggling with how to separate from his/her parents while maintaining a connection with his/her family. Equally, a teen's parent is struggling with how much freedom to allow a child while still setting limits. The study of the Shabbat liturgy creates a space for open and honest dialogue within the family.

At times the subject matter can become very sensitive. This is why the help of a trained professional would be very helpful throughout this curriculum guide. Finally, when the student attends weekly Shabbat t'filah, he/she can connect the prayers recited to a particular discussion or concept which was discussed. Ideally, this weekly reminder allows students to think about and wrestle with these issues their whole life.

Between the time when a son/daughter is a child and when he/she is an adult, comes a time of struggle. The child must wrestle with how to separate and become independent while still wanting to connect to the family. The child struggles with the connection he/she feels with his/her peers while still wanting to make his/her own independent decisions. At the same time the parent struggles with how to allow freedom while still setting appropriate limitations. Shabbat liturgy is a place where Jewish parents and Jewish children can begin to study those struggles within our own written text.

Throughout this course the parent will learn how the child feels about certain issues and the child will learn how the parent feels about these same issues. The study of Shabbat liturgy can lead to a healthier separation and build stronger relationships for both the child and the parent as the child grows to be an individual adult.

GOALS

- To provide students with an opportunity to access the plain meaning of prayers said during Shabbat T'filah.
- To offer students the opportunity to personalize the themes found in Shabbat T'filah.
- To expose students to the tensions between separation and connection, limitation and freedom in prayer.
- To expose students to the tensions between separation and connection, limitation and freedom in their own lives.
- To provide parents and teens with a chance to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and points of view.
- To offer students the opportunity to discuss real life issues with their families in a safe Jewish environment.
- To offer students the opportunity, through conversations with their families, to begin addressing the conflict between separation and connection, limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Note to the Teacher

I hope that the activities I have provided during this curriculum guide along with the list of background readings allow you as the teacher to feel comfortable in teaching this class. There are a few things which I would like to mention before you begin teaching. They are as follows:

1. It is important to remember that the prayers we are studying are sacred.
2. It is also important to remember that families are dealing with personal family development. They are choosing to share about themselves and their lives. We are blessed to go through this process with them.
3. Because families are going to grow and change together, you as the teacher might choose to speak with a family therapist before beginning to teach this class. The teacher might also want to invite the family therapist to come to some of the classes.
4. The curriculum guide is set up so that each theme is first learned before the tensions are explored. Because of this, students may ask questions which you want to save until later.
5. The prayers in this curriculum guide are taken from Reform *siddurim*. I do not want this to prevent you from using this curriculum guide. If your congregation is accustomed to different version, please feel free to substitute.
6. The units are in order from what I see as the least complicated concept to the most complicated concept. Feel free to rearrange the units however you feel they would best serve your students.
7. This curriculum guide is designed so that if you would like to only use one unit it is possible. It is also possible to use the entire first half or second half alone for a half a year class.
8. Some prayers will be taught in more than one lesson. Use this to your advantage when teaching the class.
9. Your class may have certain issues which are pertinent to them in that moment. Although, in the tension units, I have provided you with a variety of issues to discuss and activities to do, I encourage you to discover what your class is currently thinking about and add activities and topics to address these issues.
10. Throughout the curriculum guide, some prayers will be studied in depth and others have a shorter text study. What do I mean by this?
 - a. In-depth text study: Begin this by studying the translation of the prayer. The teacher should begin asking questions which will tease out the theme of the unit. Also, for most of these prayers there is commentary attached on this particular prayer. Use these commentaries to enhance your text study.
 - b. Shorter text study: This should consist of reading through the prayer in Hebrew and in English. Maybe asking one or two questions to tease out the theme. Overall this should take about 5-10 minutes.
11. Within the units, all activity titles which cover one topic are in **bold**. If I have provided more than one activity which can be used to cover the topic the title is *italicized*.

Explanation of the Family Siddur

Throughout the year, families will put together their own family siddur. These binders will allow families to write out what they are feeling about prayer, about situations and about life. As the course progresses, families will be able to look back at what they previously wrote and reflect on how they have grown as a family.

What is the “family siddur”

Each family will begin with an empty binder. During the introductory unit, families will begin to understand what this siddur is and how to use it. After that, this binder is theirs. During units two, three, five and six students will be given what looks like a Talmud page. In the middle will be the prayer they have been studying. On the left hand side is a place for the parent(s) to write what they think about both this prayer and the discussion at the end of each lesson. On the right hand side the child will do the same. On the bottom will be a place for the entire family to write together. Each of these will then be placed in the family siddur.

Units four and seven will follow a different pattern. Although these pages will look like the previous Talmud pages, the texts will vary and may include Biblical texts, Mishnaic texts, Talmudic texts and modern situations.

At the end of the year, the students will be able to take home this wonderful piece of work they have done as a family. They will have written down what they learned and how they have grown throughout the year. It is a great assessment tool for both the teacher and the student. I hope that you will take the templates I have made for the various lessons; change them, add to them, and make them your own.

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Smoking, drugs and alcohol part I

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Sexual decisions and sexuality

Unit Eight: Conclusion

Wrapping Ourselves in a Tallit

Conclusion

Bibliography

Background Reading

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman, and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005.

This book is written specifically for Jewish girls to read during their middle school years. However, most of the concepts taught in this book apply to boys also. The book begins by asking if the girl reading the book is a JGirl (someone who thinks about what Judaism says about their life or wants to begin thinking that way.) The book covers a variety of issues in an interactive way.

2. Donin, Rabbi Hayim Halevy. *To Pray as a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service*. United States of America: BasicBooks, 1980.

This is a great resource when preparing to teach prayers. It has extra readings about many of the prayers and blessings that the students will be studying. These readings are short, helpful and often contain useful diagrams or pictures to teach choreography of prayer.

3. Hammer, Reuven. *Entering Jewish Prayer: A guide to personal devotion and the worship service*. New York: Schocken Books, 1994.

Beginning with the simple question, what is prayer, Hammer continues by exploring the history of prayer in general and the history of specific prayers. This book is a great read before teaching this class and also a great resource for reading about specific prayers and customs.

4. Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only*. Woodstock: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 1999.

Just as the title says, Hoffman stresses that you do not need to be clergy in order to understand and lead prayer. He explores the words and the atmosphere of prayer. This book will be of great help in gaining ideas on how to approach the prayer aspect of this course.

5. Schuster, Diane Tickton. *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice*. New York: UAH Press, 2003.

This book will give the teacher a greater understanding of where the adults in the class are coming from. By retelling adult Jewish learners' stories and then analyzing them, you as the teacher can learn about a variety of learning styles specific to adults.

6. Steinsaltz, Rabbi Adin. *A Guide to Jewish Prayer*. New York: Schocken Books, 2000.

This book is not only a great guide on the structure of services, but also on the history of prayers. This book answers many of your questions about text, choreography, and customs.

7. Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living*. New York: Bell Tower, 2000.

This book contains 365 ways to rethink the way a person lives his/her life. It is written so that a person can read one each day and spend one full day thinking about each of the concepts. Many of these concepts can and will be helpful in teaching this class. If read daily, it has the potential to change the way a person thinks about his/her own life.

Unit One: Introduction

Enduring Understandings:

- Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the themes of separation, connection, limitation and freedom.
- Families with teenagers wrestle with the normal and important tensions of separation, connection, limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Essential Questions

- How can we begin sharing personal issues if we do not even know surface information about each other?
- How is this class going to affect the students' life?

Goals

- To provide the students with the opportunity to meet the other students in the class.
- To offer students a chance to begin to understand what is involved in this class.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- State the name and at least one fact about each of the other students in the class.
- Explain what the "Family Siddur" is and how it will be used during this course.
- Give an explanation for why their family has chosen to participate in this class.

Activities:

Introductions:

The main idea behind this activity is becoming comfortable with the other students and the teacher. The students should all get to know each other as well as to begin to explore a little about themselves.

My Jewish Journey

Give each student a copy of the Jewish Journey Map from the book Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning (it is provided in the resource section.) In the resource section you will also find the original directions for how to use this map. Please read these instructions and then read my instructions for this activity. The instructions in the book are much more detailed but I have made a few changes for our purposes.

Ask the students to fill in their Jewish journeys. They should think of this map as a road through their lives. They do not need to worry about putting people next to where the map says "people" or events next to the word "events." Allow students about 10 minutes to complete this activity.

Once everyone is done, ask them to place an "A" at the place or places where they think they became an adult. Then put a "JA" where they think they became a Jewish adult (it can be in the same place or a different place.) Then they should place a "JC" next to all the places where they had a positive or negative interaction with a Jewish

community. Finally, they should place a “JL” next to a place when they had significant positive or negative Jewish learning.

When this is done, ask each individual to find a person in the room whom they do not know and talk with them. Ask them to share whatever part of their map they want to share. The students should feel free to ask each other questions about their maps and ask for more information. They do not need to share everything and it is ok if they do not share any of it. Allow about 10 minutes for this.

Then ask the students to think about what the words separation, connection, limitation and freedom mean. They can feel free to jot down some notes. Ask them to place an “S” next to anything they think fits into separation, a “C” next to anything that they think fits connection, an “L” next to anything that seems like limitation and an “F” next to anything that seems like freedom.

When they are done they should find another partner and discuss their map with them. Finally, after about 10 minutes of this conversation the whole class should come back together.

Ask each person to introduce themselves. If they would like to share one item from their map with the class, encourage them to do so.

My First Jewish Memory

Continue by asking each person to think of the first Jewish memory that s/he has. They should not say what they are thinking out loud. Give each individual a large post-it (the kind that are the big paper easels but are now also made as post-its.) They should draw or create an image of this first Jewish memory. They should be instructed to do this without talking. These papers should then be hung on the wall. This is now your “Jewish Memory Museum.”

Continuing in silence, ask the students to walk around the room and look at all the different pictures. When all have returned to their own seats, they have seen what they would like to see and are ready to continue. Now the group should walk around the “museum” together. At each picture, allow the student who created it to share with the class if they would like. Allow others to ask questions. Let the students know that they have the choice not to share, not to take questions and if they do not want to answer a certain question, they can also choose not to answer that question.

I am scared that...

This activity is a great way to get out in the open fears about learning and sharing in this class. Give each participant a small piece of paper. Ask each person to complete the sentence...”In this class I am afraid that...” The teacher should participate in this activity and also fill out a sheet of paper.

Place all the completed papers in a tin or hat or bowl. Pass around the tin and ask each person to take a piece of paper out. The students should read the statement out loud and try to elaborate on what they read. The person should try to understand what the person who wrote it was thinking. Explain that there are to be no comments about what will be said. The teacher should go first. (For example: the teacher reads the first one which might say: In this class I am afraid that I will have less Jewish knowledge than anyone else. The teacher continues; I know that we will be studying a lot of Jewish

concepts and I did not have a strong Jewish background, so I am worried that I will be lost.) Then the next participant, a student, picks out the next piece of paper and continues.

When everyone has had a turn, ask the group to discuss some of the common themes in this discussion.

-This activity is adapted from <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/hadracha/games/2a.html#1>

What is this course anyway?

This activity is about the details of this class. Begin by welcoming everyone for their second class. Now that they all know each other a little, the class can begin their study. Explain a little bit of the reasoning behind this class (which you can read more about in the rationale section.)

Hand each person a binder (it should preferably be binders that have the clear plastic on the front so that the students can add in their own piece of paper.) Explain that this is going to be your family's "Family Siddur." Using the explanation about the Family Siddur found in the beginning of this curriculum guide, explain a little about what this binder will be.

Provide each family with a piece of paper, some markers and old magazines. There are two ways that the front can be decorated:

1. Allow families to create a collage to describe their family and how they would like to grow and change as a family.
2. Ask each family to create a family crest. To do this the family needs to draw a crest on their paper and then divide the crest into either three or four parts. They should pick out three or four basic ideas that are important to their family. Label each of the sections according to what they have chosen. Then within each section they should draw or write more about that theme and their family.

Once each family is done, allow them time to share with each other what they drew or put together for their family.

Provide the families with time to ask the teacher any questions about the class or about the Family Siddur.

Resources

For activity 1: Introduction

1. Schuster, Diane Tickton. *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning*. New York: UAHC Press, 2003. Pages 16-17

For activity 2: What is this course anyway?

None

Lesson Plan for Unit 1: Introductions

Goals:

- To provide the students with the opportunity to meet the other students in the class.
- To offer the students the opportunity to begin to look at their whole life through a Jewish lens.
- To give students the chance to begin thinking about separation, connection, limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- State the name and at least one fact about each of the other students in the class.
- Name identify when the student became an adult, when they became a Jewish adult as well as to explain one time in their life when they had a Jewish learning experience and was part of the Jewish experience.
- To identify at least one fear regarding this course.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:45: Part I: My Jewish Journey

0:45-1:05: Part II: My First Jewish Memory

1:05-1:25: Part III: I am Scared that...

Materials:

Jewish Journey Map

Pens

Paper

Large Poster Size Post-Its

Markers

Crayons

Small, pre-cut papers

The main idea behind this activity is becoming comfortable with the other students and the teacher. The students should all get to know each other as well as to begin to explore a little about themselves.

There are three separate parts to this activity. Hopefully you will have time to complete all of them. If not, make sure the students can at least get through the first and third activity.

PART I: My Jewish Journey

Give each student a copy of the Jewish Journey Map from the book Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning (it is provided in the resource section.) In the resource section you will also find the original directions for how to use this map. Please read these instruction and

then read my instructions for this activity. The instructions in the book are much more detailed but I have made a few changes for our purposes.

Ask the students to fill in their Jewish journeys. They should think of this map as a road through their lives. They do not need to worry about putting people next to where the map says “people” or events next to the word “events.” Allow students about 10 minutes to complete this activity.

Once everyone is done, ask them to place an “A” at the place or places where they think they became an adult. Then put a “JA” where they think they became a Jewish adult (it can be in the same place or a different place.) Then they should place a “JC” next to all the places where they had a positive or negative interaction with a Jewish community. Finally, they should place a “JL” next to a place when they had significant positive or negative Jewish learning.

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Then ask the students to think about what the words separation, connection, limitation and freedom mean. They can feel free to jot down some notes. Ask them to place an “S” next to anything they think fits into separation, a “C” next to anything that they think fits connection, an “L” next to anything that seems like limitation and an “F” next to anything that seems like freedom.

When they are done they should find another partner and discuss their map with them. Finally, after about 10 minutes of this conversation the whole class should come back together.

Ask each person to introduce themselves. If they would like to share one item from their map with the class, encourage them to do so.

PART II: My First Jewish Memory

Continue by asking each person to think of the first Jewish memory that they have. They should not say what they are thinking out loud. Give each individual a large post-it (the kind that are the big paper easels but are now also made as post-its.) They should draw or create an image of this first Jewish memory. They should be instructed to do this without talking. These papers should then be hung on the wall. This is now your “Jewish Memory Museum.”

Continuing in silence, ask the students to walk around the room and look at all the different pictures. When all have returned to their own seats, they have seen what they would like to see and are ready to continue. Now the group should walk around the “museum” together. At each picture, allow the student who created it to share with the class if they would like. Allow others to ask questions. Let the students know that they have the choice not to share, not to take questions and if they do not want to answer a certain question, they can also choose not to answer that question.

PART III: I Am Scared That...

This activity is a great way to get out in the open fears about learning and sharing in this class. Give each participant a small piece of paper. Ask each person to complete

the sentence..."In this class I am afraid that..." The teacher should participate in this activity and also fill out a sheet of paper.

Place all the completed papers in a tin or hat or bowl. Pass around the tin and ask each person to take a piece of paper out. The students should read the statement out loud and try to elaborate on what they read. The person should try to understand what the person who wrote it was thinking. Explain that there are to be no comments about what will be said. The teacher should go first. (For example: the teacher reads the first one which might say: In this class I am afraid that I will have less Jewish knowledge than anyone else. The teacher continues; I know that we will be studying a lot of Jewish concepts and I did not have a strong Jewish background, so I am worried that I will be lost.) Then the next participant, a student, picks out the next piece of paper and continues.

When everyone has had a turn, ask the group to discuss some of the common themes in this discussion.

-This activity is adapted from <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/hadracha/games/2a.html#1>

adult Jewish growth and how rabbis, educators, and other Jewish professionals had assisted them in their Jewish learning journeys.

Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Mapping Jewish Journeys

A valuable consciousness-raising opportunity presented itself when a synagogue invited me to speak about my work on Jewish lives and learning. As part of my presentation, I asked members of the audience to tell me—and one another—about their growth and development as Jews, and, particularly, what got them started on their Jewish journey. To facilitate the conversations, I devised a fifteen minute self-reflection activity that could be accomplished in one of two ways: participants could either make notes about themselves and their lives (dates, places, people, key moments) on a preprinted Jewish Journey Map (see Exhibit 1-1), or take a piece of blank newsprint and draw their life story in whatever creative way they wished. Most people chose to use the preprinted form, although some were delighted to spread paper out on the floor and draft more abstract and individualistic expressions of the accumulated experiences of their lives.

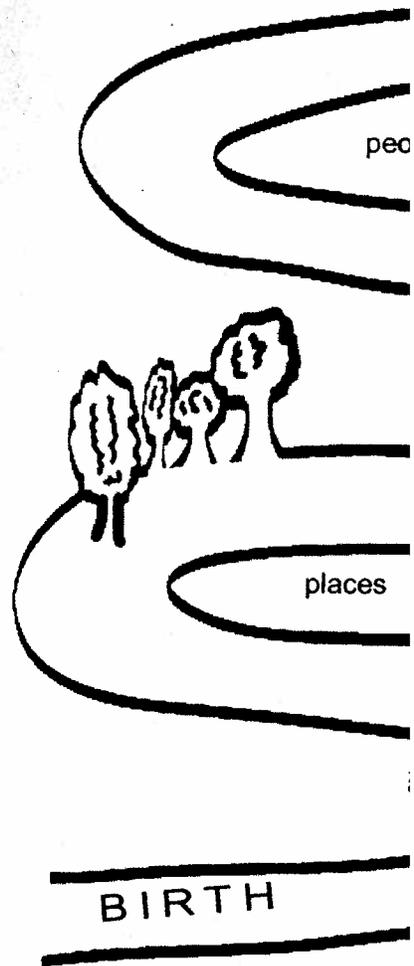
After the reflection and drawing period, I instructed the participants to “code” their maps with four symbolic labels. “First,” I announced, “put an ‘A’ at the place or places on your map or picture that indicate *when you became an adult*.” (This statement brought some laughter, especially from people who said that despite their age, they weren’t sure they could be considered adults.) Next I said, “Now put a ‘JA’ for when you became a Jewish adult—whatever that means to you.” Then I requested, “Put ‘JC’ at all the places where you had a significant (meaning either positive or negative) interaction with a Jewish community and ‘JL’ at places where you had good or bad encounters with Jewish learning.” After everyone had completed these tasks, I invited them to hang their maps and drawings up on the walls so that we could all visit the congregation’s new “gallery of Jewish life stories.” Once we had all had a chance to look over the extraordinary range of Jewish journey pictures that emerges in any group of Jewish adults, our discussion of Jewish lives and Jewish learning could authentically begin.

Building a Shared Vocabulary Through Sharing Experiences

As with any new topic of discussion, the map-drawing activity generated a vocabulary that group members could use to talk about the beginning of

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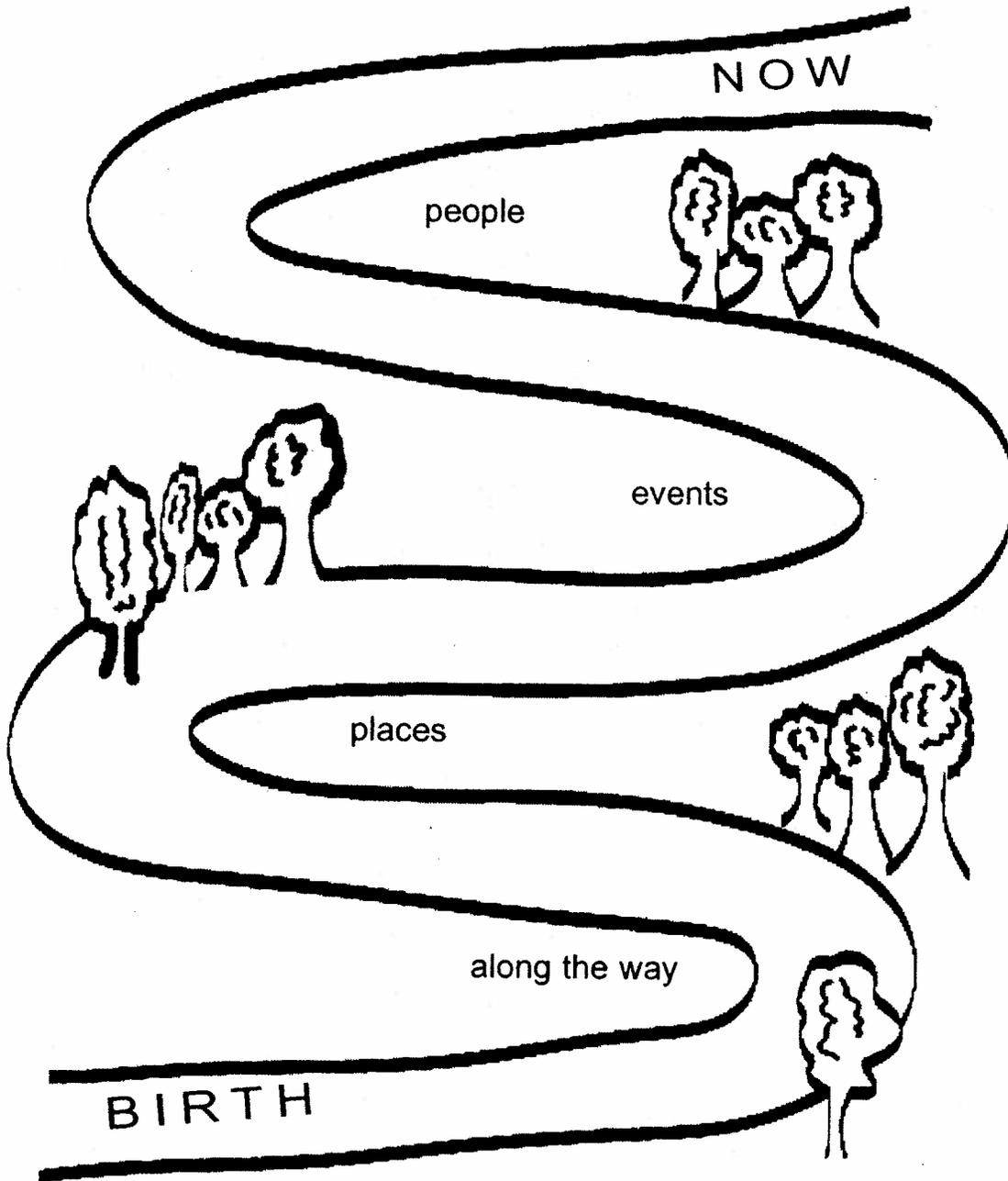
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EXHIBIT 1-1

Jewish Journey Map



All theology is autobiography. As we tell our own stories we often discover the divinity that is present in our lives. And if we listen carefully, we hear our stories as part of the cosmic Jewish stories.

Rabbi Laura Geller, 1997

Unit Two: Separation

Enduring Understandings:

- The theme of separation in Shabbat liturgy can engage us in discussing real life issues which occur in a family as a child grows.

Essential Questions

- What are some of the different ideas of separation?
- How can the theme of separation be found in our own lives?

Goals

- To expose the student to a variety of notions of separation in both their own lives and in prayer.
- To provide students with an opportunity to access the plain meaning of each of the prayers in this unit. (For example: *Ma'ariv* is about evening creation)
- To offer students the opportunity to personalize the themes of the prayers.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar or different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Give a one sentence summary of each of the prayers studied in this unit.
- Define "separation"
- Connect prayers to their own lives through journals, discussions and projects.

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Activities:

The following are a list of prayers that could be studied in this unit. They are in two different groups. GROUP ONE contains prayers which talk about things which are separated in nature. GROUP TWO contains prayers which divide the service or separate specific time. Under each prayer is listed at least one activity specific for that prayer.

** At the end of every lesson, give each family a "Talmud page" for the prayer they have just studied. Allow them time to complete this page together as a family.

GROUP 1: Prayers which speak about separations.

In this group the meaning of the prayer is more important than where the prayer is located in the service. Because these prayers discuss the idea of separation in nature and between people, the teacher should facilitate a longer discussion regarding the meaning of the prayer. This could take place as a text study with guiding questions or just a bit more time discussing the text. Please use the resources provided in the resource section for this unit to help you with this.

Activities:

Ma'ariv, Yotzer Or and Morning Blessing (between day and night)

(Talmud pages 1-3)

These three prayers discuss the separation between day and night. As a set induction ask the students; when does the day end? or When does the night end? After students brainstorm this and share with the group, conduct an in depth text study on one or more of these three prayers.

Ask students to create either a “nightly ritual” or a “morning ritual.” A “ritual” here is something that you do with your family every evening that has some significance for the family. Brainstorm many different ideas for these rituals. Once they have a significant list, ask them to pick one and begin writing a plan for this ritual. Ask students to perform this ritual every night or morning for the following week. They might even want to take notes in a journal in order to help them remember how they felt. Each family will present at the beginning of the following lesson. They should be prepared to explain the ritual, when they performed it, what happened, who was involved, how their evening/day/week felt different adding this into their daily routine and if they think they will continue this ritual.

Each family should choose one of the three Talmud pages which goes with this activity.

L'cha Dodi

(Talmud page 4)

In welcoming the Shabbat Bride, *L'cha Dodi* separates both the holy from the ordinary and also Shabbat from the rest of the week. In some congregations this is the last prayer in the Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Teach your students the term *Shomer Shabbat* which refers to someone who observes the traditional Shabbat *mitzvot*. Introduce the thirty-nine activities that are prohibited on Shabbat. These can be found in *Mishnah Shabbat 7:2* or in *The First Jewish Catalog* by Siegel, Strassfeld and Strassfeld pg 105. Discuss the origin of these prohibited acts and how they have been expanded to include technological developments, such as electricity, the automobile, etc.

If your students as a whole are *Shomer Shabbat* (in a traditional sense) discuss how this observance affects their lives. Does it separate you from you from the rest of the American community? Do you feel that it helps separate the holy from the ordinary? Do you feel that it helps separate the week from Shabbat?

If you teach in a liberal Jewish setting, consider inviting a guest speaker who is *Shomer Shabbat*. Ask the guest to describe in what ways he/she feels separated from

American community? Does he/she feel that it separates the holy from the ordinary? Do they feel that it helps them separate the week from Shabbat?

Invite students to try being *Shomer Shabbat* for one Shabbat. If they do not want to do everything offer two alternatives; they can pick one observance that they want to take on for a Shabbat or they can try to incorporate all of the observances into a shorter amount of time (like only Friday evening, or Saturday from the time they get up until dinner..etc.) At the end of the experience ask the families to answer the question: How did the themes of separation play out in the time you spent on this “experiment?”

(This lesson adapted from Teaching Tifilah; page 89.)

Aleinu: See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity

(Talmud page 5)

The *Aleinu* is a prayer which states that the Jews were chosen above all other people. For many this is problematic because it implies that Jews are different and better than others. It suggests a divide between communities (the Jews and everyone else.)

Instead of beginning this lesson with a text study begin with the following activity: Divide the group into three groups (for this activity it does not matter if families are together or separated.) Provide each group with three versions of the *Aleinu* prayer: the Artscroll version, the Mishkan T’filah version and the version in Kol Haneshamah(the Reconstructionist prayer book.)

Assign each group one of these texts. (It is important to give each group all three since they will most likely want to see what they are comparing their version to.) Ask each group to prepare to debate and defend the following statement: “Our version of the *Alienu* is the one that should be used in every prayer book throughout the world.”

After the debate, ask the students: How did the theme of separation play into your arguments? Why might the Reform movement offer more than one option? Why do you think the Reconstructionist movement also changed this prayer? What does each provide that the other does not?

(Use the commentaries on the Aleinu here as a resource for this exercise.)

Morning Blessings (for being a Jew)

(Talmud page 6)

Although many are critical of prayers or texts which distinguish Jews from other people or thank God for making us different, many also believe it is also important to celebrate our family and family history as different and separate from those around us. This can be an understanding as a celebration of Jewish history or a celebration of personal family history. Thanking God for being a Jew not only allows us to thank God for our unique history as Jews but also our unique family history.

Before coming, ask families to bring family photos, and documents which are special to their lives. Begin the class by explaining what the morning blessings are, where they came from and the way in which they are recited today. Then read this blessing together and discuss its meaning.

Ask each family: What separates you and makes your family unique from other families? Have each family make an album where they record significant Jewish events in their lives. Provide the families with materials to make this album. Suggest to them that they write poetry, create drawings, and add any documents and photographs that

they brought with them. They might also want to create a family coat of arms on the front.

(This lesson adapted from Teaching T'filah: pages 77-78)

GROUP 2: Prayers which separate time or other prayers

Because these prayers separate time or divide the service, it is not as necessary to focus as much time on the meaning of the prayers. Still, it is important to know what the prayers mean. The teachers should read through the prayer, go over the translation with the students, and then ask students to summarize the meaning of the prayer for themselves.

Activities:

Spices blessing during Havdalah

(Talmud page 8)

Havdalah literally means separation. One of the blessings recited during the *Havdalah* service is the blessing over the spices. Although some believe that the spices were used to bring sweet smells back into a household which had not showered or cleaned for a full day, others say it is to awaken our senses to a new week.

Explain this concept to students and then discuss:

1. Why would we want to awaken our senses at the end of Shabbat when the week is considered ordinary?
2. What do you think the tradition is telling us by placing this idea at the beginning of the week instead of at the beginning of Shabbat?
3. When are we supposed to awaken our senses to experience the holy?

After the discussion proceed with the following project:

For this activity you will need:

Clear Jars (empty baby jars or empty salt shakers.)

Round pieces of paper that fit into the jar

A variety of spices

Pens

Each family will be given a jar, several pieces of paper, and pens. As a family they will be asked to brainstorm events or relationships in their own lives in which they see the theme of separation. After they have a list ask them to discuss the following questions as a family:

1. How is this relationship/event an example of something holy?
2. How does this relationship or did this event awaken your senses?
3. Why was this event so powerful?

After discussing, ask each family to pick three or four of the events and write each one on the paper provided for them.

They will then pick out one spice and pour as much or as little of it into the jar as they would like. Afterwards, they will place the piece of paper on top. Then pick out another spice, pour it into the jar, write something else on another piece of paper, place

that in the jar and continue until the jar is completely full. If there are no holes on the top of the jar, they should punch holes. They now have their own spice box for Havdalah.

Chatzi Kaddish

Authentic Assessment

(Talmud page 7)

The *Chatzi Kaddish* splits apart the service. It is the divider between many different sections of prayer. In our own life, lifecycle events serve as those same type of markers and dividers.

As a set induction start by asking students to write down life cycle events in their lives which have made the family stop and think about time (ex: grandfather's 80th birthday party, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a death, a birth...etc.) After the students have shared with each other, read the prayer together, discuss its meaning and significance in the service.

Ask students together as a family to design a new family lifecycle celebration. Not only should they be able to identify a place of separation in the life of their family but also they should be able to add prayer to this ceremony. This will be a marker for the separation between time in their own family. They should come up with something new which they have not done before and which would be significant in their own lives. Ask them to share it with the group.

This activity can serve as the authentic assessment for the unit. Do this activity as the second to last one in the unit. Here the students should be able to put together the idea of separation, with prayers, and relate it to their lives through a ceremony they are creating.

Havdalah Blessing

Memorable Moment

(Talmud page 9)

Authentic Assessment

This should be the last lesson in the unit.

Havdalah is a time when we separate the holy from the ordinary. Just like other prayers in this grouping, the students should read the prayer, discuss its meaning and significance to the service.

This activity should be done on Saturday evening just before Havdalah. Ask each family before they come to choose a story which was either read to the teen when he/she was a child or is a well known story. They should pick a story which contains the theme of separation.

Based on the resources available to the teacher, the class should then continue in one of two ways:

1. The students gather together somewhere in nature. It should be a place where there are no city lights and no distractions. Either provide dinner or ask people to each bring something for dinner.

Read the Havdalah blessing as a group. Discuss its meaning. Why is this blessing said during Havdalah? What does it teach us about separation?

The family should then read through the story which they brought together as a family. After reading it answer the questions:

1. Which prayer(s), out of all the prayers in this unit, does your children's book highlight? Encourage the students to look back at their Family Sidur.
2. How/why does this prayer/blessing portray the same ideas as the story you chose?

When everyone is done, start the Havdalah service. Ask one or more families to summarize their story and read what they wrote between each blessing so that by the end everyone has read. When Havdalah is over, have dinner together outside. Invite people to lay back and watch the stars.

2. The students gather together at a planetarium. Either provide dinner or ask people to bring something for dinner.

Read the Havdalah blessing as a group. Discuss its meaning. Why is this blessing said during Havdalah? What does it teach us about separation?

The family should then read through the story which they brought together as a family. After reading it answer the questions:

3. Which prayer(s), out of all the prayers in this unit, does your children's book highlight? Encourage the students to look back at their Family Sidur.
4. How/why does this prayer/blessing portray the same ideas as the story you chose?

When everyone is done, start the Havdalah service. Ask one or more families to summarize their story and read what they wrote between each blessing so that by the end everyone has read. Afterwards eat dinner and sit in the planetarium. If it is possible, rent out the entire planetarium. This will allow you to have Havdalah inside the planetarium and to see the stars while doing it.

Both activities could either end by looking at the stars or through a discussion. If there is a discussion, ask the students:

1. How does the ceremony of Havdalah connect to the idea of separation?
2. Why is it that we wait for three stars in the sky in order to start Havdalah?
3. Which of the prayers that we studied in this unit do you feel connects the easiest to the idea of separation? Why?
4. Looking back at your Family Sidur, which of the prayers that we studied in this unit do you most connect with? Why?
5. Pick one prayer which we have studied in this unit. How did our study of this prayer through the lens of separation change your outlook on the prayer? How will this affect how you pray this prayer?
6. Pick one prayer which we have studied in this unit. How did our study of this prayer through the lenses of separation change your outlook on your own life? How will this affect how you pray this prayer?

Ask each family to fill out their Talmud page before they leave.

**The idea of going to a planetarium comes from a program done at Hillel and published on the website www.hillel.org

Resources

Activity 1: Ma'ariv, Yotzer Or, and Morning Blessing

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 1*. Woodstock: Jewish Light Publishing. 1997. Pages 41-54.
2. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 9*. Woodstock: Jewish Light Publishing. 2005. Pages 47-56.

Activity 2: L'cha Dodi

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 8*. Woodstock: Jewish Light Publishing, 2005. Pages 115-138
2. Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. Page 187.

Activity 3: Aleinu

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 6*. Woodstock: Jewish Light Publishing. 2002. Pages 134-148.
2. *Kol Haneshamah*. Wyncote, Penn: The Reconstructionist Press, 1996. Pages 444-445.
3. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Pages 284-289.
4. Scherman, Rabbi Nosson. *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1984. page 158-161.

Activity 4: Morning Blessings (for being a Jew)

1. Kadden, Bruce and Barbara Binder Kadden. *Teaching Tefilah*. New Jersey: A.R.E. Publishing, 2004. Pages 77-78.

Activity 5: Blessing for the Spices

1. Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1996. Page 65

Activity 6: Chatzi Kaddish

None

Activity 7: Havdalah Blessings

1. Friedman, Debbie. *The World of Your Dreams*. "Birchot Havdalah Hillel"
2. Website:
<http://www.hillel.org/hillel/exchange.nsf/4631b84b253300e4852568da00675ff6/675FB14CCDD68CBD85256F9B007A9E71?OpenDocument>
3. Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1996. Pages 62-70.

Lesson Plan for Unit 2 (Separation): The *Aleinu* Prayer

Goals:

- To expose students to several versions of the *Aleinu* prayer
- To offer students the opportunity to decide which version of the *Aleinu* they agree with the most.
- To connect the idea of separation with the *Aleinu* prayer
- To inspire students to make personal meanings of the *Aleinu*.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a one sentence summary of the differences and similarities between the three versions of *Aleinu* learned in this lesson.
- State which version of the *Aleinu* they most agree with and support this answer.
- Explain and analyze what their family thinks about the *Aleinu* prayer.
- Describe the type of separation presented in the *Aleinu*.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:20: Preparing for the debate

0:20-0:45: The Debate

0:45-1:00: The Discussion

1:00-1:15: The Talmud Page

Materials:

Packets containing three different versions of the *Aleinu* prayer

Talmud page for *Aleinu*

Pens/pencils

Activity:

The *Aleinu* is a prayer which states that the Jews were chosen above all other people. For many this is problematic because it implies that Jews are different and better than others. It suggests a divide between communities (the Jews and everyone else.)

See attached commentaries which come from the book *My People's Prayer Book Volume 6* pages 133-148 for more information.

PART I: Preparing for the debate (15 minutes)

Divide the group into three groups. It does not matter for this activity whether or not families are together. Give each group a copy of three versions of the *Aleinu* prayer (one from Artscroll, one from Mishkan T'filah, and one from Kol Haneshamah.) It is important that each group receive all three versions.

Assign each group one version of the prayer. They should spend 15 minutes reading the different versions and preparing for a debate in which they will have to defend the statement: "Our version of the *Aleinu* is the one that should be used in every prayer book throughout the world."

PART II: The Debate

Set up the room with three podiums or three separate areas: one for each group. Allow each group 5 minutes to give an opening statement. They should each be proposing that their version of *Aleinu* serve as the only version written in all prayer books everywhere.

After all the groups have presented, ask each group to present an answer to the question: How does the theme of separation play into your argument? Allow each group 3 more minutes to answer.

Finally, ask people to get out of their characters. On a piece of paper, each person should vote for one of the three *Aleinu* prayers, a new one which they would create or for not praying any *Aleinu* in Shabbat T'filah at all.

PART III: A discussion

Bring everyone back together. They are now no longer in debating mode. Ask the following discussion questions. Feel free to add more as they come up in the discussion.

1. Why might the Reform movement offer more than one option for the *Aleinu*?
2. Why do you think the Reconstructionist movement made a decision to change this prayer?
3. What does each version provide that the others do not?
4. Which is the most focused on the idea of separation?
5. Do any make you feel uncomfortable? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. Do you ever feel like people are separated and made to feel better or worse about themselves because they are being compared to another group?
7. Have you ever been in that situation?

PART IV: The Talmud Page

Unlike other lessons which provided the prayer inside the page, the Talmud page for *Aleinu* simply provides the form with a square that states “paste *Aleinu* prayer here.” This allows the family to either cut and paste one of the prewritten *Aleinu* prayers or to create their own. Have each family fill the page out and then place it in their book.

Ma'ariv

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ , אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְּרוֹ מַעְרִיב עַרְבִים, בְּחֻמָּה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים, וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים, וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים, וּמַסַּדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים, בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרַקִּיעַ כְּרָצוֹנוֹ. בוֹרֵא יוֹם לַיְלָה, גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֲשָׁד, וְחֹשֵׁד מִפְּנֵי אוֹר. וּמַעֲבִיר יוֹם וּמְבִיא לַיְלָה, וּמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה, יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ. אֵל חַי וְקַיִם, תְּמִיד יִמְלוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמַּעְרִיב עַרְבִים</p> | |
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Yotzier Or

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN 'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"><p style="text-align: center;">בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר אוֹר, וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ, עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל: הַמְאִיר לְאֶרֶץ וְלְדָרִים עֲלֶיךָ בְּרַחֲמִים. וּבְטוֹבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית: מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יי. כָּלֵם בְּחֻכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ, מְלָאָה הָאֶרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ: תִּתְבָּרַךְ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שְׂבַח מַעֲשֵׂה יְדִידֶךָ. וְעַל מְאֹרֵי אוֹר שְׁעֲשִׂיתָ יִפְאָרוּךְ סֵלָה. אוֹר חֲדָשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תִּאִיר וְנִזְכָּה כָּלֵנוּ מִהֲרָה לְאוֹרוֹ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת:</p></div> | |
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From Nisim B'chol Yom

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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשָׂכֹוֹי בִּינָה, לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה:</p></div> | |
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L'cha Dodi

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <p>לְכֵה דוֹדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלֶּה. פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה: שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוֹר אֶחָד, הַשְּׂמִיעֵנוּ אֶל הַמִּיחָד. יְיָ אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד. לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת וּלְתִהְלָה: לֵכֵה לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכֵה. כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה. מֵרֵאשׁ מְקַדְּם נְסוּכָה. סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תִּחְלָה: לֵכֵה הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי. כִּי בָּא אֲוֶרְךָ קוֹמֵי אֲוֶרִי. עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבָרֵי. כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה: לֵכֵה בּוֹאֵי בְּשָׁלוֹם עֲטֹרֶת בַּעֲלָה. גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצַהֲלָה. תוֹךְ אֲמוּנֵי עַם סִגְלָה. בּוֹאֵי כָלֶּה, בּוֹאֵי כָלֶּה: לֵכֵה:</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
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Aleinu

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
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| | | <i>PASTE ALEINU HERE</i> |
| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | | |
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From Nisim B'chol Yom

| <i>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</i> | <i>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</i> |
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בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשִׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל

FAMILY'S COMMENTARY

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Chatzi Kaddish

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> |
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| <p>יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָיָא: יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא לְעֻלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשֻׁבְחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאִמְרוּן בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:</p> | |
| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
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Blessing for the Spices During Havdalah

| <i>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</i> | <i>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</i> |
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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60%;">בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מֵיַיִן בְּשָׂמִים:</div> | |
| <i>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</i> | |
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Havdalah Blessing

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| | |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"><p style="text-align: center;">בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוּל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי, לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוּל:</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
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Lawrence
 My People's
 Prayer Book
 Volume 1
 pg 41-56
 for Unit 2
 Activity 1

MARC BRETTLER

Makes peace and creates everything" Except for the last word, this is a quotation from Isa. 45:7, which reads *hara*, "trouble," not *hakol*, "everything." The biblical context makes "trouble" a better translation than the usual word, "evil," because it is juxtaposed with *shalom*, "peace" in the sense of "tranquility." The "Isaiah" passage is really by an anonymous prophet whose work is appended to Isaiah, and more properly called (p. 46)

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

Blessed are You . . . creates everything" The fate of the *Yotser* is indicative of the cultural differences between medieval Ashkenaz and Sefarad. The (p. 47)

DAVID ELLENSON

Renewing daily the work of creation" All liberal prayer books of the last two centuries have retained the theme of creation, but they have expressed this blessing's version of it in different ways. In consonance with their tendency to abbreviate (p. 48)

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

Forms light" As in many other instances, the Hebrew is ambiguous between present tense verbs and nouns, so that "Former of light" would serve equally. There is little difference in meaning even in the English. We choose (p. 49)

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

THE SERVICE MOVES DIRECTLY TO THE FIRST OF THE THREE BLESSINGS THAT SURROUND THE SH'MA, THE "BLESSING OF CREATION" (YOTSER) WHICH AFFIRMS GOD'S FORMATIVE ROLE IN ALL EXISTENCE. (p. 50)

יְבָרַךְ אֶתְּךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ
 הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ.
 עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל.

הַמַּאִיר לָאָרֶץ וְלִדְרִים עֲלֶיהָ
 בְּרַחֲמִים, וּבִטְוֹבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכֹל-
 יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

¹ Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the world, who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates everything, illumining the earth and those who dwell there in mercy, in his goodness forever renewing daily the work of creation. ² How numerous (p. 46)

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
 NEHEMIA POLEN

Who forms light and creates darkness" If God created the sun and moon and all the heavenly luminaries on the fourth day of (p. 51)

DANIEL LANDES

Blessed are You . . . ruler of the world, who forms light" To be said seated. The blessing is recited out loud by the prayer leader and in an (p. 52)

JUDITH PLASKOW

Makes peace and creates everything" The blessings surrounding the *Sh'ma* are replete with images of divine power. But here, the liturgy sidesteps the ultimate expression of that power: God's responsibility for evil. In rendering Isaiah (p. 53)

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are your works, Adonai! ³You made all of them in wisdom. ⁴The earth was filled with your creatures. ⁵The exalted ruler ever since, lauded, glorified and extolled for days immemorial, God immemorial, in your great mercy have mercy on us: lord, acting as our strength; rock, acting as our protector; defender, acting as our salvation; protector, acting on our behalf.

מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיֶיךָ יי. כָּלֶם בְּחָכְמָה
 עֲשִׂיתָ. מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ. הַמֶּלֶךְ
 הַמְרוֹמָם לְבָדוֹ מֵאָז, הַמְשֻׁבַּח וְהַמְפָאָר
 וְהַמְתַנַּשֵּׂא מִימֹת עוֹלָם. אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם,
 בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, אֲדוֹן עֲזָנוּ,
 צוֹר מִשְׁגָּבֵנוּ, מִגּוֹ יִשְׁעֵנוּ, מִשְׁגָּב בְּעַדְנוּ.

MARC BRETTLER

Second- or Deutero-Isaiah. He was active in the Babylonian exile (586–538 B.C.E.), when various forms of Persian dualism, including Zoroastrianism, became the norm. Our verse is thus polemical, emphasizing Judaism’s monotheistic faith, according to which a single deity must be responsible for the opposites of light and darkness, peace and trouble. This polemic served little function in later periods, where, if anything, it was problematic, since it explicitly attributes the creation of trouble to God, and for this reason, was revised in the liturgy. Though deeply indebted to biblical precedents, the liturgy is not enslaved to the Bible, which it regularly revises to fit the changed needs of worshippers.

“You made all of them in wisdom. The earth was filled with your creatures. The exalted ruler . . .” Two themes converge here: God the wise creator and God the king. The first is a direct quotation from Ps. 104:24, “How numerous are your works, Adonai! You made all of them in wisdom. The earth was filled with Your creatures.” The whole psalm is recited in the Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) liturgy. The quotation of this single verse may recall by extension the psalm as a whole and the vast range of God’s beneficence: the earth, for instance (v. 5), which produces abundant vegetation, including the grape “which makes the heart of people rejoice” (vv. 13–16), and the vast ocean (vv. 25–26). This psalm rather than the creation stories from Genesis is chosen because it connects creation and wisdom, and emphasizes God’s continuing role in the universe.

The other attribute, God’s kingship, arises most prominently in Pss. 95–99, in the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service. But it is everywhere in the liturgy, and presented here in superlative terms, particularly within time: “The exalted ruler ever since (*me’az*) . . . extolled for days immemorial.” The emphasis here is on the past, recollecting Ps. 93:3 (“Your throne is firm ever since [*me’az*], You have existed from eternity”) because this paragraph’s theme is creation; other instances (biblical and liturgical) prefer God’s current or future kingship.

These two notions of God as creator and as king go back to ancient Semitic traditions of the king as a wise constructor of public buildings, as seen in Solomon, who built a palace and Temple (1 Kgs. 6–7). As the supremely wise king, God too is a “master builder,” and the world is God’s handiwork — as in Ps. 96:10, “Declare

among the nations, 'God has become king'; He has indeed established the world so it shall not totter."

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

Jews of medieval Ashkenaz extended their conservative attitudes towards the liturgy towards the *piyyutim* as well, and outfitted the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings with as little poetic change as possible. By contrast, for Spanish Jewry, a more cosmopolitan and urbane elite, seeking ways to express itself liturgically, the *Yotser* seemed especially suited to the types of individualistic and humanistic composition that the Sefardi poets so excelled in writing.

From early times through the medieval period, the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings had been one of many favorite sites for inserting liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*). The *piyyutim* designated for this part of the liturgy were a composite arrangement of several poetic parts, linked to different parts of the various benedictions surrounding the *Sh'ma*, and known collectively as a *Yotser*, after the theme word of the first benediction — "Blessed are You, Adonai, creator (*Yotser*) of the lights." A full set of inserts would occur only on Sabbaths and holidays, and would number seven; weekday prayers might use only a few of the standard seven parts, which were sufficiently independent as to able to appear independently of each other.

1. *Guf Hayotser* ("the body of the *Yotser*"): The first and major component, which draws on the theme of creation in a series of poetic tercets and choral verses, and concludes with a reference to the *K'dushbah*. It appears right here, at the section of the first blessing which praises God as the source of light and creator of the heavenly bodies.
2. *Ofan*: The second part, which is devoted to an elaborate description of the angelic host, and takes its name from the *ofanim*, one of the angelic bands mentioned here.
3. *M'orah*: The third poem, inserted before the conclusion of the *Yotser* benediction, and used frequently to extend the light imagery in metaphorical ways.
4. *Ahavah*: The fourth unit, an elaboration of the second benediction before the *Sh'ma*, and illustrated especially beautifully in Spain.
5. *Zulat*: The fifth segment, placed in the benediction following the *Sh'ma*, and receiving its name from the liturgical statement there to which it is attached, "There is no God like You" (*ein elohim zulatekha*).
6. *Mi kamokha*: The sixth unit, given a name for its function, the linkage of the two verse sections of the *Mi kamokha*.
7. *G'ullah*: The final poem, which comes just before the conclusion (*chatimah*) of the final *Sh'ma* benediction; in Spain, this poetic insert also received special attention.

Discussion and examples of all seven will follow in the commentary below.

מָה רָבוּ מַעֲשֵׂיֶיךָ,
עֲשִׂיתָ. מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ
הַמְרוֹמֵם לְבַדּוֹ מֵאֵן
וְהַמְתַּנְשֵׂא מִימּוֹת י
בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים רַחֵם
צוֹר מִשְׁגָּבֵנוּ, מִגֵּן יי

(586–538 B.C.E.),
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YOTSER

DAVID ELLENSON

the traditional service by deleting repetitious passages and phrases, Reform versions have usually included only the bare bones of the blessing, omitting, for instance, the description of the angels ("Holy, holy, holy . . .") and the lengthy sections of praise, which seemed to be extraneous to the theme. In so doing, they followed the prayer book of Saadiah Gaon (882–942), who had prescribed such a shortened version for individuals worshipping alone. They also followed the theories of the preeminent academic scholar of the nineteenth century, Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), who had identified this as the original and pristine version of the prayer, to which the other material has been later appended. His theory turned out to be incorrect, but the Reformers could hardly have known it at the time, and by following the most scientific hypothesis on prayer that they had available, they were able to remain faithful to the traditional idea and text of the prayer book (based on precedents drawn from the Tradition itself), while shortening the service as well.

One of the first Reform prayer books to display this tendency was David Einhorn's *Olath Tamid* (1856), a forerunner of the North American *Union Prayer Book*. Einhorn deleted the rhymes, alphabetical acrostics, and other elements that Zunz had considered relatively late in origin. His text read, "We praise Thee, O Lord our God, King of the Universe. At Thy word the light shineth forth, and by Thy command darkness spreadeth its folds. Peace Thou establishest for all that Thou hast called into being. In Thy mercy Thou sendest light to the earth and to them that dwell thereon and renewest daily and without ceasing the face of Thy creation. Thy handiwork proclaimeth Thy glory and the lights which Thou hast fashioned sing of Thy greatness. And we, too, would extoll and praise Thee, at whose command the light shineth forth."

The major American Reform prayer books of the 1900s — the *Union Prayer Book* (1895) and *Gates of Prayer* (1975) — and the British *Siddur Lev Chadash* (1995) still mostly follow Einhorn's text for this prayer, although *Gates of Prayer* offers an alternative Shabbat version which restores the alphabetical acrostic, among other things.

The tendency to abbreviate this part of the service has not been confined to the Reform Movement alone. In keeping with the philosophy of its founder, Mordecai Kaplan, by which God is seen as a natural force inherent in the universe, the 1958 Reconstructionist *Festival Prayer Book* entitles this section of the service, "God of Nature," and offers only a slightly lengthier version of this prayer than is found in other liberal liturgies. In *The Book of Blessings* (1996), feminist liturgist Marcia Falk offers the following succinct prayer as an expression of her own somewhat similar theological views: "Let us bless the source of life, source of darkness and light, heart of harmony and chaos, creativity and creation."

Most European Reform liturgists, however, elected not to reduce the service at this point — as in, for instance, the first Reform prayer books ever written, those produced by the German Hamburg Temple in 1819 and 1841. The foremost Reformers of the nineteenth century, Rabbis Abraham Geiger (of Germany) and Isaac Mayer Wise (in Cincinnati), were also exponents of this position. By maintaining the traditional blessing,

they successfully portrayed Reform Judaism as a general trend for all “enlightened” Jews, as opposed to a denominationally distinct Jewish movement. They hoped this moderate stance would attract Jews who were modern, but who still retained emotional attachment to the familiar service.

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

“forms,” not “creates,” because we reserve “creates” for *borei*, which appears next. Birnbaum and FOP agree. The point is not so much the nuances of meaning that *yotser* and *borei* convey, but rather that three verbs are used with four objects, and we need to assign English equivalents consistently.

“*Illumining*” Others, “giving light” and variations thereon. (“Enlighten” is tempting, but wrong.) The more common “illuminate” would be appropriate, but is ambiguous, suggesting both spiritual and physical light. “Illumine” is properly limited to the physical light of creation of which our blessing speaks.

“*Who dwell there*” “Dwell,” not “live,” because “live” is ambiguous in that it also contrasts with “die” in a way that the Hebrew *darim* does not.

“*In mercy*” “With mercy” might be nice here, but “in mercy” creates a proper parallel with “in goodness” that follows.

“*Forever renewing daily the work of creation*” At first glance redundant, as in Birnbaum’s “every day, constantly,” GOP and SLC’s “continually, day by day,” or Artscroll’s “daily, perpetually,” but more likely a daily process that never ceases: every day, God renews creation, and the process goes on forever.

“*How numerous are your works*” The Hebrew *rabu* can mean “many” or “great,” but in the current context, the former is more likely, since the next phrase is, “You made all of them in wisdom.” (Birnbaum and Artscroll disagree, offering “great.”) GOP, SLC, STH and SSS all use “manifold,” a poetic word from a much higher register than the Hebrew *rabu*, which many worshippers today may not even understand. “Your works” is the Hebrew *ma’asekha*, from the root *ma’aseh*, rendered “the work [of creation],” immediately prior, so we use the same English equivalent here.

“*The earth was filled . . .*” Hebrew *mal’ah*. Most translations read, “The earth is full,” or “abounds with” (present tense). But the next sentence refers to God’s role *me’az*, “ever since,” so that we are left wondering, “since what?” The meaning of this phrase seems intertwined with those around it. God “made” the many works of creation, so that the earth “was filled” with creatures, all of whom “ever since” praised their creator.

“*Your creatures*” From the root *k.n.h*, “buy,” not “create.” Words from the root *k.n.h* are often used for the world’s creatures relative to God. In the *Avot*, God is *koneh hakol*

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“creator” of everything,” and the ancient Palestinian version from the Genizah, as well as our Friday night liturgy, say *koneh shamayim va'arets*, “God ‘creates’ heaven and earth.” *K.n.h* may originally have implied “having control over,” or “being legal master of,” the way a shepherd is master of livestock. The usual way of attaining legal control was purchase, so the word gradually grew to mean “to buy,” but God could make us, thereby acquiring us without buying us.

“*For days immemorial, God immemorial*” From the Hebrew *mimot olam, elohai olam*. Repeating “immemorial” captures the deliberate repetition of the Hebrew. *Mimot olam*, literally, is “days eternal,” in the sense of forever in the past, up to now. “The dawn of days” would be especially nice here, but would make it impossible to capture the Hebrew word play in which *olam* appears twice.

“*Acting as . . . acting on*” A deliberate attempt to capture the Hebrew parallelism: four attributes of God set in apposition, each comprising two words.

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

“*Who forms light and creates darkness*” Each of the *Sh'ma's* blessings responds to a specific philosophic topic that exercised thinkers in late antiquity, thereby commenting implicitly on how Jewish belief differed from that of others at the time. Our benediction on creation emphasizes light, in particular, because the ancients saw the universe divided into light and darkness, two realms that they identified further with good and bad, or sometimes, spirit and matter. An extreme form of this dualism led to the notion that there must be two gods, or at least, an all-powerful god and a lesser power called a demiurge. The demiurge, or second deity, was regarded as the source of darkness, materiality and evil. While Jews too associated God primarily with the light of the universe, they stopped short of the radical dualism that would have compromised the principle of monotheism. They therefore attributed not just light but darkness also to God. But they were ambivalent about God's role in “creating darkness,” so in the final line of the blessing, the *chatimah*, they mention only, “Blessed are You, Adonai, creator of the lights.”

“*Makes peace and creates everything*” The midrash says, “Great is peace; it is equal to everything.” Some commentators conclude that we therefore mean, “By making peace. God implicitly created everything.”

“*The exalted ruler*” The *Yotser* is sewn together from fragments of many different prayers. There must originally have been an unlimited number of ways in which the oral artist who led the prayer service might have rendered the theme of creation. Only eventually did some unknown editor combine bits and pieces of some of them into the form we now have. From here to the end of the paragraph, for instance, we see a composition that emphasizes God's praise but has little to say about creation, the supposed topic of the blessing to begin with. It also introduces poetic features like rhyme (see the

last line in Hebrew, *adon uzeinu, tsur misgabeinu . . .*) and the emphatic use of sound from the letter "M" (*hamelekh hamromam . . .*).

It is probable that early liturgy functioned not only cognitively, but affectively as well, that is, it gave a message of content, but it also evoked trance-like behavior on the part of worshippers, who used the affect of the language to have what we would call an out-of-body experience. Living in a pre-Copernican universe, Jews believed that the earth was the center of a cosmos that expanded outward in concentric rings of astral bodies swirling endlessly around them, and producing what was called "the music of the spheres." The outermost spheres were the seven heavens, and in the final one, God sat enthroned in a chariot. The angels lived endlessly in the light of God's chariot, praising God by saying "Holy, Holy, Holy," just as Isaiah had seen. The goal of worship was to free one's spiritual self, so to speak, and then to "trip" to the outer reaches of the cosmos, there to behold God and to join momentarily in the angelic praise. Toward that end, language as a virtual mantra was introduced: Hence, our paragraph (from "The exalted ruler" to "acting on our behalf") which omits cognitive content almost entirely, substituting instead rhyme and redundant praise of God.

The blessing therefore culminates later in Isaiah's vision (see below, "Holy, holy, holy"). Inducing an out-of-body experience, it was hoped, would transport worshippers to the final heaven where they could join the angels in their praise of God — a state of bliss still reflected in our expression, "Being in seventh heaven!"

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

creation, then where did the light that God created on the first day come from? The Talmud (Chag. 12a) offers a daring solution, one with far-reaching implications for Jewish spirituality. It suggests that the first light of creation was not optical but spiritual, a light so dazzling that in it Adam and Eve were able to see from one end of space to the other end of time:

Was the light really created on the first day [as we find in Genesis 1:3, "God said let there be light, and there was light"]? It is written [further on]: "God set them [the sun and the moon] in the firmament of heaven" (Gen. 1:17), about which it says, "There was evening and there was morning, a *fourth* day" (Gen. 1:19). This discrepancy is to be explained according to Rabbi Eleazar. For Rabbi Eleazar said: In the light that the Holy One created on the first day, one could see from one end of the world to the other; but as soon as the Holy One beheld the generation of the flood and the generation of the tower of Babel, and saw that their actions were corrupt, God arose and hid it from them, for it is said, "Light is withheld from the wicked" (Job 38:15). Then, for whom did God reserve it? For the righteous in the time to come (cf. Avot 2.16), for it is said, "God saw that the light was good" (Gen. 1:4). "Good" is an allusion not to the light but to the righteous for whom it is reserved, as it is said, "Say of the righteous that they are good" (Isa. 3:10). As soon as God saw the light that was reserved for the righteous, God rejoiced, for it is said, "The light of the righteous rejoices" (Prov. 13:9).

The Zohar amplifies the legend.

Rabbi Isaac said: "The light created by God in the act of creation flared from one end of the universe to the other and was hidden away, reserved for the righteous in the world to come, as it is written, 'Light is sown for the righteous' (Psalm 97:11). Then the worlds will be fragrant, and all will be one. But until the world to come arrives, it is stored and hidden away."

Rabbi Judah responded: "If the light were completely hidden, the world would not exist for even a moment! Rather, it is hidden and sown like a seed that gives birth to other seeds and fruit. Thereby the world is sustained. Every single day, a ray of that light shines into the world, keeping everything alive; with that ray God feeds the world. And everywhere that Torah is studied at night one thread-thin ray appears from that hidden light and flows down upon those absorbed in it. Since the first day, the light has never been fully revealed, but it is vital to the world, renewing each day the act of Creation."

(Translation, Daniel Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*)

If the light of the first day of creation, that light of ultimate awareness, in other words, were to fall into the hands of the wicked, they would use it to destroy the world. (It's true. If we ourselves could see into the future, we'd make a terrible mess of things!) Yet, if God were to withdraw the light from creation entirely, deprive it of even the possibility of ultimate awareness, the universe would collapse, implode. So how did the Holy One solve the problem? God hid the light, but only for the righteous in the time to come.

Now if that be so, asks Elimelekh of Lizhensk (1717–1787) in his *No'am Elimelekh*, why do we say here, in the present tense, "Who forms light and creates darkness"? We would expect the blessing to use the past tense, "Who formed light and created darkness." The explanation, he suggests, is that God—in an act of grace—is continually creating light. And thus, to the righteous the hidden light of creation, ultimate awareness, is revealed each and every day. It appears to them that even as they are discovering light, God is continuously creating it for them. They feel as if they are actually growing into newly fashioned levels of awareness, each brighter than the one before.

As in so much of Chasidism, the vision here is not eschatological but psychological, deeply personal and interior. The light is not a thing made in the past and hidden for the future but continuously created with each act of righteousness. In this way, the holy ones in each generation ascend into this hidden light and the *Yotser* blessing here invites us to join them.

DANIEL LANDES

undertone by the congregation. One should carefully enunciate the words *yotser or*, being careful to separate them from each other.

JUDITH PLASKOW

45:7, "I form light and creates darkness" is a beautiful euphemism that avoids the harshness of the original. It includes woe and evil, but also the plenitude of creation.

This alteration of the blessing that names the truth that we want a liturgy that elevation alone? Are these *The Book of Blessings*, she argues, then the named. Her blessing light / heart of harm.

What does it mean of this truth—that I am responsible for evil—the judge of all the destruction of Sodom in the context of and for his subjects? Shall our obligation to structure our prayer might need hierarchical images of religious structures. We structure, or we can relationship, protest a

"Our protector . . ." all human power to kneel. God is difficult to recognize. Power are in God's hands. Independence, the "L" "protector acting on human action, and military power convey authority with our notions of justice.

Feminist objections to the relationship between the institutional structures. Beyond the unknowable, we must use the vocabulary available to us to force that value. In a

JUDITH PLASKOW

45:7, "I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil" as "who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates everything," the Rabbis introduce a euphemism that avoids attributing evil to God. Of course, it is true that "everything" includes woe and evil, but the word conjures — and is probably meant to conjure — the plenitude of creation, rather than its destructive or negative aspects.

This alteration of Isaiah raises the question of truth in liturgy. Do we want a liturgy that names the truths of our lives, however painful or difficult they may be, or do we want a liturgy that elevates and empowers, that focuses on the wondrous aspects of creation alone? Are these goals in conflict, or can hearing truth itself be empowering? In *The Book of Blessings*, Marcia Falk comes down on the side of truth. If God is all in all, she argues, then the divine domain must include the "bad," and the bad ought to be named. Her blessing here says, "Let us bless the source of life / source of darkness and light / heart of harmony and chaos, / creativity and creation."

What does it mean, however, to pray to a God who is "heart of chaos"? The naming of this truth — that if one God is responsible for the universe, then that God must be responsible for evil — surely elicits feelings of protest as much as reverence. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Abraham asks God, arguing over the intended destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah (Gen. 18:25). We might pose analogous questions in the context of and in relation to the liturgy as a whole. Shall not the king leave room for his subjects? Shall not the father honor the independence of his children? Is it not our obligation to struggle against the "bad" in the universe, whatever its origins? Thus our prayer might need to be expanded in the direction of protest. The masculine and hierarchical images of the prayer book in many ways capture the truth of our social and religious structures. We can seek to change those images as a step toward change in the structures, or we can name them as evil and woe and, in the context of a covenantal relationship, protest against them.

"Our protector . . ." More than just male, God is portrayed as utterly exalted beyond all human power to know, approach, or even speak his glory. This liturgical picture of God is difficult to reconcile with the reciprocal notion of covenant, for all creation and power are in God's hands. Like the parent who resists the child's necessary steps toward independence, the "Lord act[s] as our strength . . . our protector . . . our salvation"; a "protector acting on our behalf." Such divine omnipotence leaves little sphere for human action, and metaphors of sovereignty, lordship, kingship, and judicial and military power convey an impression of arbitrary and autocratic rule that is quite at odds with our notions of just government, and thus with a concept of God as just governor.

Feminist objections to such images stem from the sense that there is a reciprocal relationship between the symbols that a community uses for God and its social and institutional structures. Because the reality of God is ultimately so mysterious as to be unknowable, we must attempt to express our experiences of encounter with God in the vocabulary available to us. We draw our metaphors from what we value, and they reinforce that value. In a community in which women are excluded from public religious

YOTSER

life, imagining the ultimate power in the universe as male supports the notion that maleness is the norm of Jewish humanity and that women are of lesser value.

Moreover, God as Lord and ruler or king is the pinnacle of a vast hierarchy that extends from God "himself" to angels/men/women/children/animals, and finally the earth. As hierarchical ruler, God becomes a model and authority for the many schemes of dominance human beings create for themselves.



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BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹"With his word" The accent on God's word echoes Psalm 33:6, "By the word of Adonai the heavens were made," but is modified significantly to emphasize God's continuing engagement in the world. This is not a deity who, as Genesis 1 may imply, created day and night just once only and was then done.

²"Gates" The gates of heaven through which the sun traveled, a common ancient near eastern image (see Dorff, "Opens gates with wisdom," p. 50).

²"Wisdom" That God's "will" reflects God's "wisdom" is a notion found in Proverbs 3:19, "Adonai founded the earth by" (p. 50)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

¹"Who brings on the evening with his word" With the first chapter of Genesis in mind, our prayer accentuates the uniqueness of God's use of language to create worlds. We humans do that morally, but God does so in a physical sense as well. (p. 50)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

¹"Who brings on the evening" The Hamburg Temple Prayer Books (1819, 1841) contain only a vernacular rendering of this prayer. David Einhorn's *Olath Tamid* (1858) follows suit with his own text in the German alone. By contrast, the more (p. 52)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

²"Opens gates" Today we understand that the diurnal rhythm of our days results from the rotation of the earth. But in pre-Copernican times, the onset of evening was seen as an act of divine will—and therefore not completely predictable, even though night has dutifully been following day from time immemorial. Indeed, it was clearly within God's power to disrupt this orderliness and plunge the world back into primeval chaos—a world without light, without distinctions (p. 54)

[For prayer instructions, see page 47.]

I. BLESSING ON CREATION: MA'ARIV ARAVIM ("WHO BRINGS ON EVENING")

¹ Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the world, who brings on the evening with his word, ² opens gates with wisdom, changes one season into the next with reason, and turns one time of year into the next and arranges the stars in their trajectories in the sky as He sees fit, ³ creating day and night, rolling

GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

¹"Brings on the evening [ma'ariv aravim] with his word" Praising God for bringing on evening follows from the Torah's account of creation, whereby "there was evening [erev, the singular of aravim] and morning" (Gen. 1:5). But why the plural here, aravim, rather than the singular erev, as in Genesis? Abudarham links the choice to Exodus 12:6, where the word arbayim ("twilight") is employed. Grammatically, arbayim is the Hebrew "dual" construction, used to (p. 55)

IAN'S VOICE)

Today we understand the rhythm of our days as the rotation of the earth. In ancient times, the onset of dawn was seen as an act of divine power before not completely dark though night has allowed day from time to time. Indeed, it was clearly the power to disrupt this cycle and plunge the world back into chaos—a world without distinctions (p. 54)

[see page 47.]

MA'ARIV ARAVIM

God, ruler of the world, with his word, opens one season into the next, the time of year into the next, their trajectories in the next day and night, rolling

MUDIC HERITAGE)

evening [ma'ariv aravim] "Praising God for evening follows from the moment of creation, whereby evening [erev, the singular of morning" (Gen. 1:5). But here, aravim, rather than erev, as in Genesis? links the choice to Exodus: the word arbayim is employed. Ma'ariv is the Hebrew word used to (p. 55)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

²"Opens gates with wisdom" Instead of reading "gates" as a poetic allusion to the sources of daylight and night dark, Rabbi Meir of Apt (1767-1831, a disciple of Yakov Yitzhak, the Chozeh or Seer of Lublin) in his 1850 work Or Lashamayim (Y'sod Ha'avodah 43), suggests it might refer to what William Blake once alluded to as "the doors of perception" in the human body. There are seven: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. The "gates" here, in other words, refer to the holes in our heads! (p. 55)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּדִבְרֹךְ
מַעְרִיב עֲרֵבִים. ²בְּחֶכְמָה פּוֹתַח שְׁעָרִים, וּבְתַבִּינָה
מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים, וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים, וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת
הַכּוֹכָבִים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרִקִּיעַ כְּרַצּוֹנוֹ. ³בּוֹרֵא יוֹם
וְלַיְלָה, גּוֹלֵל אֹר מִפְּנֵי הַשֶּׁשׁ וְהַשֶּׁשׁ מִפְּנֵי אֹר.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

¹"Who brings on the evening.... Eternal love" What is the connection between these two opening blessings? The first, "Who Brings on Evening" (Ma'ariv Aravim), attributes to God the entire order of the universe—the coming and going of night, sun, and stars. The second, "Eternal Love" (Ahavat Olam), discusses the impact of God's Torah on our lives. The two are set as parallel investigations of the universe—Ma'ariv Aravim the physical and Ahavat Olam the moral. Both have order (p. 56)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

THE SH'MA AND ITS BLESSINGS ARE RECITED MORNING AND EVENING, EACH TIME PRECEDED BY THE BAR'KHU, THE OFFICIAL CALL TO PRAYER. WE THEN REACH THE FIRST OF THE BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SH'MA (THE ONE THAT FOLLOWS HERE)—ON THE THEME OF CREATION. THE MA'ARIV VERSION IS MA'ARIV ARAVIM, "WHO BRINGS ON EVENING" (FROM VERSE 1). FOR THE SHACHARIT VERSION (YOTSER OR, "WHO FORMS LIGHT"), SEE VOLUME I, THE SH'MA AND ITS BLESSINGS, PP. 41-43.

³"Lord of Hosts' is his name... rule over us forever" Careful scrutiny (p. 56)

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

¹"Brings on the evening" Literally, the much more poetic "evenings the evening," a possibility excluded by English grammar. Both the noun "evening" (erev; plural, aravim) and the verb I coin here, "evenings" (ma'ariv), come from ayin.r.b, a confusingly common root that refers variously to "entering," "sunset" (as though the sun enters its home at night?), "west," and "evening." It not only gives us the name of the evening service (Ma'ariv or Arvit), but may be the original source, via Latin and Greek, of the English word "Europe," which is west of where Hebrew was spoken. (At least four other roots with the same letters further confuse the situation. Those (p. 56)

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MA'ARIV (WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT)

light from darkness and darkness from light, making day pass and bringing the night, differentiating between day and night, "Lord of Hosts" is his name.
⁴The living and eternal God will continually rule over us forever. Blessed are You, Adonai, who brings on the evening.

וּמַעֲבִיר יוֹם וּמַבְיָא לַיְלָה, וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין
יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה, יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ.⁴ אֵל
חַי וְקַיִם, תָּמִיד יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ, לְעוֹלָם
וָעֶד. כְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמַּעֲרִיב עֲרֵבִים.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

wisdom." Biblically, this "wisdom" applies only to the creation of the world; in this prayer, however, God's continual cosmic involvement is emphasized. God sees to it that the sun and stars follow their expected patterns.

³"*Creating day*" This verse is replete with references to the first creation story, using words like "create," "day," "night," "light," "darkness," and "distinguish," but recontextualized to highlight God's perpetual care in continuing the work of creation (see above, v. 1, "With his word"). This emphasis sounds polemical, arguing against the idea that the universe is like a clock that God created and wound, but then abandoned.

⁴"*The living and eternal God*" Precisely because God still manages the world (the theme throughout—see comments above), God is "the living and eternal God." The prayer ends in the present tense, "who brings on the evening," emphasizing one final time God's ongoing activity.

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

²"*Opens gates with wisdom*" Until the discoveries of Copernicus (1473–1543), Kepler (1571–1630), Galileo (1564–1642), and Newton (1642–1727), most people thought the sun circled a flat earth. There were exceptions of course: around 560 B.C.E., the Greek philosopher Anaximander suggested that the earth was cylindrical, and Aristarchus of Samos (c. 310–230 B.C.E.) advanced the theory that the sun rested at the center of the sphere of fixed stars, and that the earth and the five known planets revolved around the sun. But by and large—and certainly in the Bible—people trusted

their immediate observation that the earth seemed obviously to extend outward on a flat plane, with the sun going around it, disappearing from sight at nighttime and reappearing every morning.

Similarly, the sky appeared to be a dome (*ra'ki'a*) enclosing the earth, moon, sun, and stars. Above the dome was water, which leaked through openings in the dome, causing rain; sunny days occurred when the openings closed. Noah's flood (says Gen. 7:11) came about because "the floodgates of the sky broke open," and the prophet Malachi (3:10) looked ahead to a happy time when God would "open the floodgates of the sky and rain down blessings."

To explain the nighttime movement of the sun, people imagined an opening in the dome on the west through which the sun slipped each evening. It then moved from west to east *on top of the dome*, which blocked its nocturnal journey from our sight, until it slipped back into view through another opening in the dome to the east. The "gates of heaven," then, is not just a metaphor; it describes how our ancestors actually conceived of the way the sun set and rose again.

We, of course, have a different understanding of how this happens, but still, hardly anyone proposes rewriting this paragraph to reflect modern science. Liturgy's purpose is frequently metaphorically suggestive, rather than literally descriptive, of natural processes. We maintain the traditional description of evening as a poetic metaphor of what actually happens. This is a good example of an important liturgical principle: *do not commit the genetic fallacy*. That is, do not limit the meaning of any piece of liturgy or ritual to the purpose it originally served. Since ritual attracts new meanings over time, the proper criterion for evaluating what to keep and what to change is the significance of the particular liturgical phrase or ritual *to us now*, with all the *new* meanings that the *old* form has taken on. If words or rituals become harmful to people, they should be changed for moral reasons. Sometimes, too, we omit them because they have lost all meaning; but most of the time, as here, we reinterpret the old form in light of our current understandings, putting new wine into old bottles. "The gates of heaven" is a phrase equally as compelling as Homer's "fingers of dawn," neither of which actually describes scientific reality, but both of which beautifully capture our feelings about the majesty of nature.

²"Seasons ... stars ... sky" People in antiquity knew a great deal about astronomy. Without electric lights, they could actually see the stars. Also, they used the movement of the heavens to set their calendar and navigate their ships. Consequently, our prayer recognizes the setting of the sun as part of a larger order of seasons and stars. Stopping to mark the sunset liturgically should help make us city folk aware of the broader orders of nature too!

³"Rolling light from darkness and darkness from light" The ancient cosmology described above (see "Opens gates with wisdom") explains the use of the word "rolls": God is pictured as rolling the sun from east to west along the inside of the dome during the day and over the dome at night.

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MA'ARIV (WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT)

³“*Lord of Hosts' is his name*” The prayer refers directly to an aspect of God most evident in nature, even for us, today. With all of our scientific advancements, we still cannot change the timing of dawn and dusk, let alone the fluctuation of seasons and the order of the stars. Thus, this prayer bespeaks something just as important for us to acknowledge as for our ancestors: the human powerlessness to control the orders of nature that depend on a power far beyond us, whom we name God.

In making these assertions, it is important to avoid the *fallacy of residue theology*, which limits God to what human beings cannot do, so that the more we learn to do, the less room there is for God. Jewish tradition is much wiser: it asserts that God is present also in what human beings do. Thus God is manifest when doctors, who act as God's agents, bring healing. God is present also when we “crack a problem” or otherwise become creative, inventive, or artistically imaginative. Still, God remains most dramatically evident in life's areas that we cannot control, like the eternal movement of sun, seasons, and stars.

⁴“*God will continually rule over us*” The Hebrew of this line may mean, “God will always rule over us” or “May God always rule over us.” The former is a statement of faith; the latter a vision of hope, occasioned by the author's recognition that without God's continual ordering of nature, humanity would be in deep trouble. Either way, God is, as the phrase immediately before this one asserts, “a living and everlasting God,” for only then could one trust or pray that the orders of nature will continue.

⁴“*Blessed are You, Adonai ...*” The mood of this entire prayer is not descriptive, but expressive—of awe, praise, and thanksgiving. We certainly may and should examine nature scientifically, but we must also appreciate the natural everyday wonders, which existed long before we understood them. Understanding should not dull our appreciation of still being as dependent on them as ever. That is the task of this prayer—to call attention to what we might otherwise take for granted.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

traditional Geiger and Wise retain the traditional Hebrew alongside a translation. Virtually all twentieth-century Reform Siddurim reflect the model established by Geiger and Wise. The prayer in question is familiar—indeed, basic—after all, and not too long to prevent congregational recitation in the original.

The issue of Hebrew has a long history in modern prayer books. In America, a short Sabbath service, all in English, appeared briefly in 1830, the product of the Reform Society of Charleston. While it was short-lived, other rabbis—most notably Samuel Holdheim of Berlin and David Einhorn of Baltimore and Philadelphia—in nineteenth-century Europe and America preferred using as little Hebrew as possible. However, the majority of rabbis still considered Hebrew desirable. When an 1845 German rabbinic

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an aspect of God most advancements, we still situation of seasons and t as important for us to o control the orders of God.

Placy of residue theology, e more we learn to do, r: it asserts that God is hen doctors, who act as a problem" or otherwise ll, God remains most he eternal movement of

e may mean, "God *will* ormer is a statement of cognition that without ouble. Either way, everlasting God," will continue.

er is not descriptive, but ay and should examine veryday wonders, which should not dull our the task of this prayer—

alongside a translation. e model established by basic—after all, and not

ooks. In America, a short product of the Reform —most notably Samuel hia—in nineteenth- sible. However, the 1845 German rabbinic

conference asserted that Hebrew was not "legally required" for the expression of Jewish prayer, Zacharias Frankel—the father of a Positive-Historical Jewish religious stance that later evolved into the ideological foundation for Conservative Judaism in America—walked out of the meeting in protest. Similarly, Abraham Geiger retained a strong attachment to Hebrew in Jewish liturgy, and Isaac Mayer Wise maintained that Hebrew should be retained "because our brethren in all parts of the world are conversant with the Hebrew service, and no Israelite should feel himself a stranger in the House of the Lord." Should Hebrew be abandoned as the principal language of Jewish prayer, Wise warned that Judaism would hopelessly be divided into sects, and the religious unity of the Jewish people would disappear.

Almost universally, the issue has not been whether to include Hebrew. Rather, the questions have been how to include and whether to include transliteration as well so that non-Hebrew readers might use it. This latter issue has exercised many rabbis because some contend that the use of transliteration would serve as a "crutch" that would have the effect of discouraging congregants from mastering Hebrew itself. This issue exercised the Conservative Movement when it issued its first official prayer book in 1946. The prototype of their book, prepared by Conservative rabbi Morris Silverman in Hartford, had employed transliteration quite liberally. However, the committee charged with the official Conservative liturgy broke with Silverman, refusing to concede the need for transliteration. Conservative Judaism insists on the principled position that people should learn to daven in Hebrew, and it remains the preferred position of the movement today. However, as the later editions of the Conservative *Sim Shalom* indicate, there has been a practical need to modify this stance somewhat in light of the sociological reality of a Jewish world where many Conservative worshipers simply do not know how to read Hebrew characters. Thus, *Sim Shalom* prints parts of the Torah service, including the blessings over the Torah, and *Kaddish* in transliteration. (See Volume 6, *Tachanun and Concluding Prayers*, pp. 155–156.) Indeed, even the Orthodox ArtScroll *Siddur Kol Ya'akov* does so.

Reform Judaism has generally omitted transliteration as well. However, because of the nontraditional nature of Reform worship, it was usually possible to conduct congregational readings in English and reserve the Hebrew parts for the rabbi, cantor, or choir (which usually sang from transliterated sheet music in any event). The forthcoming American Reform *Mishkan T'filah* was composed with the principle that every piece of Hebrew will appear with transliteration, precisely to empower worshipers to be able to say the Hebrew themselves without relying on "experts" to do it for them. A second edition without transliteration will appear as well, so as to satisfy a minority of Reform rabbis who believe—as do many of their Conservative counterparts—that transliteration impedes the learning of Hebrew and will set back the movement from the progress it is currently making in instilling Hebrew literacy among Reform worshipers.

³"Creating day and night, rolling ..." In 1892, I. S. Moses prepared a *Union Prayer Book* for the American Reform Movement. For reasons that are not altogether clear,

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MA'ARIV (WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT)

but probably having to do with the fact that it was deemed too traditional, it was quickly withdrawn from circulation and replaced by a *Union Prayer Book* that set the hallmark of what we now call classical Reform. Among other things, classical Reform exercised extreme care not to say anything that might be seen as medieval in thought. The 1892 edition had included the statement that "God rolls back," taking it as metaphoric, even poetic. (For its original meaning in biblical cosmology, see Dorff "Rolling," p. 51.) Not so the series of *Union Prayer Books* that became the hallmark of American Reform worship until the *Gates of Prayer* (1975). The *UPB* series took out all but the philosophically acceptable epithet of God as "Creator of day and night."

⁴"*The living and eternal God*" The 1977 *British Forms of Prayer*, the 1995 *British Liberal Lev Chadas*, and the 2001 *German Gebetbuch* remove this line. *Minhag America* (1857) omits this line as well.

⁴"*Blessed are You*" Marcia Falk (*Book of Blessings*, 1996) labels this prayer "Blessing of Creation," but, typically for her, refuses to affirm a God who is totally "other" who stands above and beyond us. Instead, she prefers her own hallmark blessing formula, "Let us bless the source of life, source of darkness and light, heart of harmony and chaos, creativity and creation."



FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

between day and night. It's significant—given this sense of human vulnerability to the forces of heaven—that we thank God for bringing on the evening, thereby asserting that daylight is the natural state of the world, and darkness a daily intervention.

How does this prayer depict the heavenly alternation of day and night? Not as the dance of the planetary spheres nor a cosmic clock, nor a grand celestial drama—but rather as a domestic scene: God opens the gates (*pote'ach sh'arim*), changes the seasons (*machalif et haz'manim*), orders the stars in their courses (*m'sader et hakokhavim b'mishm'rotaihem*). Like an efficient *baleh busteh* (pronounced bah-l' BUS-t' [the U of "BUS" rhymes with the OU of "could"], "homemaker"), God airs out the house each day, letting in the cool night air; changes the sheets, makes the beds, puts things to rights. Each day God rolls up the blinds of night; each night, rolls them down again. How comfortable it is to inhabit a world that is so well tended!



GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

describe two of anything, so rather than “twilight,” it can be taken as implying two movements of the sun, each called *erev*: the first *erev* occurs when the sun passes its zenith in the afternoon and begins to tilt toward the west, while the second *erev* is the actual setting of the sun. Our blessing, says Abudarham, praises God for bringing about these two celestial movements every day.

²“*Opens gates*” Abudarham recalls patriarch Jacob’s famous dream of the ladder stretching from earth to heaven. Jacob calls the place where the dream occurred *sha’ar hashamayim*, the “gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:17). The gates mentioned in our prayer must therefore be similar gates—in effect, our own (not just Jacob’s) gates to heaven. The plural “gates” is employed to parallel Psalm 78:23, which refers to *daltayim*, “doors of heaven,” in the plural.

²“*With wisdom ... reason*” The juxtaposition of God’s “wisdom” (*chochmah*) and “reason” (*t’vunah*) is based on Proverbs 3:19, where God is said to have established the earth through wisdom, and the heavens through reason.

²“*Turns one time of year into the next*” Abudarham identifies the “changing” here with the three times the day changes: evening, morning, and afternoon.

²“*Their trajectories [mish’m’roteihem]*” The Talmud (Ber. 3a) teaches, “The night has three watches [*mishm’rot*],” using the same word for “watch” that we have translated as “trajectory.” Even though our blessing represents God as the silent and efficient enforcer of natural law, the Talmud pictures Him at the conclusion of each watch “sitting and roaring like a lion ... over [the destruction of] his beautiful place [the Temple in Jerusalem].”

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

And the operative question for him, and us, is how to bring these doors into alignment with God; or, in the language of the blessing, how can we open our own gates with wisdom? The answer to his rhetorical question comes from Job 28:12, where we read: *v’hachokhmah me’ayin timatsei*, “From where can wisdom be found?” But Meir of Apt, following a long tradition of kabbalistic interpretation, does not read the verse as a question, but as a statement. The word *me’ayin*, “from where,” can also be read as meaning “from *ayin*,” from “nothingness,” that is, from the “divine nothingness.” The source of wisdom is *ayin*, the divine nothingness, God. And, through making oneself *ayin*, “nothing”—both in the pietistic sense of humility and in the mystical sense of dissolution of self into the divine nothing (*bittul hayesh*), one can attain true wisdom. Through entering the ocean of the divine, we return to our own origins; we go back to zero. In the language of computers, we “restore the default configuration.”

too traditional, it was *Prayer Book* that set the things, classical Reform as medieval in thought. “rolls back,” taking it as cosmology, see Dorff, became the hallmark of the *UPB* series took out of day and night.”

Prayer, the 1995 British is line. *Minhag America*

els this prayer “Blessing o is totally “other” who mark blessing formula, heart of harmony and

nan vulnerability to the ning, thereby asserting ily intervention.

y and night? Not as the d celestial drama—but *m*), changes the seasons *sader et hakokhavim b’-bah-l’ BUS-t’* [the U of airs out the house each he beds, puts things to rolls them down again.

MA'ARIV (WEEKDAY AND SHABBAT)

But Meir of Apt goes farther. He cautions us that thinking of ourselves as nothing can be a trap, a clever disguise of one's ego, for it can lead us into thinking that we now are in exclusive possession of the truth. How easy it is for us to forget that others too behold a dimension of the divine. Indeed, the ultimate *ayin* opens the doors for each person in a unique way. As important and sacred as it might be for us to realize that all wisdom comes from God, it may be more important to remember that for each creature this divine contact is a powerful and uniquely different experience.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

and beauty; both come from God. The first evokes awe; the second, love. But both universes are actually one, which find their resolution in the *Sh'ma*, our statement of God's unity.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

reveals these as extra words. The prayer reads much better without them, going directly from "differentiating between day and night" to "Blessed are You, Adonai, who brings on the evening." Indeed, David Abudarham of twelfth-century Spain pointed this out. Most Sefardim (not all) omit these words, therefore, although the Spanish-Portuguese prayer book includes the first half, "Lord of Hosts is his name."

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

roots mean "to barter," "Arab," "to mix," and finally "to be pleasant.")

²"*Gates*" Probably the gates of heaven.

²"*One season into the next*" Literally, "changes the seasons."

²"*Time of year into the next*" Literally, "turns the times of year."

²"*Sees fit*" Or "wants."

³"*Bringing*" Commonly, "bringing on," but we have already used that phrase in "bringing on the evening," and we want to use different phrases in English to reflect different phrases in Hebrew.

II. BLESSING ON R AHAVAT OLAM (LOVE")

¹You have loved the people, with an e us Torah and command
²Therefore, Adonai ou down and when we sta your laws, and rejoice i Torah and your com
³For they are our life a days. We will meditate night. ⁴Never remove
⁵Blessed are You, Ad People Israel.

Unit 2
Activity 2

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

L'khab Dodi The Bible has no equivalent prayer; it does not view the Sabbath as a bride and never uses the rhyme scheme AAAB (or with the refrain, AAABBB). The poem draws on biblical language, however, changing it where necessary to fit the rhyme scheme, and using it creatively to mean new things. (p. 122)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

¹"Go forth my love to meet the bride" The metaphor of marriage goes back to the Prophets (Hos. 2:4, 18, 21-22; Isa. 54:5-8, 62:4-5), who see God as the groom and Israel as God's bride. Rabbi Akiba (*Avot D'Rabbi Natan*, 1) expands the metaphor by (p. 122)

ELLENSON
(MODERN LITURGIES)

¹"Go forth my love" The patent mysticism of *L'khab Dodi* was anathema to early Reform rationalists. So was its blatant imagery of a desolate Jerusalem awaiting redemptive restoration at the (p. 123)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

¹"Go forth my love to meet the bride" Shabbat here becomes a feminine expression of the divine will manifest in our lives. Such, of course, was the intention of the kabbalist who wrote this poem, Solomon Alkabetz, who was intoxicated, as were his mystic (p. 126)

GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

¹"Go forth my love to meet the bride" The opening line of *L'khab Dodi* is reminiscent of R. Chanina's practice of wrapping himself in his cloak close to sunset on Friday and saying, "Come and let us go out to greet the Shabbat Queen," and of R. Yannai's similar practice of saying "Come O bride! Come O bride!" (Shabbat 119a; see Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, pp. 148, 152; Gray, "*Shabbat Hamalkah*").

²"Observe' and 'remember'—two words as one" The first version (p. 127)

II. L'KHAH DODI ("GO FORTH MY LOVE..."):
THE DIVINE UNION OF BRIDE AND GROOM

¹ Go forth my love to meet the bride.
Shabbat's reception has arrived!

² "Observe" and "remember"—two words as one,
Proclaimed by the Only, forgotten by none.
Adonai is One. His name is One.
Praised, and renowned, and glorified.

KIMELMAN (KABBALAH)

L'khab Dodi Other kabbalistic Sabbath songs are characterized by Aramaisms and technical kabbalistic terminology, but *L'khab Dodi* is written in virtually pure biblical Hebrew, along the model of Spanish Hebrew poetry. The masking of its kabbalistic message is so successful that only a kabbalist attuned to its theology can unlock its meaning. Much depends on prior understanding of the kabbalistic system of *sefirot* (see Koren, pp. 33-42).

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e to meet the bride" The of *L'khab Dodi* is Chanina's practice of lf in his cloak close to y and saying, "Come t to greet the Shabbat f R. Yannai's similar ng "Come O bride!" (Shabbat 119a; see *bat at Home*, pp. 148, *bat Hamalkah*").

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ner kabbalistic Sabbath cterized by Aramaisms bbalistic terminology, i is written in virtually brew, along the model Hebrew poetry. The abbalistic message is so nly a kabbalist attuned an unlock its meaning- on prior understanding i system of *sefirot* (see

introduutory (p. 128)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

L'khab Dodi Gematria is an ancient system of assigning a numerical equivalent to each Hebrew letter based on its sequential place in the alphabet. (It is the most popular, but by no means the only, system of extracting additional meaning from the letters and words of the holy language.) Thus, *aleph*, the first letter, is 1; *bet*, the second letter, is 2; *gimel*, the third letter, 3; and so forth until we get to *yod*, which is 10. From then on, letters increase by tens until we reach *kuf*, which is 100. The (p. 132)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

L'KHAH DODI CONCLUDES THE KABBALISTIC SECTION OF KABBALAT SHABBAT. IT FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY UPON ANA B'KHO'ACH (THE MYSTICAL MEDITATION ABOVE) AND IS MEANT TO COINCIDE WITH SUNSET, SERVING AS A WELCOME FOR SHABBAT.

L'khab Dodi This poem contains multiple esoteric meanings (see Kimelman). Probably the best-loved composition in all of Jewish liturgy, it appears in almost every rite. None other than Heinrich Heine translated it into German. (p. 134)

לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת בְּלָה,
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה.
שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד²
הַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ אֶל הַמִּיָּחָד:
יְיָ אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד
לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת וּלְתִהְלָה.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

L'khab Dodi I cannot resist a personal note about the almost unbelievable beauty of *L'khab Dodi*, in my mind the most perfect poem in our liturgy. The structure of the poem is flawless, adhering to strict rhyme and meter. The words themselves are composed almost entirely of biblical passages, sometimes rearranged for variety, yet they convey outstanding novel imagery and kabbalistic nuances beyond compare. Further investigation into the poem reveals not only an acrostic of the author's name but an oblique numeric reference to the unification of God (see Kimelman). Any one of these qualities would be enough to make *L'khab Dodi* a gem. Their combination puts the poem at the apex of our liturgy—our (p. 135)

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"Observe' and 'remember'" "Observe" (*shamor*) refers to the thirty-nine categories of prohibited labor. "Remember" (*zakhor*) is the articulated proclamation of Shabbat's sanctity via (1) *Kiddush* at the beginning of the Shabbat ("over wine, for the nature of man is that he is stirred greatly when he feasts and makes merry"—Sefer Hachinukh, *Mitzvah* 31) and (2) *Havdalah* at its conclusion.

For Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch, the leader of nineteenth- (p. 133)

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

³ Go forth my love...

⁴ To meet Shabbat, come, let us go
For she is the source from which
blessings flow.

From creation's beginning a royal
veiled glow,
The last thought created, the first
sanctified.

⁵ Go forth my love...

⁶ Regal city, the king's holy shrine
Rise up and leave your upheaval
behind.

Too long in the valley of tears have
you pined.

The Compassionate One will
compassion provide.

⁷ Go forth my love...

⁸ Shake off the ashes. Rise up from
them!

Wear glorious clothes, my people, my
gem.

Through the son of Yishai of
Bethlehem

Redeem my soul. Draw near to my
side.

⁹ Go forth my love...

¹⁰ Awake, awake! Your light is here.
Arise, shine out light bold and clear.
Wake up! Wake up! Sing verse to
hear.

Through you the presence of God
comes alive.

¹¹ Go forth my love...

¹² Be not despondent. Be not cast
down.

³ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

⁴ לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכָּה
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה;
מֵרֵאשׁ מִקְדָּם גְּסוּכָה
סוּף מְעֻשָׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תַּחֲלָה.

⁵ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

⁶ מִקְדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מְלוּכָה
קוֹמֵי צְאֵי מִתּוֹךְ הַהֶפְכָּה;
רַב לָךְ שַׁבָּת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָא
וְהוּא יַחְמַל עָלֶיךָ חֲמָלָה.

⁷ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

⁸ הַתְּנַעֲרֵי מֵעַפְר קוֹמֵי
לְבָשֵׁי בְּגָדֵי תַפְאֲרַתְךָ עֲמִי;
עַל יַד בֶּן יִשַׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמֵי
קִרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְאֻלָּה.

⁹ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

¹⁰ הַתְּעוֹדְרֵי הַתְּעוֹדְרֵי
כִּי בָּא אוֹרְךָ קוֹמֵי אוֹרֵי;
עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבָרֵי
כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה.

¹¹ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

¹² לֹא תִבְשֵׂי וְלֹא תִכְלָמֵי
מָה תִשְׁתַּחֲחֵי וּמָה תִתְהַמֵּי;
כִּי יַחְסוּ עֲנֵי עֲמִי
וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תִּלְתָּה.

¹³ לָכֶּה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלָה...

¹⁴ וְהִיוּ לְמִשְׁסָה שְׂאִסְיָךְ
וְרַחֲמוּ כָּל מְבַלְעֵיךָ;

SECTION 1

לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא³
 לְקַרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לְכוּ⁴
 כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרֶכֶת
 מֵרֵאשׁ מְקַדֵּם גְּסוּכָד
 סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבוֹ
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁵
 מִמְקַדֵּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מִ
 קוֹמֵי צְאֵי מִתּוֹךְ הַהַר
 רַב לָךְ שַׁבַּת בְּעַמְּךָ
 וְהוּא יִחַמֵּל עָלֶיךָ חַו
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁷
 הַתְּנַצְרֵי מֵעַפְרֵי הַיָּם
 לְבָשֵׁי בְגָדֵי תֵרֶם
 עַל יַד בֶּן יִשִׁי בֵּית ו
 קָרְבָה אֶל נַפְשֵׁי גְאֵי
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁹
 הַתְּעוֹדְרֵי הַתְּעוֹדְרֵי
 כִּי בָא אֹרֶךְ קוֹמֵי אֶ
 עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבַר
 כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא¹¹
 לֹא תִבְשֵׁי וְלֹא תִכֵּי
 מֵהַ תְּשִׁתְּחַחֵי וּמֵהַ
 כֶּף יִחַסוּ עֲנֵי עַמִּי
 וּבְנִגְתָּה עִיר עַל תְּלוּ
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא¹³
 וְהִיוּ לְמִשְׁפָּה¹⁴
 וְדַחְקוּ כָּל מִבְּקֵי יְהוּדָה

Why be dejected; why face the ground?
 In a city rebuilt on its own ancient mound,
 The poor of my people find shelter inside.
¹³Go forth my love...
¹⁴Shunned are all who would shun you.
 Gone are those who'd overrun you.
 The joy of your God shines upon you
 Like the joy of a groom and a bride.
¹⁵Go forth my love...
¹⁶Spread out to the left and the right
 Proclaiming the Holy One's might.
 We'll revel in our delight
 Through Peretz's son magnified.
¹⁷Go forth my love...
 [Worshippers rise and turn toward the sanctuary door to welcome Shabbat. They bow in welcome at "Come forth O bride; come forth O bride!"]
¹⁸Come forth in peace her husband's pride,
 Joyful, happy, gratified.
 Into the midst of the faithful tribe,
 Come forth O bride; come forth O bride!
¹⁹Go forth my love...
 [Traditionally, mourners observing their period of shivah now join the community in Shabbat worship. As they enter the room they are greeted as follows.]
²⁰May God comfort you with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem's mourners.

יִשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ חַתָּן עַל כַּלָּה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כַּלָּה...¹⁵
 יִמִּין וּשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרֹצֵי¹⁶
 וְאֵת יְיָ תַעֲרִיצֵי;
 עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פְּרָצֵי
 וּנְשִׁמְחָה וּנְגִילָה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כַּלָּה...¹⁷

[Worshippers rise and turn toward the sanctuary door to welcome Shabbat. They bow in welcome at "Come forth O bride; come forth O bride!"]

בּוֹאֵי בְּשִׁלוֹם עֲטֹרַת בְּעֵלָה¹⁸
 גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִהְלָה;
 תּוֹךְ אַמוּנֵי עַם סְגֵלָה
 בָּאֵי כַלָּה, בָּאֵי כַלָּה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כַּלָּה...¹⁹

[Traditionally, mourners observing their period of shivah now join the community in Shabbat worship. As they enter the room they are greeted as follows.]

הַמְּקוֹם יִנַּחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר
 אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלָיִם.²⁰

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹ *"My love"* From Song of Songs 7:12, "Come, my love, let us go into the open." In medieval Safed, *L'khah Dodi* was recited "in the open," outside in the fields (see Koren, "The Mystical Spirituality of Safed," pp. 33–42).

² *"Praised ... renowned"* Stock biblical descriptions (see Deut. 26:19; Jer. 13:11, 33:9), but always in reference to Israel, never God, as here.

⁴ *"Come, let us go"* Used twice in the Bible, in 1 Samuel 9:9, of seeking a prophet, and in Isaiah 2:5, of seeking God's light.

⁴ *"From creation's beginning [merosh ... n'suchah]"* A paraphrase of Proverbs 8:23.

¹⁰ *"Wake up!... Sing verse [uri ... daberi]"* From the Song of Deborah (Jgs. 5:12), but radically recontextualized. Words addressed to Deborah are here addressed to Jerusalem.

¹⁰ *"The presence of God comes alive [k'vod niglah]"* A modification of Isaiah 40:5, predicting the return from Babylonian exile, and used here for a still later hoped-for restoration, perhaps modeled after the biblical one.

¹⁶ *"We'll revel in our delight [v'nism'chah v'nagilah]"* Similar to Isaiah 25:9, Psalm 118:24, and Song of Songs 1:4; but the poet flips the verbal order for the sake of rhyme.

¹⁶ *"Peretz's son"* Several biblical texts name Peretz as David's ancestor.

¹⁸ *"Faithful [s'gulah]"* From Akkadian, meaning "private possession;" Deuteronomy (7:6; 14:2; 26:18) describes Israel as *am s'gulah*, God's "private possession."

²⁰ *"God [Hamakom] comfort you"* Before the Babylonian exile, even secular inscriptions contained the tetragrammaton (the four-letter name of God, YHWH). People started avoiding it in the Second Temple period, after which the Rabbis felt the need to develop surrogates. This one, "the place," may come from the fact that God resides in a sacred place. It may also reflect Esther 4:14, where "from another place" refers to divine intervention.

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

defining the biblical book Song of Songs as a graphic depiction of their love. Separately, however, a second tradition emerged. Genesis Rabbah (11:8) tells us that every day of the week was given a partner, except for Shabbat. God rectified the injustice by making Israel the Sabbath's husband, and the Sabbath Israel's bride. Kabbalists expanded the wedding imagery further by applying it to the *sefirot* (see Koren, "The Mystical Spirituality of Safed," pp. 33–42)

²“*Observe’ and ‘remember’—two words as one*” The two versions of the Ten Commandments bid us to “remember” the Sabbath day (Exod. 20:8) and to “observe” it (Deut. 5:12), leading the Rabbis to declare that God uttered both commands at once. This duality emphasizes the need to approach the Sabbath with both *keva* and *kavannah*, observing the commandments governing the day but doing so with full intention of remembering to make it holy.

²“*Adonai is One. His Name is One*” Since the Sabbath is “a foretaste of the world to come” (Gen. Rab. 17:5 [17:7 in some editions]; *Mekhilta* to Exod. 31:13), this Shabbat song emphasizes Jewish messianism. According to the prophet Zechariah (14:9), “On that day [in messianic times] Adonai shall be one and his name shall be one”—that is, all peoples on earth will recognize Adonai as God. We repeat this messianic line daily to conclude *Alenu* (see Volume 6, *Tachanun* and Concluding Prayers, p. 133) and repeat the idea in the *Minchah* service for Shabbat, where the middle section of the Shabbat *Amidah* for *Minchah* begins: “You are one and your name is one” (see above, “More revered than all other gods” for comments on monotheism and henotheism).

⁶“*Regal city ... rise up*” Prophetic messianism promised a rebuilding of Jerusalem and an ingathering of the exiles. As an inhabitant of Safed, and knowing first hand exactly how downtrodden Jerusalem was, the poet describes its hoped-for renaissance in powerful, poetic terms.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

hands of a personal messiah, all of which made early modern Jews nervous lest their liturgy imply they did not feel fully at home in their host countries.

As a result, the pioneering Hamburg Temple Prayer Books of 1819 and 1845 replaced *L'khab Dodi* with a creative composition in German. Most nineteenth-century liberal prayer book authors followed suit in one way or another. In his earlier (and more traditional) liturgy, Abraham Geiger included at least a truncated version (see below for commentary on these selections), as did the 1940 *Union Prayer Book* (American Reform), but earlier versions of that book (1895, 1924) had omitted it, following both Isaac Mayer Wise and David Einhorn, the two primary liturgical influences from the nineteenth century here.

Interestingly, in their 1885 *Abodath Israel*, one antecedent for American Conservative liturgy, Benjamin Szold and Marcus Jastrow provided even a more abbreviated version of *L'khab Dodi* than that presented by Geiger. They too had hesitations about the poem's traditional theology. The full version was restored to American Reform liturgy with its 1975 *Gates of Prayer* and then found its way into Israeli (*Ha'avodah Shebalev*, 1982) and German (*Seder Hatefillot*, 2001) Reform. But an abbreviated version still marks the 1977 British Reform (*Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*) as well as the British Liberal Movement's *Lev Chadash*.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

¹ “My love” In her *Book of Blessings*, feminist author Marcia Falk substitutes *re’ot* (“friends,” feminine) in the first line and *re’im* (“friends,” masculine) in the second, for “my love.” In accord with her preference for non-hierarchical relationships, Falk translates the refrain, “Let us go, friends, to greet the bride, let us welcome the Sabbath.”

² “Observe’ and ‘remember” In his 1854 Siddur, Abraham Geiger selected five stanzas of *L’khah Dodi*, including this one, for inclusion. The other four were verses 4, 10, 12, and 18. In light of his omission of *L’khah Dodi* altogether in his 1870 prayer book, and in view of the decision made by most nineteenth-century Reform prayer book authors to delete this prayer altogether, Geiger’s decision to include so many of the traditional stanzas in 1854 is notable. It reflects the role that Geiger then played as a community rabbi in Breslau who felt that Reform must proceed with caution lest it be deemed too radical. The complete removal of *L’khah Dodi* would have shocked the many Jews who regarded this prayer as a staple of Friday night worship.

But he omitted verses 6, 8, 14, and 16. Geiger was clearly balancing his anti-messianic and anti-nationalistic sensibilities against received and expected liturgical practice. He obviously selected those stanzas that focus on the Sabbath itself, while eschewing those that expressed a belief in a personal messiah and the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem. Where necessary (see below, “Awake awake!... Be not despondent”), he employed “translation” as a means for obviating the manifest content of prayers he felt he had to include even though he disagreed with what they had to say.

Interestingly, several other Reform and liberal prayer books that have included *L’khah Dodi* have followed Geiger’s 1854 pattern by offering their own abbreviated versions. For example, early Conservative rabbis Szold and Jastrow—and the *UPB* of 1940, too—included stanzas 4, 6, and 18. This newly revised version of *UPB* at least included that much: its 1895 and 1921 predecessors had omitted the poem altogether.

In the contemporary period, virtually all liberal Siddurim—all Reconstructionist and Conservative prayer books as well as most present-day Reform ones (like *GOP* and *Ha’avodah Shebalev*)—include all the stanzas. Clearly, nineteenth-century liberal opposition to classical notions of redemption and Jewish nationalism has been muted, if not overturned altogether.

The two current British non-Orthodox prayer books, *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship* and *Lev Chadash*, are the exceptions to this rule. In each, only four stanzas (2, 3, 10, and 18) have been included.

Part of the poem’s popularity (and a good reason in itself to include it) is the plethora of popular “singable” melodies that are used for it. When *UPB* 1924 introduced it, the editors were careful to assign it to the choir. Congregations today insist on singing it.

^{10, 12} “Awake, awake!... Be not despondent” One of the most notable facets of Geiger’s editorship was his decision to include these two stanzas in 1854. He apparently also felt the need to mute the meaning even of the stanzas he included, especially here! To

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Geiger selected five: four were verses 4, in his 1870 prayer liturgy Reform prayer to include so many of Geiger then played as if with caution lest it would have shocked the ship.

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do so, he employed the time-honored method of creatively "translating" the Hebrew to obviate its plain meaning. "Awake, awake" by itself was not necessarily troublesome, since it contains reference to light, a favorite liberal image of the "Enlightenment" and, therefore, universal overtones of redemption and hope. Still, the obvious reference was to Jerusalem lying asleep and awaiting messianic light to dawn. "Be not despondent" (v. 12) is an equally clear personification of Jerusalem in ruins. Seeing their common theme, Geiger collapsed the two stanzas together and offered a paraphrase that removed all references to Zion. Instead, he spoke of "God's kingdom (*Gottesreich*)" being built for all peoples and emphasized how "the love and unity of mankind (*die Menschen*)" would one day emerge (see below, "A city rebuilt").

¹² "*A city rebuilt*" Like "Awake, awake" and "Be not despondent" (see above), Geiger included this line in 1854 but avoided its particularistic meaning as a prayer for the rebuilding of Zion and Jerusalem by paraphrasing it in universal terms. (Geiger went the easier route of omitting the whole prayer from his 1870 prayer book.)

One hundred years after Geiger's initial liturgy, Jewish nationalism was no longer a scandal. In the wake of Hitler, almost all Jews were ardent Zionists. Conservative Judaism had always been so, and its 1945 Rabbinical Assembly Siddur speaks clearly of Zionist dreams when it renders the line "Zion, my city, in thee shall find rest." More recently, Falk's *Book of Blessings* states directly, "Jerusalem will be rebuilt on its hill." The controversy surrounding references to Zion that so wracked nineteenth-century liberal Judaism has long since passed.

¹⁴ "*The joy of your God shines upon you*" Seeing "God" as necessarily masculine in popular consciousness, Marcia Falk substitutes *ziv hashekhinah alayich nighlah*, which she translates as "*Shekhinah's* radiance is revealed in you," for the traditional "joy of your God." Her choice also bespeaks her emphasis upon immanence, rather than the distance inherent in traditional transcendent imagery. Joy need not shine on us from without. It can be "revealed in" us.

¹⁸ "*Her husband's pride*" Falk substitutes *ateret shekhinah*, which she translates "crown of *Shekhinah*." The 1985 Conservative *Sim Shalom* provides "soul mate, sweet gift of the Lord." By 1998, "the Lord" was too sexist, so the revised version translates "soul mate, sweet bride so adored." The Reconstructionist *Kol han'shamah* answers the gender issue by using "divine crown." Sexism was not perceived as an issue for British Reform in 1977 (which, however, uses a poetic paraphrase for the whole poem). Nor, quite obviously, did sexism matter for the various editions of the Union Prayer Book (1895, 1924, 1940). But the Chicago Sinai modern rendering of the book (2000), which frequently alters the English to demonstrate gender sensitivity, nonetheless leaves "crown of your husband" untouched. Current British Liberal liturgy (1995) selects "creation's crown."

²⁰ "*Mourners*" The conclusion of the 1985 *Sim Shalom* (Conservative) offers the following instruction: "Mourners do not observe public forms of mourning on Shabbat.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

On the Shabbat during the period of *shivah*, when mourners attend synagogue service they are greeted after the singing of *L'khab Dodi*, by all other members of the congregation, with these words....” The traditional greeting offered to mourners during the *shivah* period follows, with a literal translation, “May God comfort you together with all the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” The Israeli Masorti *Va’ani T’filla* includes this greeting as well, but so, already, did 1945 Conservative liturgy. However, the Israeli *Va’ani T’fillati* considers the classical greeting inappropriate for a world in which the Jewish State has been rebuilt. Consequently, it alters the Hebrew to read *Hamakon y’nakhem etchem b’tokh sh’ar ha’avelim b’tziyon u’vi’rushalayim*: “May God comfort you among the mourners *who are in* Zion and Jerusalem.” One should no longer mourn *for* Zion and Jerusalem. These are no longer “dead.”

FRANKEL (A WOMAN’S VOICE)

companions in Safed, with the notion of God as a multitude of divine selves, acting upon the world in various ways. The self closest to our own experience is the *shekhinah*, God’s feminine dimension, here associated with Shabbat as a bride. Although God is also depicted in masculine form—as a bridegroom—the mystic tone of the poem suggests that we, as the People Israel, are guests at a heavenly wedding, witnessing the union of two aspects of divine holiness.

Women are also present at this wedding, either at the synagogue on Friday night or at home, where many Sabbath hymns likewise adopt this metaphor. Yet, until now it was believed that Jewish men alone could fathom the deeper kabbalistic secrets only hinted at in poems such as *L’khab Dodi*. Women, traditionally seen as more earthbound to the world of materiality, and intellectually incapable of understanding esoteric mysteries, were to be excluded from mystic study and practice. However, it has recently come to light that between 1648 and 1720, many editions of Jewish prayer books throughout the Ashkenazi world were printed with a Yiddish supplement intended specifically for women, and that this supplement is infused with kabbalistic content. Known as *Seyder Tkhines* and of anonymous authorship, this collection of Yiddish prayers expressed the widespread belief that the coming of the messiah was at hand, if only Jewish men *and women* would turn to God in prayer and devotion. This inclusive outlook was short-lived, however. Following the devastating conversion of the false messiah Shabbetai Zevi in 1666 and the scandal of religious heresies in its wake, Jewish messianic hopes became suspect, and by 1720, *Seyder Tkhines* was no longer being added to the standard Siddur. With its absence, we lost the widespread acceptance of Jewish women as valued spiritual partners in hastening redemption.

Following is a stanza from a prayer from *Seyder Tkhines*, to be recited by a Jewish woman after lighting the Shabbat candles.

tend synagogue services, other members of the congregation are invited to comfort you together in the Hebrew to read, *Yisroel Masorti Va'ani T'fillati* liturgy. However, appropriate for a world in which the Hebrew to read, *Yisroel Masorti Va'ani T'fillati*: "May God bless you." One should not read."

of divine selves, acting in the name of God is the tone of the poem wedding, witnessing the

synagogue on Friday night metaphor. Yet, until now the kabbalistic secrets only seen as more earthbound understanding esoteric. However, it has recently of Jewish prayer books which supplement intended with kabbalistic content. This collection of Yiddish the messiah was at hand, if devotion. This inclusive of conversion of the false heresies in its wake, Jewish *Yisroel Masorti Va'ani T'fillati* was no longer being widespread acceptance of to be recited by a Jewish

You have singled out
The Sabbath for rest,
So we may honor it
And rejoice in it,
And illuminate it
With candle light,
To serve you joyfully today
On Your holy Sabbath,
Which we are bound to honor
And keep in all things,
Like a king his queen
Or a bridegroom his bride,
Because in the words of our sages:
The Sabbath is queen and bride.

(Translated by Devra Kay, *Seyder Tkhines: The Forgotten Book of Common Prayer for Jewish Women* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004], p. 256.)

The speaker in this prayer, like those who recite *L'khab Dodi*, identifies herself with king and bridegroom as she welcomes the Sabbath. She is not allowed to lead the congregation in the public worship that formally initiates Shabbat, but she sees herself as empowered to invite in Shabbat anyway, on behalf of the People Israel.

GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8) says, "Remember the Sabbath day," but the second version (Deuteronomy 5:15) says, "Observe the Sabbath day." The Talmud (Shev. 20b) reconciles the two by saying that God proclaimed them simultaneously, something that "the [human] mouth cannot say, nor the ear bear to hear."

⁴ "The source from which blessings flow" When properly observed, Shabbat bestows blessing on Israel (Shab. 119a; see Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, p. 84: Gray, "Eshet Chayil").

⁴ "From creation's beginning a royal veiled glow ... the first sanctified" The last line is usually translated literally as "last in creation, first in God's plan." Baruch Halevi Epstein paraphrases a midrash according to which the purpose of the creation of the days of the week was to lead up to the creation of Shabbat. Shabbat is thus the ultimate purpose behind the creation of the week; in that sense, although it was the last created, it was first in God's thoughts. Epstein further compares this to preparations for a wedding: first we prepare all the wedding necessities, and only then do we bring the bride underneath the *chuppah*. As the ultimate purpose of the wedding preparations is the entrance of the bride, so was the ultimate purpose of the creation of the week the entrance of Shabbat.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

KIMELMAN (KABBALAH)

psalms correspond to the six days of the week, the end of Psalm 29 (the last of them) marks the end of Friday. It should have immediately ushered us into Psalm 92, "A musical song for the Sabbath day," instead of *L'khah Dodi*. By coming between Psalm 29 (p. 29) and Psalm 92 (p. 139), *L'khah Dodi* serves as the bridge between the end of Friday and the beginning of Shabbat, thereby linking profane and holy time.

How is *L'khah Dodi* a bridge between the profane and the holy? Since the profane represents the unredeemed, or not-yet-redeemed, and the holy the redeemed, the question becomes, How does *L'khah Dodi* create a bridge to redemption? To answer this, much needs to be known about *L'khah Dodi*. We can begin it here, but all the comments that follow, regarding individual verses, bear on the subject.

The poem's language speaks to us on four levels. Its explicit subjects are Shabbat and Jerusalem, which address the dimensions of time and space. Its implicit subjects are the People Israel and the realm of the *sefirot* (which mirrors the other three). The goal is to bring all four under the canopy of the holy. Its redemptive vision is both utopian (looking toward the end of time) and restorative (recapitulating the perfection of Eden).

To impart this message, *L'khah Dodi* weaves together strands of biblical verses, rabbinic midrash, liturgical *piyyut*, Spanish Hebrew poetry, Renaissance meditative poetry, and marriage madrigals into a kabbalistic lyric of redemption. A comparable poem is Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion," composed a generation later in 1595.

Poetically speaking, *L'khah Dodi* has nine stanzas, corresponding to the nine lower *sefirot*, and a repeating refrain corresponding to the tenth *sefirah*, *Keter*. As the refrain energizes each stanza, so too, in the kabbalistic system, *Keter* energizes each *sefirah*.

Each stanza contains four lines. Assigning letters to the closing sounds of each line (a = *ah*, b = *ee*, and c = *ayikh*), we can see a carefully laid out rhyme scheme. The refrain (vv. 1, 3, 5, etc., here) is *aa*; verses 2, 4, 6, and 18 (stanzas 2, 3, and 9) are *aaaa*; verses 8, 10, 12, and 16 (stanzas 4, 5, 6, and 8) are *bbba*; and verse 14 (stanza 7) is *ccca*.

The poem is attributed to Solomon Alkabetz. There is, however, no direct evidence from the period that he or Cordovero actually recited it. It first appears in a Moroccan document from 1577 and a prayer book from 1584. Nonetheless, other liturgical poetry from their time—especially by Mordecai Dato, who studied with Cordovero from 1555 to 1560—is so similar that there is no reason to suspect the traditional attribution of authorship to Alkabetz. Moreover, all the ideology implicit in it had already been applied by the kabbalists to the Shabbat recitation of the Song of Songs.

¹ "Go forth my love [1]" On one level the love expressed here is the love of Israel for God, the love of God for Israel, and the love of both for Shabbat, which is both the *sefirah Shekhinah* and Israel's bride.

On another level, the poem is about the love of groom and bride. Both levels converge in the word *Dodi*, "my love," for *Dodi* is not just an earthly husband but the divine groom too. Indeed, reversing the Hebrew letters of *Dodi* (DVDY → YDVD) and exchanging the *dalet* for a *heb* (both common abbreviations for the divine name)

results in YHVH: the divine name applied to *Tiferet* (the masculine principle in the sefirotic realm).

¹ "Go forth my love [2]" Both Israel (collectively and individually) and God are urged to welcome Shabbat by approaching their brides. As the earthly husband greets his earthly wife, so *Tiferet* greets *Binah*, the *sefirah* in the upper triad that corresponds to *Malkhut* in the final triad below (also called *Shekhinah*). Both husbands also greet *Shekhinah*, the sefirotic equivalent of Shabbat. The two movements occur in tandem. Both the human and sefirotic male (*Tiferet*) are surrounded by two females, one lower and one higher. The earthly husband is situated between wife (lower) and *Shekhinah* (higher). *Tiferet* is situated between *Shekhinah* (lower) and *Binah* (higher). It is the link with the respective lower female that allows for merging with the upper one. Ultimately, the souls of husband and wife will merge with *Shekhinah*, which itself merges with *Tiferet*, which in turn merges with *Binah*. Ultimate redemption is this merging of all into *Binah*. In the meantime, *Shekhinah* is the bride of both God and Israel. Her temporal expression is Shabbat. There are three partners in the marriage metaphor for Shabbat: God, Shabbat, and Israel. Since the Hebrew "to sanctify" also means "to marry," when God sanctified Shabbat and Israel, God took them as brides. Similarly, when Israel sanctifies Shabbat, Israel takes Shabbat as bride. Thus, Shabbat becomes the rendezvous of God and Israel. On Shabbat both human and divine meet. The meeting that takes place with *Shekhinah* in this world takes place on a grander scale with *Binah* (known as *Shabbat Hagadol*, the Great Sabbath) in the world to come. Hence, Shabbat is a foretaste of the world to come, *Shabbat Hagadol*.

The theme of union is reflected in the number of letters in the seven Hebrew words of the refrain, which add up to twenty-six, the numerical value of the tetragrammaton. These twenty-six letters are divided between two lines, the first with fifteen and the second eleven, reflecting the unification of the divine name (YH = 15, VH = 11; YH+VH = 15+11).

Each time we verbalize the refrain, we perform—in love—the unification of the divine by bringing together what was once torn asunder. Nothing can be whole without having been rent.

² "Observe [shamor] and remember [zakhor]" Shabbat is really composed of three Shabbats. The Hebrew for masculine is *zakhar*, so *zakhor* represents the masculine. *Shamor* is then the feminine. The feminine *shamor* is identified with the Shabbat of Sabbath eve, represented by *Malkhut* and called "name" (*shem*). The masculine *zakhor* is identified with the Shabbat of Sabbath day, represented by *Tiferet* and called YHVH. As night precedes day, so *shamor* precedes *zakhor*. By observing Shabbat properly, through incorporating both feminine and masculine, *Malkhut* and *Tiferet* unite with each other, bringing about redemption. This is the third Shabbat which occurs at the end of the Sabbath, represented by *Binah*. That is why in the last service of Shabbat, *Minchah*, the *Amidah* states: "You (*Tiferet*) are one (*atah echad*) and your name (*Malkhut*) is one (*v'shimkha echad*)." Unification makes Shabbat the day of redemption,

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FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

as it says: "On that day YHVH (= *Tiferet*) shall be one and His name (= *Malkhut*) one" (Zec. 14:8). The human parallel is the verse "Therefore a man should ... cleave to his wife and become *one* flesh" (Gen. 2:24). When God is one and humanity is one, they meet as one. Some rites even cite the *Zohar* (II, 135a–b) to expound this idea of oneness. It states: "The secret of Shabbat: she is Shabbat, united in the secret of One to draw down upon Her the secret of One." Shabbat enables one and one to be one.

⁶ "Regal city" Jerusalem. The opening two stanzas and closing ninth (vv. 2, 4, 18) spotlight Shabbat (sacred time), whereas the middle six (vv. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16) feature Jerusalem (sacred space). Though human beings perceive time and space as separate dimensions, Kabbalah sees them as one continuum. Jerusalem is the *spatialization* of the holy; Shabbat is its *temporalization*. Desacralizing Shabbat brings about the destruction of Jerusalem and exile from the holiness of space. Sanctifying Shabbat brings about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and restoration to the holiness of space. *L'khab Dodi* thus allocates exactly six stanzas to reversing a Jerusalem destroyed, for a Jerusalem in ruins is to space what the six days of the week are to time. Jerusalem rebuilt, however, is to space what Shabbat is to time. As Jerusalem is a holy day in space, Shabbat is a sanctuary in time.

¹⁴ "Shunned" The last of five stanzas (vv. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) all deal with Jerusalem, *Shekhinah*, and the People Israel—they are interchangeable. Each stanza seeks a reversal of the lachrymose present, which it contrasts with redemption. Verse 6 commands, "Rise up.... Too long in the valley of tears have you pined." Verse 8 beseeches, "Shake off the ashes.... Wear glorious clothes." Verse 10 pleads, "Awake, awake ... Arise, shine." Verse 12 continues, "Be not despondent," and verse 14 predicts the riddance of all would-be despoilers, "who'd overrun you." Taken together, the five stanzas spell out the remedy: "The Compassionate One will compassion provide.... Through the son of Yishai of Bethlehem ... Through [Jerusalem] the presence of God comes alive ... The poor of my people find shelter inside.... The joy of your God shines upon you like the joy of a groom and a bride." The glory of God will thus be revealed to Jerusalem, the soul, and (in the sefirotic realm) the *Shekhinah*, too, for Jerusalem rebuilt signifies repair of the soul and the reconstitution of the divine name. To consummate the process, verse 14 reiterates the poem's primary metaphor: God will rejoice over Jerusalem/soul/*Shekhinah* as a groom over the bride.

¹⁴ "The joy of your God ... like the joy of a groom and a bride" Genesis 1:27 explains. "God created *Adam* in his image, in the image of God did He create it, male and female did He create them." As the original human being was both male and female, so too is God. As the human image was divided into male and female, so is its divine counterpart split into "King" and "Bride." The unification of earthly husband and wife can prompt a corresponding unification in God. Connubial life can thus be an insight into divine reality.

¹⁶ "Left and right ... the Holy One ... We'll revel ... *Peretz*" Here all four kabbalistic dimensions of *Shekhinah* are addressed: (1) Jerusalem, (2) the Sabbath, (3) the People

SECTION I

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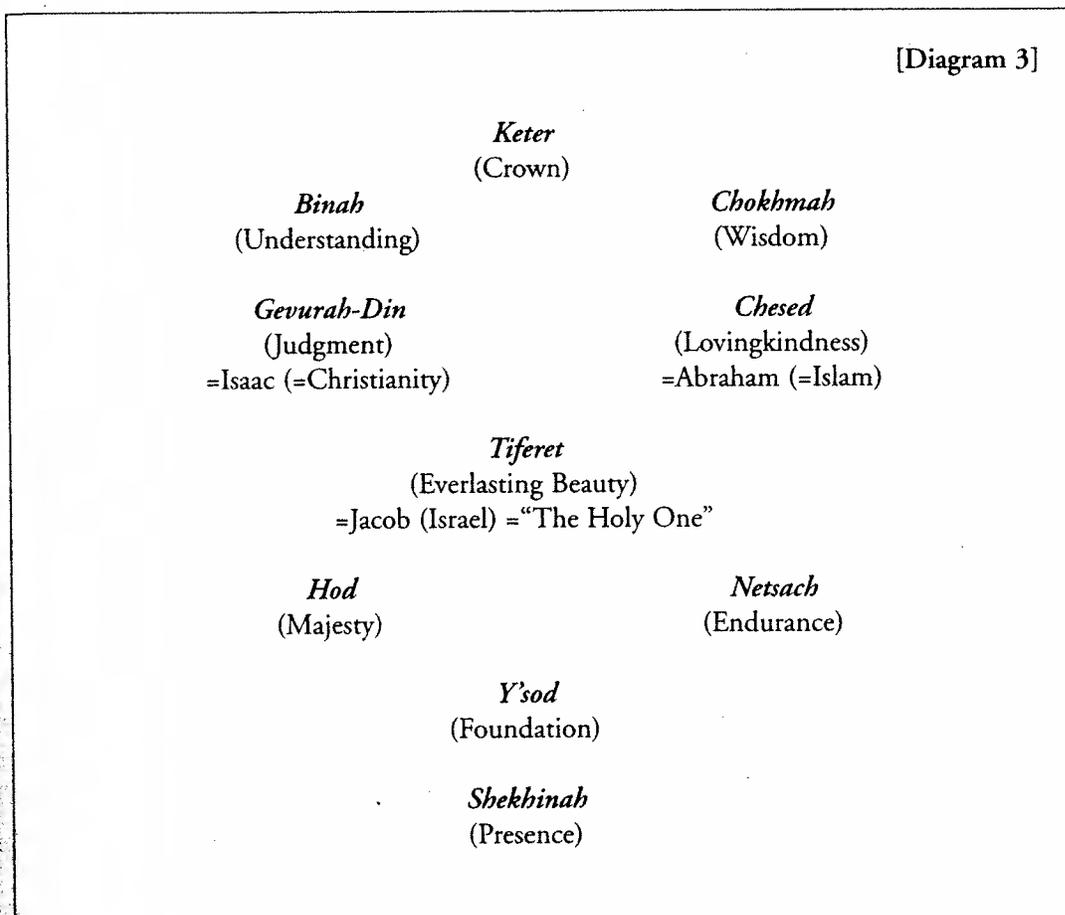
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Israel, and (4) the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*. All four function as centers of their respective domains. Jerusalem is the sacred center of the world; Shabbat is the sacred center of the week; Israel is the sacred center of the nations. And *Malkhut*, which is portrayed as the center of ten encircling *sefirot*, stands for all of the above: Jerusalem (spatially), Shabbat (temporally), and the People Israel (humanely).

Expanding “left and right” is a spatial reference to the way the *sefirot* are arranged:



The *sefirot* are said to correspond to biblical personalities. Thus, *Chesed* (on the right) is Abraham; *G'vurah* (on the left) is Isaac; *Tiferet* (in the middle) is Jacob—that is, the People Israel. Israel (through Jacob) expands to the right and left of the sefirotic structure embracing the *sefirot* of *Chesed* and *G'vurah* respectively. By virtue of its link with Abraham and thus his first-born, Ishmael, *Chesed* stands for Islam; similarly, by virtue of its link with Isaac and thus his first-born, Esau, *G'vurah* stands for Christianity. *Chesed* and *G'vurah* are, as it were, the arms of the sefirotic structure and thus cannot break through the restraining shoulders to get to the head, the uppermost *sefirah* of *Keter*. Only *Tiferet* can do so by virtue of being located in the middle.

Peretz (verse 16) is the messiah who will repair the breach created by Adam and restore things to their original state. Restoration of the pre-Adamic situation creates a

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

world in which evil (the *k'lipot*) will be redeemed. As Israel brings about redemption through *Tiferet*, it spreads out to the left and right sides of the diagram, encompassing the rest of the universe. Thus, all of humanity, epitomized by Islam and Christianity, will return to the worship of God, for which, verse 16 says, "We'll revel in our delight."

Appropriately, the Sabbaths of Islam (Friday) and of Christianity (Sunday) are the first days to the right and to the left of the Sabbath of creation. In sum, the spatial sanctity of Eretz Yisrael will expand throughout the world; the temporal sanctity of Shabbat will radiate through the week; the human sanctity of Israel will extend to all nations from right to left (see J. Hoffman, "Left and right"); the divine *sefirot* will reunite; and redemption will have occurred.

¹⁶ "Peretz" Peretz, the messiah who brings redemption, precedes his descendant King David by ten generations. As David stands for the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*, Peretz stands for *Keter*, ten *sefirot* above. Redemption radiates down from Peretz to David, encompassing all ten *sefirot*.

¹⁸ "Come forth in peace" Stanza 9 (v. 18) brings everything to consummation. All four dimensions of the feminine, the Sabbath, Jerusalem, the People Israel, and the *Shekhinah*, are invited in/with/by means of *shalom*, for they are at once crown and spouse of their consort, human and divine. "Come forth O bride" occurs twice: for bride and queen, for just married and consummated; and for human and divine. Some make this explicit by adding: "Come my bride, the Sabbath queen."

KUSHNER & POLEN (GHASDISM)

increments now progress by hundreds until we reach the last letter, *tau*, which is 400.

Perhaps the single most commonly noted *gematria* is the numerical equivalent for the *shem ham'forash*, the ineffable name of God, the tetragrammaton: *yod*, *hey*, *vav*, and *hey*. The numeric value of God's most awesome name is thus 10+5+6+5, totaling 26. And, while it strikes most moderns as arcane, it is difficult for even a beginning student of Kabbalah to encounter this number without taking pause. It is, in other words, a very significant number. Kabbalistic tradition furthermore often explains the broken state of our present world as a manifestation of the brokenness of God's ineffable name into its first two letters (*yod* and *hey*: 10+5=15) and its last two letters (*vav* and *hey*: 6+5=11). The messianic goal then would be to reunite the two broken halves, bringing them back to the ultimate total of 26, and thereby repair the cosmos.

Professor Reuven Kimelman (see "Go forth my love [2]"), in his *The Mystical Meaning of Lekhah Dodi and Kabbalat Shabbat*, points out that the four Hebrew words in the first line of the stanza (*L'khah dodi likrat kallah*) have 15 Hebrew letters, while the three words of the second line (*p'nai shabbat n'kablah*) have 11, totaling 26, the divine name. At last the unity is restored!

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

century modern Orthodoxy, *zakhor* is verbal expression, while *shamor* is physical demonstration. Since they were “uttered as one expression” at Sinai, they remain inseparable. *Zakhor* alone would be a “mere ‘theoretical’ observance of the Sabbath,” while *shamor* alone would mean that Shabbat would “neither be taken to heart nor accepted by the spirit” (commentary on the Siddur).

¹⁸ “*Come forth in peace*” As they say this line, some communities move, physically, to an antechamber or even outside, to greet the Shabbat Bride (Chaim ben Israel Benveniste, 1603–1673, Smyrna, Turkey: *K’nesset Hag’dolah* to Sh. A., O. Ch. 262).

Our general custom is to stand for this stanza even if praying alone (Chaim Kanevsky, B’nei B’rak, Israel, contemporary authority). One faces west (Mishnah Berurah 262:10). According to Yechiel Michael Halevi Epstein (nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Lithuania; *Arukh Hashulchan*, O. Ch. 262:5), one faces the door of the room. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe*, O. Ch. Vol. 5, #16) holds that if the door is not in the west, one should turn westward anyway. “People will do what they wish, and as long as the intent is to honor Shabbat, it is fine, but, in my humble opinion, turning specifically toward the door has no significance” (O. Ch. 263:45). These practices derive from Shabbat 119a: “R. Chanina would wrap himself in his cloak and stand at sunset of Sabbath eve, proclaiming, ‘Come, let us go forth to welcome Queen Shabbat!’ R. Yannai put on his Sabbath cloak on Sabbath eve and exclaimed: ‘Come forth, O Bride, Come forth, O Bride!’”

From this quotation, authorities also conclude that one should dress up in one’s Sabbath finery at this point (*Tzitz Eliezer* vol. 14:34) and that *Kabbalat Shabbat* should be chanted *b’simchah*, “joyfully” (*M’kor Chayim Hashalem*, Vol. 3: 112:6, by R. Chayim David Halevi, Chief Sefardi Rabbi of Tel Aviv, mid- to late twentieth century).

¹⁸ “*Come forth O bride; come forth O bride [bo’i khallah]*” Repetition of *bo’i khallah* is a sign of affection (*Barukh she’amar*, commentary on the Siddur by R. Baruch Halevi Epstein, Pinsk, Russia, late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries).

²⁰ “*May God comfort you*” During *shivah* (pronounced shee-VAH, but, popularly, SHIH-vah), the week of mourning that follows burial, mourners remain home and worship services take place there with them. They are not present at synagogue services during *Kabbalat Shabbat*, either, because it is service of joy, and it is not yet Shabbat. After *L’khab Dodi*, however, Shabbat has been accepted and they can no longer publicly display their mourning (*Siddur Y’sodei Yeshurun—Shabbat*, p. 262; by Rabbi Gedalia Felder, Canada, mid-to late twentieth century).

²⁰ “*God (hamakom)*” Rabbi Meir Juzient (mid- to late twentieth century, Lithuania and Chicago) a master of Musar (pronounced moo-SHR, but, popularly, MOO-sahr), the traditional Jewish ethical literature rooted in Halakhah, explained that we call God *Hamakom* (“The Place”) here because mourners have “no place.” Traditionally, during *shivah* (the first seven days of their mourning period), they sit on the floor, and

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FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

when they come to synagogue, it is customary for them not to sit in their regular seats for all eleven months of mourning. Understanding the feelings of dismay occasioned by having lost their bearings, we bless the mourners with the prayer that the source of *place* should grant them a renewed place among family, community, and Israel (conversation as I sat *shivah* for my father, Chicago, 1987).

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

It was composed by Solomon ben Moses Halevi Alkabetz (ca. 1505–1584), whose grave in a haunting medieval cemetery in Safed is still clearly marked and visited. Along with Joseph Caro, author of the *Shulchan Arukh*, Alkabetz is also credited with initiating the custom of spending the entire night before the festival of Shavuot in Torah study (*Tikkun leil shavuot*).

¹⁸ “*Her husband’s pride* [ateret ba’alah]” The sexual metaphor is graphic. “Pride” is literally “crown.” Shabbat (which is also the last of the *sefirot*, God’s feminine part, *Shekhinah*) is designated “crown.” As a crown circles the head of a king, so the feminine aspect of God, *Shekhinah*, circles the divine phallus belonging to *ba’alah* (“her husband”).

²⁰ “*May God comfort you with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners*” The syntax of the sentence leaves ambiguity as to whether the subject is “people who are part of Zion and Jerusalem [who] are mourning, or people [who] are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem” (see J. Hoffman). But a similarly worded prayer for comforting the sick is given in the Talmud (Shab. 12b): not “May God (*hamakom*) comfort (*y’nachem*) you with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners” but “May God (*hamakom*) show compassion (*y’rachem*) to you with the rest of Israel’s sick.” If our prayer for mourners is based on the similarly structured sentence of the Talmud, as it seems to be, the sense can only be “people [who] are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem.”

That is what we would have expected. “Mourners of Zion” is a technical term, corresponding to a medieval movement of ascetics mourning the Temple’s destruction. The trend went back to the years following the destruction itself, as can be seen by the Talmud’s concern with people who mourn overly much. By the eighth or ninth century, many of these people were Karaites, the geonic opponents who denied the oral law by, among other things, darkening their homes on Friday night instead of celebrating with Shabbat joy (*oneg*) (see L. Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy of *Kabbalat Shabbat*: Politics, Piety and Poetry,” p. 1–20; and below, “What may we use”).

With Kabbalah, “mourning for Zion” was given a new twist. “Zion and Jerusalem” were identified with the tenth *sefirah* (also known as *Malkhut* and *Shekhinah*, the feminine aspect of God). More than bemoaning the physical destruction of geographical sites, it meant mourning the alienation of God’s feminine aspect from her male consort (the *sefirah Tiferet*).

Our custom of welcoming mourners to the service just before *Ma'ariv* is probably kabbalistic. Asking God to comfort them "along with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem's mourners" was tantamount to welcoming them into the worshipping congregation, where *everyone* was a mourner of Zion, but where such mourning ceased with the coming of Shabbat, because Shabbat as *Shekhinah* was reunited with *Tiferet* now, so there was nothing to mourn for. On a personal level, mourners were shown that their loss would not be permanent; their personal trauma was part and parcel of God's own sorrow, shared by every other Jew as well.

²⁰ "God [hamakom]" Calling God *hamakom* is talmudic. But kabbalists emphasize its numerological consequences: If YHVH is divided letter by letter (Y=10 + H=5 + V=6 + H=5), and if each of these is squared (100 + 25 + 36 + 25), the *gematria* adds up to *MaKOM*. In Hebrew—מקום—the "a" is a vowel but the "o" is the consonant *vav*. Only consonants get counted. So we get M=40 + K=100 + V=6 + M=40.)

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

liturgy's crown, as it were. It is therefore especially appropriate, it seems to me, that it is this poem that celebrates the arrival of Shabbat.

I am particularly grateful to my students Ethan Franzel, Wendi Geffen, Elisa Koppel, Eric Lazar, and Julie Saxe, who created this poetic translation of *L'khah Dodi* with me. As with *Y'did Nefesh* (Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, p. 135), we felt that the poetic impact of *L'khah Dodi* was more important than the literal meaning of the words. Accordingly, we set out to find an English translation that, at least in part, conveyed not only the words of the poem but its poetry. Because the version presented here follows the poetry of the original so closely, it can be sung to any of the melodies composed for *L'khah Dodi* in the original Hebrew. It also mostly captures not just the poetry but also the meaning of the original.

In terms of rhythm, all the verses (except verses 7, 8, and 9) consist of four lines, each with four heavy syllables and no more than two light syllables between each heavy syllable. The chorus consists of two such lines. In verses 7, 8, and 9, each line lacks one heavy syllable. Our translation similarly follows this strict rhythm. In terms of rhyme, the first three lines of each verse rhyme with each other, and the last lines of all the verses rhyme with each other. The rhyme that ends the last lines of all the verses also ends both lines of the chorus, and indeed all four lines of the last verse. Although we resorted occasionally to weak rhymes, our translation follows the same rhyme scheme.

We hope we have captured at least some of the lyric beauty of the original. We have done our best to include the kabbalistic references in the poem, but many of these depend on technical terms in Hebrew that we felt could not be translated into English; we have noted our omissions in the notes. Additionally, in Hebrew, the first two lines form a mystical reference to the unification of God (see Kimelman), a trick we could not replicate.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

Trac

The first letter of each of the verses in Hebrew spells out the original author's name. If our verses spell anything, we have been unable to discern it.

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¹ *"My love"* Often translated "my beloved," probably in an attempt to remove sexual love from the liturgy.

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¹ *"Shabbat's reception has arrived!"* More accurately, "Let us welcome Shabbat," or, literally, "Let us accept the face of Shabbat." To "accept the face" is a common idiom in Hebrew, meaning "to welcome." In Psalm 95 we saw similar language. We chose "reception" here in keeping with the imagery of a wedding that pervades *L'khab Dodi*.

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² *"Two words as one"* There are two versions of the Ten Commandments in the Torah. They are mostly the same, but in Exodus the command is to "remember" the Sabbath, while in Deuteronomy it is to "observe" it. Tradition holds that both words were uttered simultaneously as part of the same command. The Hebrew literally reads "as one speech act."

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² *"Only"* The Hebrew *M'yuchad*, or "united," reflects the kabbalistic notion that God is composed of male and female parts, which must be united to form one complete God. The Hebrew word for "united" (*m'yuchad*) is related to the Hebrew word for "one" (*echad*) in much the same way that our English word "only" relates to the English word "one." Hence our choice of "Only" as a description of God here.

² *"Forgotten by none"* We added this concept for euphony; it does not appear in the original, which reads simply "proclaimed to us by the 'united' God."

² *"Renowned"* The Hebrew word for "renown" is actually the same as the word for "name," reflecting an ancient ontology that conflated the two concepts. Our translation misses that play on words.

² *"Glorified"* Hebrew: *Tiferet*, one of the ten *sefirot*.

⁴ *"Creation's beginning"* Hebrew: *merosh mikedem*, "from the beginning, from *kedem*." *Kedem* means "before," but also "east," and (according to Genesis 2:8) is where God planted the Garden in Eden. In light of the rest of this verse, it is likely that *kedem* here forms a play on words that refers to creation.

⁴ *"A royal veiled glow"* The Hebrew is simply *nsukhah*, a word that has two relevant meanings. The root letters *n.s.kh* form the words for "prince" (*nasikh*) and "princess" (*nsikha*) but also the word for "mask" (*massekha*—the "n" assimilates to the following "s"). Our translation spells out the play on words, which suggests that Shabbat was both "hidden" and "princely" (or, more accurately, "princessly"). In the next verse, we will see that Jerusalem is a "kingly city."

⁴ *"The last thought created, the first sanctified"* More literally, "the last created, the first thought."

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⁶“*Regal city*” Following the theme of “princess” above, in which Shabbat is “princely,” the city is now “kingly.”

⁶“*Shrine*” Literally, “city.”

⁶“*Valley of tears*” More literally, “valley of Bacca.” Bacca is a type of tree, but its name sounds like *bakhah*, the Hebrew word for “crying.” The reference is to Psalms 84:7. “Valley of weeping willows” is a tempting translation that unfortunately rhymes with nothing.

⁶“*The Compassionate One will compassion provide*” From Jeremiah 15:5, in which the author, after describing the horrors of the time when God will abandon Jerusalem, asks, “Who will be compassionate to you, Jerusalem?” Hebrew often prefers doubling of roots (as in “He dreamed a dream”) and that is what we get here: “He will compassion you with compassion.” We try to double the word in English, too.

⁸“*My gem*” Added only for euphony.

⁸“*Yishai*” Or “Jesse.” King David, who built Jerusalem and who, according to the liturgy, will rebuild it, is the son of Yishai.

¹⁰“*Bold and clear*” Added for euphony.

¹⁰“*Wake up! Wake up! Sing verse*” The Hebrew for “awake” in the line above (*hitor’ri*) and “wake up” here (*uri*) come from the same root, as do their English translations.

¹⁰“*Through you the presence of God comes alive*” Adapted from Isaiah 60:1. The original quote from Isaiah reads, “The presence of God shines upon you” while the Hebrew in *L’khab Dodi* is “The presence of God is revealed through you.” (The Hebrew word for “upon” and “through” is the same, making the two versions seem closer in Hebrew than in English.)

¹²“*Why be dejected; Why face the ground?*” More literally, as in Birnbaum, “Why are you downcast? Why do you moan?”

¹²“*In a city rebuilt on its own ancient mound*” Its “ancient mound” is a *tel*, a technical term (identical in English and in Hebrew, though more familiar in Hebrew) for a city repeatedly rebuilt on its older ruins so as to form a hill.

¹²“*The poor of my people find shelter inside*” Isaiah 14:32. In the original poem, this line precedes Jeremiah 30:18. We reversed the order to make the rhyme work.

¹⁴“*Shunned are all who would shun you*” This line sets the stage for a word play that permeates the entire verse. The original reads, “Destroyed are those who would destroy you.” But the words for “destroy” both times contain the sounds “sh” and “s” (*m’shi’sah* and *shosayich*), a use of sibilance that is continued in the following line, where the words for “joy” are *yasis* and *m’sos*. (“She sells sea shells by the sea shore” comes to mind.) We

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

try to capture the same word play in English with “shun” and “shine.”

¹⁴ “*Overrun*” Literally, “devour.”

¹⁴ “*The joy of your God ... Like the joy of a groom and a bride*” In the Hebrew, the parallelism of the last two lines is complete. “The joy of your God shines upon you like the joy of a groom shines upon a bride” would better capture the close relationship, but contains too many syllables.

¹⁶ “*Left and right*” Literally, “right and left.”

¹⁶ “*Proclaiming the Holy One’s might*” More literally, “Proclaiming Adonai’s glory,” but “glory” doesn’t rhyme with “right” (or “left”).

¹⁶ “*We’ll revel in our delight* [nagilah v’nism’chah]” From Isaiah 25:9, where, however, the verse reads, *nagilah v’nism’chah bishu’ato*, making it clear that the delight here is occasioned by God’s deliverance, which Peretz, David’s descendant, will bring.

¹⁶ “*Through Peretz’s son magnified*” A continuation of the messianic allusion from Isaiah 25:9 (see above, “We’ll revel in our delight”). In the original poem, this line comes first, so that the reference to Peretz precedes Isaiah 25:9. We reversed them to complete the rhyme scheme.

¹⁸ “*Her husband’s pride*” Literally, “her husband’s crown.” It is particularly unfortunate that we couldn’t keep the word “crown,” but we needed “pride” to rhyme with all the other words ending in “-ide.”

¹⁸ “*Faithful*” Hebrew, *s’gulah*, a word whose exact meaning (see Brettler) has been lost.

¹⁸ “*Tribe*” Literally, people.

²⁰ “*God*” Literally, “the place.” *Hamakom* (“The Place”) is one of God’s appellations.

²⁰ “*Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners*” Like the Hebrew, our English translation leaves open two possibilities: people who are part of Zion and Jerusalem are mourning, or people are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem.

2 F E Ps:

A. PSALM 92: A 1

¹ A musical psalm for the
is good to praise Ad
your name, O Most High, ³ to
love by morning, and t
faithfulness, ⁴ on harps of n
melodious lutes. ⁵ For your
me happy, and I celebrate
your hands. ⁶ How great a
Adonai! Your thoughts are
simpleton will not know
understand this: ⁸ When the
like weeds and all evildoers
they be destroyed forever
exalted forever, Adonai. ¹⁰
enemies, Adonai, surely yo
perish, all evildoers scatter.
horn like a wild ox. I am so:
¹² My eyes shall see those who
me, as those who rise up a
evil will be heard by my ears.
bloom like a date tree, thrive
cedar. ¹⁴ Planted in God
blossom in our God’s cour
old age they will produ
invigorated, and fresh, ¹⁶ to
Adonai is upright, my rock, in
no flaw.

Neusner, Jacob The Mishnah Pg 187

Unit 2
Activity 2
SHABBAT

APPOINTED TIMES

has a hole [M. 6:1F5],
lae brooch, (4) with a
the words of R. Meir
ice box and a perfume
w, (3) shield, (4) club,

to plowshares and their
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en stump," the words of

- C. And if it has a receptacle for pads, it is susceptible to uncleanness.
- D. His kneepads (1) are susceptible to uncleanness imparted by pressure [to something upon which a *Zab* may lie or sit], (2) they go forth with them on the Sabbath, and (3) they go into a courtyard with them.
- E. His chair and its pads (1) are susceptible to uncleanness imparted by pressure, (2) they do not go out with them on the Sabbath, and (3) they do not go in with them into a courtyard.
- F. An artificial arm is insusceptible to uncleanness, and they do not go out in it.

- 6:9 A. Boys go out in garlands, and princes with bells.
- B. [And so is the rule] for any person, but sages spoke concerning prevailing conditions.

- 6:10 A. "They go out with (1) a locust's egg, (2) a fox's tooth, (3) a nail from the gallows of an impaled convict, for purposes of healing," the words of R. Meir.
- B. And sages say, "Even on a weekday it is prohibited [to go forth with such objects],
- C. "because of the 'ways of the Amorite' [which Israelites are not to adopt]."

- 7:1 A. A general rule did they state concerning the Sabbath:
 - I B. Whoever forgets the basic principle of the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbath days is liable only for a single sin offering.
 - II C. He who knows the principle of the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbaths is liable for the violation of each and every Sabbath.

- III D. He who knows that it is the Sabbath and performed many acts of labor on many different Sabbaths is liable for the violation of each and every generative category of labor.
- E. He who performs many acts of labor of a single type is liable only for a single sin offering.

- 7:2 A. The generative categories of acts of labor [prohibited on the Sabbath] are forty less one:
 - B. (1) he who sews, (2) ploughs, (3) reaps, (4) binds sheaves, (5) threshes, (6) winnows, (7) selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], (8) grinds, (9) sifts, (10) kneads, (11) bakes;
 - C. (12) he who shears wool, (13) washes it, (14) beats it, (15) dyes it;
 - D. (16) spins, (17) weaves,
 - E. (18) makes two loops, (19) weaves two threads, (20) separates two threads;
 - F. (21) ties, (22) unties,
 - G. (23) sews two stitches, (24) tears in order to sew two stitches;
 - H. (25) he who traps a deer, (26) slaughters it, (27) flays it, (28) salts it, (29) cures its hide, (30) scrapes it, and (31) cuts it up;
 - I. (32) he who writes two letters, (33) erases two letters in order to write two letters;
 - J. (34) he who builds, (35) tears down;
 - K. (36) he who puts out a fire, (37) kindles a fire;

AN'S VOICE)

like us like the nations many contemporary and the first paragraph cult, even as they find welcome. The difficult is emphasis on the cess of the world, the ples, the separateness d rather than lament t, we are asked to de that this is the way celebrate that our lot of the (p. 141)

of all, and render use, who did not the lands, and did ie earth, who did not stiny like all of them. il acknowledgment kings, the Holy One, ds out the sky and

be master of all" The uth to fourteenth tradition according al Joshua instituted enu after conquering m is supported by variant version of oded in the prayer. hoshi'a, ayin, comes ter of "We must" last letter of the first letter following, (p. 142)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

⁴"There is none else" The first of the two paragraphs of *Alenu* prays for a time when the Jewish people will lead all humanity to acknowledge God's sovereignty and exclusive reality. Each of the two concluding sentences ends with the thought that Adonai is our God and "there is none else." Indeed, the second sentence ("Know this day...there is none else") is a direct quotation from Deuteronomy 4:39. In each case, the plain meaning of the Hebrew is clear: our God is (p. 142)

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל, לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית, שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאָרְצוֹת, וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה; שֶׁלֹּא שָׁם חָלַקְנוּ כְּהֵם, וְגִדְלָנוּ כְּכָל הַמּוֹנִם. וְאַנְחָנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים. הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיוֹסֵד אֶרֶץ, וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

¹"We must praise [1]" The first paragraph of *Alenu* is usually said standing. Although the second paragraph too is, in practice, said standing, one may technically sit for it. Indeed, according to Chaim Vital (sixteenth century, Safed), *Alenu* is intended to end our prayers on a meditative note, for which sitting is appropriate. If a community is reciting *Alenu*, one must join them, even if one has already recited it and even if one is not even praying with the (p. 143)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

¹"Who did not place us like the families of the earth..." Until the Middle Ages, *Alenu* contained a further phrase, "for they [unspecified others] bow down low to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who does not save." Though originally a polemic against paganism, the line was interpreted by some medieval Jews to denote Christians and Muslims. Jews were subservient to both and at times suffered under both, as well.

By the thirteenth century, Jews were particularly conscious of these two world powers because they had experienced the Crusades. In 1096, Crusading armies (p. 146)

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

¹"We must" The literal meaning of *alenu* is "[it] is on us," and so some translate "it is incumbent upon us" or "it is our duty."

But those seem too literal to us. *Alenu* often means simply "we must," in Hebrew and other Semitic languages.

¹"The creator of the universe" Hebrew, *yotzer breishit*, that is, technically, "the creator of Genesis."

¹"Nations of the lands" Presumably, "other nations of other lands."

¹"All of them" Literally, "all of their multitudes."

²"Bow down low in grateful acknowledgment" Birnbaum: (p. 147)

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹ "We must praise" The first paragraph of the *Alenu* (until "none else") is post-biblical, but modeled after biblical prayer in that it is filled with biblical motifs and couched in biblical style such as constant parallelism, where (as here) the second half of each line mirrors the first.

¹ "Who did not make us" As in biblical texts, the sense is not Jewish superiority, but the Jew's gratitude for being shown how to worship the one, proper God. This was the original idea behind the line that was censored out of the prayer ("For they bow down low to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who does not save"). (p. 137)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

⁵ "Adonai our God, we therefore hope...to perfect the world...." Many people know just the first paragraph of the *Alenu* because it is usually sung. But the thrust of the prayer appears here in the second paragraph. Because (from the first paragraph) God is the creator (p. 138)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

¹ "Not place us like the families of the earth" The late Jakob Petuchowski noted that while the *Alenu* as a whole "kept the balance between universalism and particularism," the form in which this particularism "has been expressed has generally been found to be (p. 138)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

¹ "Who did not make us like the nations of the lands" Many contemporary American Jews find the first paragraph of this prayer difficult, even as they find the second one welcome. The difficult part is the *Alenu's* emphasis on the essential dividedness of the world, the tribalism of its peoples, the separateness of its families; and rather than lament this estrangement, we are asked to declare our gratitude that this is the way things are and to celebrate that our lot is not like that of the (p. 141)

ALENU

¹We must praise the master of all, and render greatness to the creator of the universe, who did not make us like the nations of the lands, and did not place us like the families of the earth, who did not make our lot like theirs, or our destiny like all of them.

²We bow down low in grateful acknowledgment before the king over the kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. ³For He spreads out the sky and

GRAY (TALMUD)

¹ "We must praise the master of all" The *Kol Bo* (thirteenth to fourteenth century) records a tradition according to which the biblical Joshua instituted the recitation of *Alenu* after conquering Jericho. That claim is supported by finding *hoshi'a*, a variant version of Joshua's name, encoded in the prayer. The last letter of *hoshi'a*, *ayin*, comes from the first letter of "We must" (*alenu*). The second to last letter of *hoshi'a*, *shin*, comes from the first letter of the thought following, (p. 142)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHA)

⁴ "There is none else" The first paragraphs of *Alenu* praise when the Jewish people humanity to acknowledge sovereignty and exclusivity of the two concluding sentences with the thought that God and "there is none the second sentence day...there is none else" quotation from Deuteronomy: each case, the plain meaning Hebrew is clear: our God

לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ
מִחֲלָקְנוּ כְּהֵם וְגִדְלוֹ
נִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים
קְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.³ שְׁהוּא
זָב יִקְרוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

¹ "We must praise" The first paragraph of *Alenu* is standing. Although the second paragraph too is, in standing, one may tech indeed, according to (sixteenth century, S: intended to end our meditative note, for appropriate. If a comm *Alenu*, one must join th has already recited it a not even praying w

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

² “*The king over the kings of kings*” The image of God as king is thoroughly biblical, but attributing to God the status of being “king over the kings of kings” so that God is far beyond mere earthly monarchs is a post-biblical innovation. Likewise, God as “the Holy One, blessed be He” is rabbinic.

³ “*Spreads out the sky and establishes the earth*” Quoting a text that occurs twice in late biblical writings: Isaiah 51:13 and Zechariah 12:1.

³ “*Majestic abode [moshav y’karo] is in the sky above*” *Moshav*, “abode” or “throne,” is used biblically (Ps. 132:13) to situate God specifically in the Jerusalem Temple: “For Adonai has chosen Zion; He has desired it for his throne.” Here the same term is used to assure God’s presence even after that Temple is destroyed. The word used for that presence (*Sh’khinah*) is post-biblical, equivalent to the biblical *kavod*.

⁴ “*There is none else*” Deuteronomy 4:39, a fitting conclusion here to declare God’s absolute monotheism. Contrast, however, Exodus 15:11 (see Volume 1, *The Shema and Its Blessings*, p. 130), where we see early biblical allusions to the possibility of there being other gods, who, however, are just not as mighty as our God.

⁵ “*Adonai our God, we therefore hope*” The second paragraph of the *Alenu* teases out the implication of the first: if, as the first paragraph of the *Alenu* asserted, Adonai is the sole, all-powerful God, we might wonder why He is not recognized universally. So a host of prophetic images occurs here to demonstrate that He will be.

⁵ “*Idols [gilulim]*” A derogatory Hebrew term related to the word for “dung.” It is favored by Ezekiel (30:13), who predicts their destruction. But not all prophets imagined the ultimate triumph of Adonai as the sole deity. Micah 4:5, for example, imagines, “Though all the peoples walk each in the names of its gods, we will walk in the name of Adonai our God forever and ever.”

⁵ “*Perfect the world*” The use of *l’taken olam* is post-biblical, but even here, it should not be confused with the modern concept of *tikkun olam* as “improving the world,” to which it is etymologically related. *Tikkun olam* is accomplished by individuals, whereas the improvements envisioned here are initiated by God.

⁵ “*All will call on your name*” Because calling on Adonai’s name means invoking Adonai in prayer, many biblical psalms and prayers begin with “Adonai.” According to Joel 3:5, only those who call upon God’s name will be saved.

⁵ “*To turn all the wicked of the earth toward You*” A more liberal view than several psalms that see God destroying “all the wicked of the land” (75:9; 101:8; 119:119).

⁷ “*They will all accept*” The final theme is biblical: the kingship of God. From here to the end of the prayer, no fewer than six words appear from the root *m.l.kh*, “to reign.”

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

establishes the earth, and his majestic abode is in the sky above, and his mighty dwelling place in the lofty heights. ⁴He is our God. There is none else. He is truly our king. None is like Him—as is written in his Torah: “Know this day and reflect on it, because Adonai is our God in the sky above and the earth below. There is none else.”

⁵Adonai our God, we therefore hope soon to see your majestic glory; to remove idols from the earth, so that the false gods will be destroyed; to perfect the world under the Almighty's kingdom, so that all will call on your name; and to turn all the wicked of the earth toward You. ⁶May all the inhabitants of the world realize and know that to You every knee must bow down, every tongue swear allegiance.

⁷Adonai our God, before You they will bow down and fall, and honor your glorious name, and they will all accept the yoke of your kingdom, that You might rule over them soon and forever; ⁸for the kingdom is yours, and to the ends of eternity You will rule in glory, as is written in your Torah, “Adonai will rule forever.” And it has been said, “Adonai will become king over the entire earth. On that day Adonai shall be One and his name shall be One.”

ושְׁכִינַת עֲזוֹ בְּגִבְהַי מְרוֹמִים. ⁴הוא אֱלֹהֵינוּ. אֵין עוֹד; אִמֶּת מְלַכְנוּ, אָפֶס וּזְלוּתוֹ, כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרָתוֹ: וְיִדְעֶתָ הַיּוֹם וְהִשְׁבַּתְּ אֶל לְבָבְךָ, כִּי ייִ הוא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּתָּה, אֵין עוֹד.

יְעַל כֵּן נִקְוֶה לָּךְ, ייִ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרִאוֹת מַהֲרָה בְּתַפְאֲרַת צִנּוֹר, לְהַעֲבִיר גִּלּוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְהָאֱלִילִים כְּרוֹת יִכְרֹתוּן; לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי, וְכָל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְשִׁמְךָ, לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רָשָׁעֵי אָרֶץ. ⁶יִכִּירוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל, כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל בְּרִיָּה, תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לְשׁוֹן. ⁷לְפָנֶיךָ, ייִ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יִכְרְעוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ, וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקְרֹוּ יִתְנַגּוּ, וַיִּקְבְּלוּ כָּלֵם אֶת עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ, וְתִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מַהֲרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד; ⁸כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שְׁלָךְ הִיא, וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד, כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ: ייִ יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד, וְנִאֶמַר: ייִ לְמִלְךָ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ; בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה ייִ אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

²“The king over but attributing to G far beyond mere ear Holy One, blessed b

³“Spreads out th late biblical writings

³“Majestic abode is used biblically (Ps Adonai has chosen 2 to assure God’s pres presence (Sh’khinah)

⁴“There is none absolute monotheism Its Blessings, p. 130), other gods, who, ho

⁵“Adonai our Go the implication of th sole, all-powerful G host of prophetic im

⁵“Idols [gilulim] favored by Ezekiel imagined the ultim: imagines, “Though the name of Adonai

⁵“Perfect the wor not be confused wit which it is etymolog the improvements er

⁵“All will call on Adonai in prayer, ma Joel 3:5, only those v

⁵“To turn all the psalms that see God

⁷“They will all ac to the end of the pray

If even traditionalists in the early modern period judged the manifest content of the classical *Alenu* awkward, it is a small wonder that virtually all non-Orthodox liturgies of the last two centuries have felt similarly and seen fit to alter it somehow. However, few of them have been content to offer a more acceptable ground for Jewish distinctiveness like the Italian rite mentioned above, which retained Jewish uniqueness, but shifted its grounds to the Jewish commitment to God's uniquely revealed laws. Instead, they have found the very idea of Jewish particularism offensive, agreeing, no doubt, with the assessment Petuchowski reported of them; they thought *Alenu* offered an "invidious comparison" between Israel and the nations. Already the Hamburg Temple Prayer Books of 1819 and 1841, as well as David Einhorn's pioneer American *Olath Tamid*, just excised this prayer altogether as a concluding part of the service (their usual answer to prayers that said what they disliked or that expanded the service overly much).

The more liturgically conservative Abraham Geiger did otherwise. Wishing to retain the allegiance of even the traditionalists in his Frankfurt community (see above, "He is merciful," p. 40), Geiger retained the prayer in his two prayer books of 1854 and 1870. While he did not feel comfortable omitting *Alenu*, he did feel the need to add some mitigating conceptual frame for Israel's unique status. He therefore omitted the offending "Who did not make us like the nations of the lands, and did not place us like the families of the earth, who did not make our lot like theirs, or our destiny like all of them." Instead, his 1854 edition substituted a Hebrew sentence (but not in translation!), "Who was revealed to our fathers and informed them of his will, and established his covenant with them and bequeathed them his Torah," while the 1870 edition of the Geiger prayer book stated, "We, who acknowledge his unity and are called to dedicate ourselves to his Name and to his Service, we, in particular, are obligated to praise the Lord of the universe, and to proclaim the greatness of the world's creator."

In America, Isaac Mayer Wise concurred with Geiger and omitted the same offensive sentences from his version of *Alenu*. However, he offered nothing new in their place. Instead, he rearranged the order of the traditional prayer and wrote, "It is our duty to render praise to the Ruler of the universe, to proclaim the greatness of the creator of nature. For He arched the heaven and established the earth. The habitation of his glory is in heaven above and the majesty of his power is in the skies most exalted. He is our Lord, and none beside Him." Furthermore, in both his prayer books, Geiger—though not Wise—simply omitted the sentence from the second paragraph of the *Alenu* that we translate "Remove idols from the earth, so that the false gods will be destroyed." Such negative sentiments regarding other religions were simply unacceptable to him.

Twentieth-century Reform prayer books generally followed the patterns established by Geiger and Wise. The *Union Prayer Book* (North American Reform) published a vernacular rendition of the universalistic dimensions of the prayer while its successor prayer book, *Gates of Prayer* (*GOP*), offered three alternative Hebrew versions of this part of the prayer based upon the models and words supplied by Geiger and Wise. One

In contrast to all this renewed traditionalism in present-day Reform and Reconstructionism, the Israeli Masorti Siddur, *Va'ani T'fillati* stands out as the first Conservative liturgy to offer its worshipers a liberal alternative here. A complete traditional *Alenu* is later followed by one that purges the phrase "who did not make our lot like theirs, or our destiny like all of them." Instead, following the Reconstructionist rite, it substitutes, "who gave us teachings of truth and planted within us eternal life." This innovation is again a sign of the Israeli Conservative prayer book showing more liturgical innovation than its American Conservative counterpart, *Siddur Sim Shalom*.

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

multitudes. An older version of this prayer offered a rationalization for this triumphalist stance: "For they bow down to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who does not save, whereas we bend the knee, and bow in acknowledgment of the one true God." In this modern, multicultural world in which we live, we can no longer allow ourselves such arrogance. We may acknowledge our difference, without privileging it.

As we move through this prayer, however, we come to understand that even this essential differentness, so basic to our identity as Jews, so ancient and so familiar, is illusory. There is, after all, only one God; "there is none else." What a subversive theological stance! For in essence, this prayer looks forward to the day when all difference will be harmonized, when all religions will be gathered under one universal God, when all of humanity will embrace the same God. Not solely the God of Israel, but the God who rules over all of us. Only on that day will God truly be One.

For anyone who experiences exclusiveness as exclusion—Jews, for instance, who have known powerlessness and been without sustenance, voice, and even hope—this messianic future is truly redemptive. But for others, those for whom difference promises special distinction, it will come at a price. Ultimate universalism brings a great leveling, the subordination of human will to divine justice, the substitution of repentance for retribution. Such a messianic era dissolves the culture of privilege.

But Jews too should find such a vision challenging because of what it means to the culture of suffering. Jewish culture has long made of our misfortunes a badge of honor. Without the maligned other, who are we? Without demons to blame for the evil in the world, who will take the rap? Without good fences, how will we distinguish ourselves from our neighbors? The *Alenu* asks us to liberate our self-image so that we are no longer dependent on such demonized others, who will, after all, eventually, not be there as "other." *Alenu* thus has incredible power to transform our own lives, not just our world. This prayer that signals the end of the service demands that we make a new beginning when we leave the synagogue. Otherwise, our recitation of it is no different than the worship of the "vanity and emptiness" that we attribute to those who give allegiance to false gods.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

version is borrowed with slight modification from the 1967 British prayer book of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues (*Service of the Heart*), which speaks, in Hebrew, of "our destiny to proclaim his kingdom." The 1995 *Siddur Lev Chadash* adopts the wording of its British predecessor.

Often designated as a sign of a Reform "return to tradition" is the fact that many contemporary Reform prayer books have reinstated the traditional text of the Hebrew *Alenu* in its entirety. These prayer books include *GOP*, the Israeli *Ha'avodah Shebalev*, and the 1998 Dutch *Siddur Tov L'hodot*. They do not, however, all provide accurate translations of the Hebrew text. The *GOP* avoids the "invidious comparisons" of which Petuchowski spoke, by providing the more positive message that God "has set us apart from the other families of the earth, giving us a destiny unique among nations." Interestingly, even *Siddur Sim Shalom* (American Conservative), the most traditional of the non-Orthodox prayer books surveyed here, adopts a similar tenor in its vernacular rendering of the prayer, stating, "He made our lot unlike that of other people, assigning to us a unique destiny."

Of course, as mentioned above, *GOP* also provides three "more palatable" Hebrew options to the classical text, and the Dutch and Israeli prayer books follow suit by offering Hebrew alternatives based largely, though not exclusively, upon the wordings provided by Geiger and Wise. In so doing, the sentiments of Reform prayer books regarding the *Alenu* are basically alike, worldwide. Despite differing wording that distinguishes one work from another, a common underlying ideological unity is evident. All parties allow a version of the tradition rooted in the uniqueness of Israel's historical destiny, but offer options more in keeping with the classical Reform texts of Geiger and Wise as well.

Given the strongly universalistic thrust that has always marked Reconstructionism, it is no surprise to find its *Kol Haneshamah* commenting, "The traditional *Alenu* has troubled Reconstructionist Jews because it implies the inferiority of other faiths and peoples." To obviate the problem, this 1996 Reconstructionist liturgy, like so many Reform prayer books, provides alternatives. Nonetheless, in light of the strong universalistic ideology that characterized Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the movement, it is remarkable that the current Reconstructionist prayer book now provides the traditional text of *Alenu*, even as *one* of the options. The earlier 1963 Reconstructionist liturgy simply explained, "It is our duty to extol the Lord of the universe...[because He] gave us true Torah and thereby planted everlasting life within us."

Obviously, no less than the Reform Movement's *GOP*, *Kol Haneshamah* displays its own move toward traditionalism. But here too, the traditionalistic turn goes only so far; it is balanced by the principles that governed the movement's original critique of tradition under Kaplan. Like *GOP* and even *Siddur Sim Shalom*, *Kol Haneshamah* avoids a literal translation, saying instead, "The Source of all" has "situated us in quite a different spot, and made our daily lot another kind from theirs, and given us a destiny uncommon in the world."

In contrast to Reconstructionism, Conservative liturgical traditional *Alenu* is not like theirs, or, in its rite, it substitutes, This innovation is liturgical innovation.

FRANKEL (A WOMAN)

multitudes. An old stance: "For they live, whereas we live in this modern, multicultural arrogance. We

As we move through essential differences, there is an illusory theological stance. The difference will be evident, when all of life is but the God who

For anyone who has known power, the messianic future is a special distinction, the subordination to retribution. Such a

But Jews too suffer in a culture of suffering. Without the malign world, who will take from our neighbors, no longer dependent as "other." *Alenu* world. This prayer beginning when we than the worship allegiance to false

the underlying and ultimate divine reality. According to such a reading, the meaning of the *Alenu* shifts from a yearning merely that everyone acknowledge God's kingship. Now it becomes a yearning that all people see through the apparent brokenness, confusion, contradiction, and discord to the ultimate divine unity that is the true source of reality.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

community in question (*Arukh Hashulchan*, O. Ch. 65:6, Yechiel Mikhel Halevi Epstein, 1829–1908, Russia).

The proper "intention" (*kavvanah*) that should occupy the mind during *Alenu* is to think, "There is no power aside from God; we share in the hope of perfecting the world under the kingship of *shaddai*" (the Bach, Rabbi Joel Sirkes, 1570–1641, Poland). According to the M'nachem Tzi'on (Rabbi Menachem Ben Zion Sacks, of blessed memory; Jerusalem and Chicago, contemporary rabbinic master), *shaddai* is the name of God that is simultaneously an acronym for *She'omer Da'i*, "the One who says, 'Enough.'" God will reign when the world finally reaches the point where people agree to limit their grasping and insatiable desires, by saying, "Enough!"

We say *Alenu* also at the end of circumcisions and burials, and as part of the *Musaf* service on the High Holy Days.

¹ "We must praise [2]" *Alenu* was added here only in medieval times and presents a second conclusion to the *Shacharit* service, the first being *K'dushah D'sidra*. It had been composed, however, much earlier for Rosh Hashanah recitation, possibly by the fourth-century Babylonian sage, Rava. The Rabbis considered its author to be Joshua, who composed it while conquering Jericho, as a prayer of *shevach* ("praise") for God's oneness (*Pirkei D'rabbi Eliezer*). The sound of the chant accompanying it has led it to be associated with the *mitzvah* of *kiddush hashem* (literally, "sanctification of [God's] name"), that is, martyrdom.

Martyrdom is demanded of the Jew in three circumstances: when called upon to commit murder; to commit certain sexual offenses such as rape, adultery, or incest; or to worship other gods (see Maimonides, *Y'sodei Hatorah* 5:1). *Alenu* deals with the belief in one God, so has implications for the third instance, idolatry.

The obligation to choose martyrdom over idolatry is Mishnaic (San. 74a; Ber. 61b). Rabbi Yishmael demands it only in public; in private, one should "transgress and not be killed" (*ya'avur v'al yehareg*). Only in public must one accept martyrdom, as we learn from Leviticus 22:32, "Do not profane my holy name, but rather I shall be sanctified amongst the children of Israel." His point is that privately the action of bowing to an idol will not necessarily be taken to imply denial of the belief in God. Publicly, however, actions speak louder than thoughts. Rabbi Eliezer, however, generalizes the obligation even in private, as derived from Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love Adonai your God

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

GRAY (TALMUD)

shelo sam ("did not make"). A *vav*, the second letter of *hoshi'a*, is the first letter of *va'anachnu* ("we bow down"). And, finally, the *heh* with which *hoshi'a* begins is from *hu eloheinu* ("He is our God").

According to R. Joel Sirkes (1561–1640, Poland), *Alenu* is a theological summary at the end of the service reminding us of God's unity and the ultimate goals of eradicating idolatry. We now say it at the end of every service, but some medieval authorities relegated it to the evening service (*Ma'ariv*) alone. Its future-oriented and eschatological focus seemed especially appropriate to the end of the day's prayers, when we naturally anticipate the next day and should think confidently about God's ultimate triumph over idolatry.

³ "His majestic abode [moshav y'karo]" Jacob ben Asher (1269–1343) notes an alternative wording, "his glorious seat" (*kisei k'vodo*). Six hundred years later, Barukh Halevi Epstein (1860–1908) favored this alternative, because reference to a "seat of glory" is common in the Bible, but "his abode of majesty" is not, and he suspected early Christians of introducing what we normally say ("his abode of majesty"). Nonetheless, in practice, he accepted the wording that had been handed down to him ("his abode of majesty").

⁵ "To perfect the world" "Perfecting the world" is now almost universally known as *tikkun olam*. But this interpretation expands the concept beyond its original boundaries. In the Mishnah (Git. 4–5) specific acts of rabbinic legislation are designed to remedy equally specific social ills or legal injustices. These enactments are said to have been promulgated for *tikkun olam*, meaning the repair of particular undesirable situations. *Alenu* thus takes a concept that denoted only certain, but not all, rabbinic enactments and expands it to mean God's ultimate repair of the world. We commonly think of *tikkun olam* ("perfecting the world") as a human project, but here it is presented as God's responsibility.

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

the only God. But Chasidic tradition, as taught by such masters as Dov Baer of Mezritch (1704–1772), Shneur Zalman of Liady (1747–1813), and Yitschak Isaac Epstein of Homel (1780–1857), hears something else.

The Hebrew is ambiguous. *Ein od*, literally, means, not just "there is none else," but "there is nothing else." This dramatically expands the theological assertion: Not only is God the only God, but God is all there is; only God is real; besides God, there is literally "nothing else"; in the Yiddish, *als is Gott*. The technical term for such a radical monistic theology is acosmism, the denial of the reality of the cosmos. God is the substratum, the font of all being. If something is real, it can only be because it is a manifestation of

the underlying and of the *Alenu* shifts fi Now it becomes a confusion, contradiction of reality.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

community in que Epstein, 1829–1908

The proper "int think, "There is no under the kingship According to the M memory; Jerusalem of God that is sim 'Enough.'" God wil to limit their graspi

We say *Alenu* al service on the High

¹ "We must prais second conclusion t composed, however, century Babyloniar composed it while oneness (*Pirkei D'ru be associated with t name*"), that is, mar

Martyrdom is c commit murder; to to worship other g belief in one God, s

The obligation t Rabbi Yishmael der be killed" (*ya'avov v from Leviticus 22:3 amongst the childre idol will not necessa actions speak loude even in private, as c*

God's glory (see also Bach, Joel Sirkes, 1561–1640, Poland), to O. Ch. 132). However, the Gra (Vilna Gaon, 1720–1798) maintained that in Hebrew numerology, the word *y'karo* is the same as *Yeshu* ("Jesus"), so preferred the alternative reading.

⁵ "Perfect the world under the Almighty's kingdom" The fundamental concept of *tikkun olam*, "improving the world," is nowadays a popular slogan. Since it is employed imprecisely, it is important to understand its halakhic origin. *Tikkun olam* originally applied to a *takkanah* (pronounced tah-kah-NAH), a legislative fiat intended for the public good. More precisely, a *takkanah* is a rabbinic enactment that is imposed when the practical application of a biblical or rabbinic precept is perceived as unjust or no longer effective. The *takkanah* would override, restrict, or change existing practice. The power to impose such *takkanot* (plural) may seem heretical, but it is evidence of the Rabbis' faith in the efficacy of Jewish law, its need to be just, and the confidence that God has in the students and custodians of that law.

Tikkun olam is a *takkanah* intended to prevent social or political injustice. Hillel, for example (M. Git. 4:4), instituted the *prozbul* as a *tikkun olam*. In order to save the poor from the cycle of poverty and/or servitude, Deuteronomy 15:2 had mandated that, with the advent of the sabbatical year, all existing debts be annulled. Fearing the economic consequences of moneylenders who would hesitate making loans near the end of the sabbatical cycle, the Torah had also warned (v. 9): "Take care that there not be the malicious thought in your heart that the seventh, sabbatical, year is near, and you are not generous toward your impoverished brother." But people refrained from lending money anyway, thus undoing the intent of the debt annulment. Hillel's *tikkun olam* allowed creditors to submit their outstanding debts in a deed called a *prozbul* to a court of law, which is exempt from the obligation of debt annulment applicable only to individuals. The court would then, in effect, collect the money for the lender. *Prozbul* thus allowed those who wished to observe the Torah to lend money and refuse to ask for its return after the sabbatical year. Others could lend money to the poor with the assurance that it would be repaid.

A second example is the ruling (M. Git. 4:6) that "we do not redeem captives for more than their actual value, on account of *tikkun olam*." The Rabbis viewed redemption of prisoners as a *mitzvah* of the highest order. Allocation of funds for redeeming captives superceded almost every other priority (B.B. 12a). But the willingness of Jewish communities to rescue its members from captivity (and what went with it—physical degradation and even sale into slavery) at almost any price would lead to extortion and even an increase in captives being taken in anticipation of large sums for their release (Maimonides, *Hilkhot Matnot Oniyim* 8:12). The Rabbis, therefore, instituted a *tikkun olam* limiting the sums paid for redemption of captives.

In medieval times, *tikkun olam* expanded in meaning. A famous passage in *Pirkei Avot* (1:2) tells us, "The world stands on three things: Torah, worship, and kind deeds." In his commentary to the Mishnah, Maimonides explains, "By virtue of wisdom, which is 'Torah,' positive personal behavior, which is 'kind deeds,' and observance of the commandments, which is 'worship,' we achieve *tikkun olam* and the continued

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

with all your heart, with all your soul," that is, "Love God even if that means you must give up your soul (i.e., your life)." One's personal love for God may never be violated or diminished.

Alenu is a private prayer in that it was originally recited silently. But for us, it is public in that we recite it aloud—a practice that arose, ironically, because of the pressure by non-Jewish governments to prove that we had censored out a line protesting paganism, which they took to be offensive to them (see below). Its stirring melody and wording in the plural make *Alenu* a public pledge to choose martyrdom over surrendering one iota of monotheistic commitment. That is why it is customary to join in the communal recitation of *Alenu* even if one has already said it: this communal recitation defines our community.

¹ "Not place us like the families of the earth" As is well known, medieval censors removed the line that juxtaposes Isaiah 30:7 and 45:20: "They bow down to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who does not save." Some have imputed reference to Christianity here, because in Hebrew numerology, *varik* ("and emptiness") equals "Jesus" [*Yeshu*]. But only paganism is intended, not monotheistic religions. No halakhic authority has argued for the continued exclusion of the phrase, and some, like Maharil Diskin (late nineteenth to twentieth century, Lithuania and Jerusalem), have strenuously urged its retention. A counterargument for its continued exclusion may be *mipnei aivah* ("because of enmity"): it causes needless and unintended enmity between gentiles and Jews. A further reason for excluding it is the hesitancy to change what is by now a three-hundred-year-old custom.

² "We bow down low" Originally, this came after the line that was censored out: "They bow down to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who does not save" (see above, "Not place us like the families of the earth"). Communities that still say that line should wait slightly after "a god who does not save" (*el lo moshi'a*) before bowing.

At *kor'im* (one word for "bow"), we bend the knees; at *umishtachavim* (another word for "bow"), we bow forward from the waist; at *umodim* ("in grateful acknowledgment"), we hold the posture; at *lifnei melech* ("before the king"), we stand erect again. The Maharil (Jacob Moelin, 1355–1427, Germany) forbade bowing during *Alenu*, because it was only custom, not a talmudic dictate (*Matteh Moshe*, R. Moses Eliakim Bria of Koznitz, 2:72).

During the *Alenu* within the Rosh Hashanah *Musaf*, many communities still preserve the Temple custom of full prostration. When it is said on Yom Kippur, it is customary in some communities for worshipers to prostrate themselves on the synagogue floor. Elsewhere, only the leader does so.

³ "His majestic abode [moshav y'karo] is in the sky above" The *Shulchan Arukh* (O. Ch. 132:3) discusses alternative wording for this phrase. It selects *umoshav y'karo* (which it understands as "the place of his glory") over *v'khisei k'vodo*, on the grounds that the latter might be interpreted as being just "the seat of God's honor" and might mean that God's glory is somehow limited, whereas the former implies the actual presence of

God's glory (see also the Gra (Vilna C) *y'karo* is the same

⁵ "Perfect the *tikkun olam*, "imprecisely, it is applied to a *tak* public good. Me the practical app longer effective.

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In medieval *Avot* (1:2) tells u In his comment is 'Torah,' posi commandment

him *Y'shu'ah*, both of which have different numerical equivalents.

The charge resurfaced with Anton Margarita, a German Jew who had converted to Catholicism in 1522 and later still to Protestantism. He recorded this accusation along with others in 1530, in a book entitled *The Entire Jewish Faith*. A public disputation with Joseph of Rosheim that year revealed the scurrilous nature of the charges, but the book was reprinted many times and was used by Martin Luther in his own anti-Jewish volume, *On the Jews and Their Lies*. No wonder the claim against *Alenu* would not go away. Years later, for instance, Jacob ben Elijah of Venice again fought off the charge by citing the traditional view that Joshua had composed *Alenu* in biblical days, "against the Canaanites, who worshiped idols and bowed down low to vanity and emptiness 2,000 years before Jesus of Nazareth was born."

By then, Jewish-Christian relations were becoming increasingly bitter, and powerless Jews often held onto the negative interpretation as an act of quiet outrage. To add to the problem, the offending word, *varik*, also means "spittle," and some Jews took up the custom of spitting on the floor when they got to it.

Eventually, communities began censoring out the line to avoid further incidents with the authorities. Others just changed the verb, changing *she'heim* ("for they [bow down low]") to *v'hayu* ("they used to [bow down low]"). In 1703 and then again in 1716 and 1750, the Prussian government actively made it illegal for Jews to include it.

In the Sefardi world, however, it was retained, probably because the offending interpretation had never gotten as far as Spain, and accusations against Jews on account of it were an Ashkenazi phenomenon. Sefardi Jews saw no reason to get rid of it.

On the current status of the offending line, see Landes.

³ "*His majestic abode [moshav y'karo]*" Literally, "the seat of his glory." The word *y'karo* figures in another argument that Jews advanced against the claim that *Alenu* vilified Jesus (see above, "[Who] did not place us like the families of the earth"). Christians objected to the word *varik* ("emptiness") because it is numerologically the same as *Yeshu*, the Hebrew name for Jesus. Jews admitted the equivalence, but replied that *y'karo* ("his glory") adds up to the same thing. If Christians want to read secret meaning into Jewish prayers, let them commend Jews for alluding to Jesus as "his [God's] glory."

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

"we bend the knee and bow and acknowledge." As it stands now, the repetition of "bowing" words seems to emphasize the bowing, and so we translate "bow down low." However, the line may originally have followed the thought that others bow down to false gods, and so the line we have may have been intended to convey something like "any sort of bowing we do is always before God."

² "*The king over the kings of kings*" Translated more or less literally. The "kings of

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

existence of society in the best way possible." For Maimonides, *tikkun olam* is no longer just a *tikkun* for the sake of Jewish society in a difficult social situation, but a *tikkun*, or "betterment," of the world. *Tikkun olam* becomes the pronounced goal of *mitzvot* in general.

As enlarged upon by Maimonides, the halakhic *tikkun olam* becomes a concept that is fully engaged with the world and its problems. It permits far-reaching reforms that shake up society without being revolutionary or utopian. This is the way of Halakhah: to work within the system and to transform it. *Alenu* charges us to do divine work through this world—the primary halakhic task.

"On that day Adonai shall be One" *Alenu* seeks not to end the world but to perfect it. Without denying human differences and identities, it sounds a universal call for submission to God alone—universal, because everyone can serve God. In this sense *Alenu* parallels the Maimonidean messianic vision (Laws of Kings, 12), which is this-worldly. For Maimonides, the messianic future is just like this world, except that we will lack no confidence in facing life's challenges. *Alenu* pushes us all to reach toward this messianic future.

L. HOFFMAN (History)

that had decimated Rhineland Jewry went on to establish the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. By 1198, that kingdom had again been taken over by Islam. The ongoing war between Muslims and Christians suggested to some that the end of times was near. German Jews, especially, looked for hints in ancient texts about their current reality.

In that historical context, *Alenu* was mined for hidden meaning, leading Abraham ben Azriel of Bohemia, in 1234, to write, "I have heard that we should say 'to vanity and emptiness' because the *gematria* [the numerical equivalent] of these words is equivalent to Jesus and Mohammed." So anyone who believes in these two pray to 'vanity and emptiness.'" Such interpretations were known to Christians, and in the fourteenth century, an apostate known as Pesach Peter charged the Jews with reviling Christianity in their worship. Yom Tov Lippmann Muelhausen of Cracow answered him by drawing attention to the sculpted works of art in European cathedrals and the words that appear in the *Alenu* just prior to the offending sentence "[He] did not place us like the families of the earth." "Don't you yourself maintain," he wrote, "that the wood and stone figures to which you bow are just likenesses, not themselves divine?" Yet the rural masses, he alleged, mistake them "for actual divine objects." The Jewish point, then, is our gratitude to God, who "did not place us like the families of the earth," that is, the people who work the earth for a living and mistakenly treat works of art like idols. Surely, enlightened Christians and Jews should agree on this. Besides, he continues, though it is undeniable that *varik* ("emptiness") is numerically equivalent to *Yeshu*, in actual fact, that is not Jesus' name! Christians call him *Jesus* and Jews call

him *Y'shu'ah*, bot

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J. HOFFMAN (T)

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² "The king o

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

kings" may have been some emperors, and the idea was that God is king over them. "King of kings of kings" would be more accurate, but is harder to read.

³ "Abode" Or, "throne."

⁴ "There is none else" Or, "there is nothing else." In its current context, "none" is the right choice, but a kabbalistic reinterpretation of this line claims that "He is God. There is nothing else [i.e., that's all there is]." While the original Hebrew here and immediately below support that reinterpretation, our English does not.

⁴ "Reflect on it" Literally, "Return to your heart."

⁵ "Idols" Birnbaum: "abominations."

⁵ "Perfect the world" The Hebrew for this phrase is the source of the modern phrase for "social action," *tikkun olam*, which in turn is often translated "fixing the world," reflecting a modern understanding of the ancient root *t.k.n.*

⁵ "All" Literally, "all flesh."

⁶ "Tongue swear allegiance" Literally, just "tongue swear to." But the English expression "swear to God" has its own connotations that would falsify the Hebrew meaning.

⁷ "Honor" Birnbaum: "give honor to."

⁷ "Yoke" That is, "control." The yoke is what an ox driver puts around the ox's neck to control the ox—a familiar image to those who wrote the prayer. Modern readers may miss it, but we retain the imagery because it is so vivid. "Subjugation of your kingdom" is probably the point.

C. MOURNER¹

¹ Magnified and sanctified his great name in the world, according to his will. ² In your kingdom in your lifetimes, days, and in the life of Israel, speedily and soon.

⁴ May his great name be glorified for all eternity.

⁵ Blessed, praised, glorified, extolled, lauded, and adored, the Holy One—blessed be your earthly blessings, consolations. ⁶ Say: Ar

⁷ May there be abundance of life, for us and for all. Amen.

⁹ May the One who dwells on high bring peace to all.

¹⁰ Say: Amen.

עֲלֵינוּ

We rise for Aleynu. It is customary to bow at korim. Choose one of the following.

- Aleynu leshabe'ah la'adon hakol
- later gedulah leyotzer bereyshit
- shenatan lanu torat emet
- vehayey olam nara betohenu.

Continue on page 447.

- עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבְּעַתְּ לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל
- לְתַת גְּדוּלָה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית
- שְׁנִיתָנוּ לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת
- וְהָיֵה עוֹלָם נָטֵעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ:

Continue on page 447.

- עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבְּעַתְּ לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל
- לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית שְׁלֵא עֲשֵׂנוּ פְּגוּרֵי
- הָאֲרָצוֹת וְלֵא שְׁכֵנוּ פְּמִשְׁפּוֹת הָאֲרָמָה
- שְׁלֵא שָׂם תְּקֵנוּ בָּהֶם וּגְוַרְלָנוּ כִּכְל
- הַמְּוֹנֵנוּ:

It is up to us to offer praises to the Source of all, to declare the greatness of the author of Creation, who has made us different from the other nations of the earth, and situated us in quite a different spot, and made our daily lot another kind from theirs, and given us a destiny uncommon in this world.

ALEynu

We rise for Aleynu. It is customary to bow at "bend the knee." For an alternative version see page 126. For additional readings see pages 737-739, 748, 772-774, 776-777, 803-804.

Choose one of the following:

- It is up to us to offer praises to the Source of all,
- to declare the greatness of the author of Creation,
- who gave us teachings of truth
- and planted eternal life within us.



It is up to us to offer praises to the Source of all, to declare the greatness of the author of Creation, who created heaven's heights and spread out its expanse, who laid the earth's foundation and brought forth its offspring, giving life to all its peoples, the breath of life to all who walk about.

COMMENTARY. This siddur offers several versions of the Aleynu. The first, which appeared in the 1945 Reconstructionist siddur, emphasizes that the gift of God's Torah or teaching demands our committed response. The second version, based on Isaiah 42:5 and fit into the Aleynu by Rabbi Max D. Kline, emphasizes that our obligation to God flows from our role as part of Creation. The traditional Aleynu that appears below the line has troubled Reconstructionist Jews because it implies the inferiority of other faiths and peoples.

D.A.T.

עֲלֵינוּ ב'

ALEINU II

ALEINU I shabei-ach laadon hakol,
lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit,
shehu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz,
umoshav y'karo bashamayim mimaal,
ush'chinat uzo b'govhei m'romim,
hu Eloheinu ein od.

עֲלֵינוּ לְשִׁבְחָהּ לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתַת גְּדֻלָּהּ לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיֹסֵד אֶרֶץ,
וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וְשׁוֹכֵנֵת עֵז בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים,
הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵין עוֹד.

ALEINU I sh
lateit g'dulah l'y
shelo asanu k'go
v'lo saman k'n
Shelo sam chell
v'goraleinu k'ch

LET US ADORE the ever living God,
and render praise unto the One who spread out the heavens
and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above
and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world.
You are our God; there is none else.

Vaanachnu kor'im
umishtachavim umodim,
lifnei Melech mal'chei hamlachim
HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

וְאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים,
לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

Vaanachnu kor'
umishtachavim
lifnei Melech m
HaKadosh Bart

Therefore we bow in awe and thanksgiving
before the One who is Sovereign over all,
the Holy and Blessed One.

Continue on page 287.

We seek God as a partner in every significant act, we invest our deciding and doing with direction, worth, hope, and in failure, the possibility of repair. *Eugene Borowitz*

Maybe God and perfection are at the end and not at the beginning. Maybe it is a growing world and a growing humanity and a growing God, and perfection is to be achieved, and not something to start with. *Henry Slominsky*

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ALEINU I, CONTINUED

עלינו

SHEHU noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz,
 umoshav y'karo bashamayim mimaal
 ush'chinat uzo b'govhei m'romim.
 Hu Eloheinu ein od,
 emet Malkeinu efes zulato.
 Kakatuv b'Torato, v'yadata hayom
 v'hasheivota el l'vavecha,
 ki Adonai hu HaElohim
 bashamayim mimaal,
 v'al haaretz mitachat, ein od.

שְׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיֹסֵד אֶרֶץ,
 וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל
 וּשְׁכִינַת עֵזוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים.
 הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵין עוֹד,
 אֱמֶת מַלְכֵנוּ אֶפֶס זֹלָתוֹ.
 כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרָתוֹ, וְיֹדַעַת הַיּוֹם
 וְהִשְׁבֵּת אֶל לְבָבְךָ,
 כִּי יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים
 בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
 וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת, אֵין עוֹד.

FOR YOU SPREAD OUT THE HEAVENS and establish the earth; Your majestic abode is in the heavens above and Your mighty Presence is in the loftiest heights. You are our God and there is none else. In truth You are our Sovereign without compare, as is written in Your Torah: Know then this day and take it to heart that Adonai is surely God in the heavens above and on the earth below. There is none else.

Al kein n'kaveh lach Adonai Eloheinu,
 lirot m'heirah b'tiferet uzecha,
 'haavir gilulim min haaretz
 v'ha-clilim karot yikareitun.
 L'takein olam b'malchut Shaddai,
 v'chol b'nei vasar yikr'u vishmecha.
 L'hafnot eilecha kol rishei aretz.

עַל כֵּן נִקְוֶה לָךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 לְרֹאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְרֵי אֶזְרֶךָ,
 לְהַעֲבִיר גִּלּוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ
 וְהַאֲלִילִים כְּרוֹת יִכָּרְתוּן.
 לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדַי,
 וְכָל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ.
 לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רִשְׁעֵי אֶרֶץ.

We therefore hope in You, Adonai our God, may we soon behold the glory of Your might: sweeping away the false gods of the earth that idolatry be utterly destroyed; perfecting the world under the rule of God that all humanity invoke Your name; turning all the wicked of the earth toward You.

Continue on page 288.

עוֹד אֵין עוֹד *Ein od* . . . *There is none else* . . . The Kabbalah's interpretation is "Adonai is God; there is nothing (!) else," the idea being, "God is all there is!" God and the universe become the same, interwoven in history. *Joel Hoffman*

שְׁמַיִם נוֹטֵה (שְׁהוּא) *(Shehu) noteh shamayim* . . . *For You spread out the heavens* . . . Isaiah 51:13

וְיֹדַעַת הַיּוֹם *V'yadata hayom* . . . *Know then this day* . . . Deuteronomy 4:39

ALEINU II, CONTINUED

MAY WE GAIN wisdom in our lives, overflowing like a river with understanding; our soul profound enough to cover the earth. Loved, each of us, for the peace we bring to others. May our deeds exceed our speech, and may we never lift up our hand but to conquer fear and doubt and despair.

Rise up like the sun, O God, over all humanity. Cause light to go forth over all the lands between the seas. And light up the universe with the joy of wholeness, of freedom, and of peace.

MAY THE TIME not be distant, O God, when all shall turn to You in love, when corruption and evil shall give way to integrity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye. O may all, created in Your image, become one in spirit and one in friendship, forever united in Your service. Then shall Your realm be established on earth, and the word of Your prophet fulfilled: "Adonai will reign for ever and ever."

Al kein n'kaveh l'cha Adonai Eloheinu,
lirot m'heirah b'tiferet uzecha,
l'takein olam b'malchut Shaddai.

על כֵּן נִקְוָה לְךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
לְרֵאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְאַרֶת עֲזָדְךָ,
לְתִקּוֹן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵיךָ.

Adonai our God, how soon we hope to behold the perfection of our world, guided by a sacred Covenant drawn from human and divine meeting.

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

וְנֵאמַר, וְהָיָה יי
לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ.
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יי אֶחָד
וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

Thus it has been said, Adonai will be Sovereign over all the earth.
On that day, Adonai will be one, and God's Name will be one.

Continue on page 289.

The *שמע Shema* declares the oneness of God. Yet that oneness is not apparent in the world. Human action can bring oneness and peace to all. *Elyse D. Frishman*

The Jewish idea of redemption compels us to imagine a perfect world, a world that has reached its full potential. Poetry asks the same of its language; poetry at its best imagines a perfect language, which can impart all the nuances, meanings, and music that it never quite achieves in our everyday speech. When understood well, poetry and redemption can help us remake our world: a brilliant line of poetry can place a new link in the chain of our thought and language; and the idea of redemption helps us to look beyond our lives towards a world of possibility. *Adam Sol*

SHEHU r
umoshav y'ka
ush'chinat uz
Hu Eloheinu
emet Malkein
Kakaturv b'Te
v'hasheivota
ki Adonai hu
bashamayim
v'al haaretz r
FOR YOU
abode is ir
are our Ge
as is writte
surely Goo

Al kein n'ka
lirot m'heira
l'haavir gilul
v'ha-elilim k
L'takein olar
v'chol b'nei
L'hafnot eile
We therefi
might: sw
perfecting
turning al

אין עוד
there is not
same, inter
יְהוָה שְׁמִים
יְדַעַת הַיּוֹם

ALEINU I, CONTINUED.

עלינו

aru v'yeidu kol yoshvei teivel
 ki l'cha tichra kol berech,
 tishava kol lashon.
 L'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu yichr'u v'yipolu.
 V'lichvod shimcha y'kar yiteinu.
 Vikablu chulam et ol malchutecha,
 v'timloch aleihem m'heirah l'olam va-ed.
 Ki hamalchut shelcha hi,
 ul'olmei ad timloch b'chavod,
 kakatuv b'Toratecha:
 Adonai yimloch l'olam va-ed.
 V'ne-emar, v'hayah Adonai
 l'Melech al kol haaretz.
 Bayom hahu yih'yeh Adonai echad
 ush'mo echad.

יְכִירוּ וַיִּזְדְּעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל,
 כִּי לְךָ תִכְרַע כָּל בְּרֵךְ,
 תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לָשׁוֹן:
 לְפָנֶיךָ יִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ.
 וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקָּר יִיתֵנוּ.
 וַיִּקְבְּלוּ עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ,
 וַתִּמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שֶׁלְּךָ הִיא,
 וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד,
 כַּכָּתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ:
 יִי יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
 וְנֹאמַר, וְהָיָה יִי
 לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ.
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יִי אֶחָד
 וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

Let all who dwell on earth acknowledge
 that unto You every knee must bend and every tongue swear loyalty.
 Before You, Adonai, our God, let them pay homage.
 Let them give glory to Your honored Name.
 Let all accept the yoke of Your reign,
 that You may rule over us soon and forever.
 For Sovereignty is Yours
 and to all eternity You will reign in glory,
 as it is written in Your Torah:
 Adonai will reign forever and ever.
 Thus it has been said:
 Adonai will become Sovereign of all the earth.
 On that day Adonai will become One and God's Name will be One.

Kaddish begins on page 291.

כי לך (לי) תכרע *Ki l'cha (li) tichra, . . . Unto You (Me) every knee must bend . . .* Isaiah 45:23

ימלך יי *Adonai yimloch . . . Adonai will reign . . .* Exodus 15:18

ימלך יי ויהיה *V'hayah Adonai l'Melech . . . Adonai will become Sovereign . . .* Zechariah 14:9

ביום ההוא *Bayom hahu . . . On that day . . .* Zechariah 14:9

GOD, ANSWER US — we long for You!
 Overcome Your silence, Lord of all words!
 The downcast of a thousand years beg you: reveal Yourself!
 Spare us work-plays on enigmas.
 Show us goodness, not craft; joy not magic.
 Why do You tease our trust in You?
 Mock our pride in You?
 Truly, You hide from our craving for You. Oh, see:
 our lustful passions disguise our need for You,
 and Your silence — *gehinnom*, hell on earth.
 I feel Your ear near to my beseeching lips,
 and know that Your strict rule
 is kinder than my pity.
 But at times bile spurts from horror, and screams
 through a thousand mouths: God is our prosecutor!
 And then I cannot speak my wordless words to anyone.
 Deeper than my faith is the world's despair,
 so that I'd give away all Your gifts to me and all my talents,
 for simply a light bright word given from You.

Kaddish begins on page 291.

תקון עולם *Tikkun olam* (literally, "repairing the world") originally (second century) stood for rabbinic legislation to remedy specific social ills or legal injustices. In the *עלינו Aleinu*, composed about the same time, it represents acts by God to replace this imperfect world with the legal and moral perfection of divine rule. Sixteenth-century kabbalistic thought applied the term to human action, shifting the responsibility for perfecting the world onto us. *Lawrence A. Hoffman*

Yakiru v'ye
 ki l'cha tich
 tishava kol
 L'fanecha A
 V'lichvod s
 Vikablu ch
 v'timloch a
 Ki hamalch
 ul'olmei ad
 kakatuv b"
 Adonai yin
 V'ne-emar
 l'Melech al
 Bayom hal
 ush'mo ech

 Let all w
 that untc
 Before Yc
 Let them
 Let all ac
 that You
 For Sove
 and to al
 as it is w
 Adonai v
 Thus it f
 Adonai v
 On that

לי תקרע
 יי ימלך
 יי למלך
 ים ההוא

על כן Therefore we put our hope in You, Hashem our God, that we may soon see Your mighty splendor, to remove detestable idolatry from the earth, and false gods will be utterly cut off, to perfect the universe through the Almighty's sovereignty. Then all humanity will call upon Your Name, to turn all the earth's wicked toward You. All the world's inhabitants will recognize and know that to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear. Before You, Hashem, our God, they will bend every knee and cast themselves down and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage, and they will all accept upon themselves the yoke of Your kingship that You may reign over them soon and eternally. For the kingdom is Yours and You will reign for all eternity in glory as it is written in Your Torah: Hashem shall reign for all eternity. Chazan—And it is said: Hashem will be King over all the world — on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.³

Some congregations recite the following after Aleinu:

אל תירא Do not fear sudden terror, or the holocaust of the wicked when it comes. Plan a conspiracy and it will be annulled; speak your piece and it shall not stand, for God is with us. Even till your seniority, I remain unchanged, and even till your ripe old age, I shall endure. I created you and I shall bear you; I shall endure and rescue.⁴

MOURNER'S KADDISH

In the presence of a mourner, mourners recite שיר שיר, the Mourner's Kaddish (see Law 5119). A translation of this Kaddish appears on page 162.

והגדיל May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified (Cong.—Amen) in the world that He created as He willed. May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days, and in the lifetimes of the entire Family of Israel, swiftly and soon. Now respond: Amen.

(Cong.—Amen. May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.)

Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled, mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He (Cong.—Blessed is He) — (from Koach Hachayah to Yom Kippur add: exceedingly) beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation that are uttered in the world. Now respond: Amen. (Cong.—Amen). May there be abundant peace from Heaven, and life, upon us and upon all Israel. Now respond: Amen. (Cong.—Amen).

Take three steps back, bow left and say, The Who makes peace.

How right he says, may He ... bow forward and say, and upon all Israel.

Remain standing in place for a few moments, then take three steps forward.

He Who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace upon us, and upon all Israel. Now respond: Amen. (Cong.—Amen).

(1) Cf. Isaiah 45:23 (2) Exodus 15:18 (3) Proverbs 3:28 (4) Isaiah B. 50 (5) 46:4

Abraham (Abraham) Alone. They express confidence in God's protection and are regarded as signs of devotion of reciting these three verses after intention, no matter how dangerous it seems; (6)

על כן נקמה לך יהוה אלהינו לראות מחרת מתפארת אגף, לתעביר נזלים מן הארץ, והאלילים ברות יפחיתו, לתקן עולם במלכות שרך, וכל בני אשר יקראו בשמך, להפנות אלך כל קרן, חשבע כל לשון, יקפדו וידעו כל ילדכי, כי לך תכבדו, וכלבדו שמך יקר יתנו, וקפולו כלם את עול מלכותך, ותמלך עליהם לטוב ועד. כי תמלכות שורך הוא ולעולמי עד ממלוקה כבוד, בפתח פתחך: יהוה ימלך לעולם ועד. ונאמר: והיה יהוה למלך על כל הארץ, בימים יהוה יהיה יהוה אחד ושמו אחד.²

Some congregations recite the following after שיר

אל תירא. מקוד פחאם ומשאח רשעים כי תבא, אצי עוצר והקר, וקרד ורבר לא יקום, כי עמנו אלו, ועד וקנה אצי הוא, ועד שירכי אצי אסבל, ואצי עשיתי ואצי אסבל ואמלטי.³

קריאת יהוה

והתקדש שמו רבך. (אמן) — (Cong.—Amen) בקולכם יד ברא ברעות, וקמלך מלכותך, בחיבתך וביומנו ובנינו וכל בית ישראל, באגיא וביום קרוב, ואמרו: אמן.

(Cong.—Amen. הוא שמו רבך מקוד לעולם ולעלמי לעלמי.)

והתפלל שמו וקדושה ברך הוא (ברך הוא) — לקלא מן כל רשירותא וחספנותא ותמקא ותמקא בקולכם: אמן. (Cong.—Amen).

הוא שלכא רבך מן שמיא, והים עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו: אמן. (Cong.—Amen).

Take three steps back, bow left and say, ... how right he says, and upon all Israel. Remain standing in place for a few moments, then take three steps forward.

עשה שלום בבורותינו, הוא יגשד שלום עלינו, ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו: אמן. (Cong.—Amen).

not sufficient to make people observe the mitzvot as they should. After obtaining Your Having stated that God does us from knowledge we must take it to heart, that is, we are entitled to hope that He will speedily reveal the greatness and rid the earth of spiritual

guest speaker from the library commission, the ACLU, People for the American Way, or another organization to speak about censorship today. (6 and up)

20. Someone once remarked that if what has happened to the Jews in history is a result of being the chosen people, maybe God could choose someone else next time. Conduct a poll on the question of whether being Jewish is a blessing or a burden. Students should interview parents, other relatives, friends, Jewish professionals, and lay leaders in the community, etc. Students should record comments, share them with the class and put together a summary of their findings for publication in the synagogue's bulletin or another forum. (6 and up)

21. Although the *Aleinu* would have us look forward to the day when all people will serve one God, it does not mean that everyone will become Jewish. But it does mean that all people will abide by a basic moral code. In groups, students should create a set of basic laws and guidelines for such a society. Students should limit their lists to ten or fewer rules. Share the rules with each other and draw up a composite list. Introduce the students to the idea of the Noachide laws, which are the basic laws that everyone is expected to follow in order to merit entering the world to come. Compare the Noachide laws to the students' lists. Resource: "Noachide Laws" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 12, cols. 1189-1191. (6 and up)

22. The *Aleinu* contains the seemingly contradictory themes of particularism and universalism. With the class, define these terms and ask students to identify which phrases in the *Aleinu* reflect each theme. Divide the class into two groups and assign each group to explore one of these themes. They should give examples of Jewish teachings and prayers that reflect the themes and analyze their importance to Judaism. After each group presents its findings, discuss whether they are contradictory or whether they are compatible. Are they both necessary for Judaism to survive and flourish? (9 and up)

HEBREW

23. Ask students to identify the Hebrew word for king, *melech*. Explain the concept of "root" in Hebrew as three consonants that appear in the same order in most forms of the word. Direct students to read through the *Aleinu* and identify all words with the root *mem, lamed, kaf*. (It occurs eleven times.) Discuss the significance of this root occurring so many times vis-a-vis the theme of the prayer. (3 and up)

24. The *Aleinu* contains many names and terms for God including: *Adon HaKol/Lord of all, Yotzeir B'reishit/Creator, Melech, Malchei HaMelachim/King of the king of kings, HaKadosh Baruch Hu/The Holy One Who is blessed, Eloheinu/our God, Malkeinu/our King, Adonai/Lord, Shaddai/God almighty*. Have students find these names in the prayer and learn to read them. Discuss why there are so many different names and phrases referring to God. What are some of the other terms for God? What does each add to our understanding of God? (6 and up)

25. With the students, identify and translate the biblical passages contained in the *Aleinu* — Deuteronomy 4:39, Exodus 15:18, Zechariah 14:9. (6 and up)

FAMILY

26. The conclusion of the *Aleinu* looks forward to the day when all people will recognize the God of the Jews as their God. This time is called the Messianic Age. What will this age be like? Encourage families to imagine what it would be like to live during that time. Ask each family to choose a problem that exists in the world and come up with a solution to that problem. Each family should share its solution with the other families. The group as a whole should then choose one or two of the problems and begin to implement the suggested solutions.

27. One of the themes of the *Aleinu* is Jewish uniqueness. Have families make albums in which they record significant Jewish events in their lives

with creative writing, photos, and mementos. Provide each family with a blank book. On the cover, each family may create a coat of arms using its last name or other important characteristics. Begin this session by having families recall noteworthy experiences, about which they can write. Encourage families to use a variety of forms of creative expression in their books.

RESOURCES

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Shapiro, Mark Dou Gates of Shabbat Pg 65 Unit 2 Activity 5

◆ Havdalah

יְיָ צַב
מִשְׁגַּב
סֵלָה.
אֲשֶׁר י
יְיָ הוֹי
הַמֶּלֶךְ
בְּיוֹם-

לִיהוֹד
וּשְׁמֵהָ
בֶן תֵּן
בוֹס י
וְרַחֲמֵי

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בְּרוּךְ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ
בוֹרֵא

Blessing for Spices

The leader holds up the spice box.

The added soul Shabbat confers is leaving now, and these spices will console us at the moment of its passing. They remind us that the six days will pass, and Shabbat return. Their scent makes us yearn for the sweetness of rest, and the dream of a world healed of pain, pure and wholesome as on the first Shabbat, when God, finding all things good, rested from the work of creation.

⚡ See page 118

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei mi-nei ve-sa-mim.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מִיְנֵי בְשָׁמִים.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of fragrant spices.

The leader shakes the spices, smells them, and passes them on so that everyone present may enjoy the fragrance.

Blessing for Light

Raise the Havdalah candle

The Havdalah candle is a unique candle. Its multiple wicks remind us that all qualities can be joined together. We have the power to create many different fires, some useful, others destructive. Let us be on guard never to let this gift of fire devour human life, sear cities and scorch fields, or foul the pure air we breathe. Let the fire we kindle be holy; let it bring light and warmth to all humanity.

⚡ See page 118

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei me-o-rei ha-eish.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the lights of fire.

Cup the hands and extend them palms up toward the candle.

Separating from Shabbat

The Havdalah Service

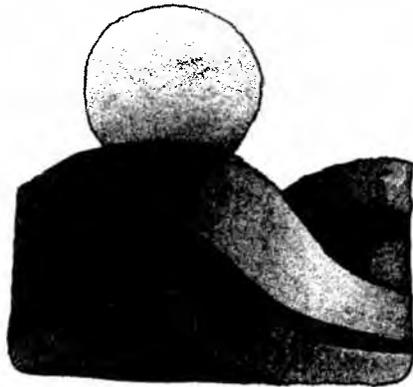
"Havdalah" means "separation." It refers to the beautiful and visual ceremony which ends Shabbat and thereby "separates" it from the weekdays.

The Havdalah service consists of:

1. Introduction
2. Blessing for wine
3. Blessing for spices
4. Blessing for light
5. Blessing of separation ("*havdalah*")
6. Conclusion

In order to conduct the Havdalah service, you will need a specially braided Havdalah candle, wine (if wine is unavailable, any beverage other than water may be used), and a spice box containing a variety of spices (for instance, cinnamon and cloves).

Everyone in the household should participate in Havdalah, although where children are present, the Havdalah candle is often held during the service by a child. It is customary to stand during Havdalah.



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Activity 7

Introductio

Havdalah

Introduction

*As Shabbat ends, the Havdalah candle is kindled.
(You may read one of the following.)*

If we take joy in the fullness of its spiritual pleasure, Shabbat is a taste of the messianic days. As Shabbat comes to an end and we confront darkness, we kindle light and speak words of confidence. We shall speak of *salvation*, deliverance from darkness; *salvation*, triumph of the work of redemption.



Legend tells us: As night descended at the end of the world's first Shabbat, Adam and Eve feared and wept. Then God showed them how to make fire and, by its light and warmth, to dispel the darkness and its terrors.

Kindling flame is a symbol of our first labor upon the earth. As Shabbat departs and the work week resumes, we kindle our own fire. We begin to separate ourselves from Shabbat by lighting the way into a new week with this candle.



*(The following biblical verses may be read or chanted
along with the English version of the text. It is customary to lift the cup of wine
high when the last sentence in the Hebrew or English is read
and then proceed directly to the blessing for wine.)*

Hi-nei Eil ye-shu-a-ti,
ev-tach, ve-lo ef-chad.
Ki o-zi ve-zim-rat Ya A-do-nai,
va-ye-hi li li-shu-a.

U-she-av-tem ma-yim be-sa-son
mi-ma-ai-nei ha-ye-shu-a.
La-do-nai ha-ye-shu-a,
al am-cha bir-cha-te-cha, se-la.

הִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי,
אֲבֹטָח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד.
כִּי עֲזֵי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה יְיָ,
וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
וּשְׂאֲבֹתֶם מַיִם בְּשִׂשׁוֹן
מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.
לֵי יְיָ הַיְשׁוּעָה,
עַל־עַמּוֹת בְּרַכְתֶּךָ, סֵלָה.

A-do-nai tse-va-ot i-ma-nu,
mis-gav la-nu E-lo-hei Ya-a-kov,
se-la. A-do-nai tse-va-ot,
ash-rei a-dam bo-tei-ach bach!
A-do-nai, ho-shi-a;
ha-me-lech ya-a-nei-nu
ve-yom kor-ei-nu.

La-ye-hu-dim ha-ye-ta o-ra
ve-sim-cha, ve-sa-son vi-kar;
kein ti-he-yeh la-nu.
Kos ye-shu-ot e-sa,
u-ve-sheim A-do-nai e-ke-ra.

God is my deliverance; I will be confident and unafraid. God is my strength, my song and my salvation. In joy we shall drink from the wells of salvation. God will rescue and bless our people. The God of all creation is with us; the God of Israel is our refuge. Happy are those who trust in God. The Jews had light, joy, delight, and honor; so may it be for us. I lift up the cup of deliverance and call upon the Holy One.

for Wine

The leader raises the cup of wine.

Wine gladdens the heart. In our gladness, we see beyond the injustice and violence which stain our world. Our eyes open to unnoticed grace, blessings till now unseen, and the promise of goodness we can bring to flower.

See page 118

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

(The leader does not drink the wine until after the final blessing when Havdalah is fully complete.)

יְיָ צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ,
מִשְׁגָּב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,
סֵלָה. יְיָ צְבָאוֹת,
אֲשֶׁר־י אָדָם בִּטַּח בְּךָ!
יְיָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה;
הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ
בְיוֹם־קִרְאָנוּ.

לַיהוּדִים הִיְתָה אוֹרָה
וְשִׂמְחָה, וְשִׁשׁוֹן וְיִקָּר;
כֵּן תִּהְיֶה לָנוּ.
כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא,
וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא.

Blessing for Spices

See page 118

Blessing for L

See page 118

Blessing for Spices

The leader holds up the spice box.

The added soul Shabbat confers is leaving now, and these spices will console us at the moment of its passing. They remind us that the six days will pass, and Shabbat return. Their scent makes us yearn for the sweetness of rest, and the dream of a world healed of pain, pure and wholesome as on the first Shabbat, when God, finding all things good, rested from the work of creation.

‡ See page 118

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei mi-nei ve-sa-mim.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בְּשָׂמִים.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of fragrant spices.

The leader shakes the spices, smells them, and passes them on so that everyone present may enjoy the fragrance.

Blessing for Light

Raise the Havdalah candle

The Havdalah candle is a unique candle. Its multiple wicks remind us that all qualities can be joined together. We have the power to create many different fires, some useful, others destructive. Let us be on guard never to let this gift of fire devour human life, sear cities and scorch fields, or foul the pure air we breathe. Let the fire we kindle be holy; let it bring light and warmth to all humanity.

‡ See page 118

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei me-o-rei ha-eish.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מֵאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Creator of the lights of fire.

Cup the hands and extend them palms up toward the candle.

...ssing of
...eparation

Havdalah is not for the close of Shabbat alone;
it is for all the days.
Havdalah means: separate yourself from the unholy;
strive for holiness.
Havdalah means: separate yourself from fraud and exploitation,
be fair and honest with all people.
Havdalah means: separate yourself from indifference to the poor
and the deprived, the sick and the aged;
work to ease their despair and their loneliness.
Havdalah means: separate yourself from hatred and violence;
promote peace among people and nations.
May God give us understanding to reject the unholy and
to choose the way of holiness.
May the One who separates the holy from the profane
inspire us to perform these acts of Havdalah.

Conclh

⚡ See p

⚡ See page 118

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh le-chol,
bein or le-cho-shech,
bein Yis-ra-eil la-a-mim,
bein yom ha-she-vi-i
le-shei-shet ye-mei ha-ma-a-seh.
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,
ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh le-chol.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֵל הַיּוֹם, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוּל,
בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,
בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים,
בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוּל.

⚡ See pi

We praise You, Adonai our God, who separates the holy from the ordinary, light from darkness, who has called the people of Israel to a destiny and purpose separate and distinct, and who separates between the seventh day and the six weekdays. We praise You, Adonai, who separates between the holy and the ordinary.

Sip the wine.

Conclusion

Extinguish the Havdalah candle in the remaining wine
while the following passages are sung or said.

‡ See page 119

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh le-chol, cha-to-tei-nu hu yim-chol, zar-ei-nu ve-chas-pei-nu yar-beh ka-chol, ve-cha-ko-cha-vim ba-lai-la.</i></p> | <p>הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל, חֲטָאתֵינוּ הוּא יִמְחַל, זָרְעֵנוּ וְכַסְפֵּנוּ יִרְבֶּה בְּחֹל, וְכַוְכְּבִים בְּלַיְלָה.</p> |
|--|--|

May God who separates the sacred from profane, forgive our sins
and make us secure and as numerous as the sands on the shore of
the sea and as the stars of night.

Sha-vu-a tov...

שָׁבוּעַ טוֹב...

A good week. A week of peace.
May gladness reign and joy increase.



‡ See page 120

| | |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Ei-li-ya-hu ha-na-vi, Ei-li-ya-hu ha-tish-bi; Ei-li-ya-hu, Ei-li-ya-hu, Ei-li-ya-hu ha-gil-a-di. Bi-me-hei-ra ve-ya-mei-nu, ya-vo ei-lei-nu; im ma-shi-ach ben Da-vid, im ma-shi-ach ben Da-vid. Ei-li-ya-hu...</i></p> | <p>אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא, אֱלֹהֵי הַתִּשְׁבִּי; אֱלֹהֵי, אֱלֹהֵי, אֱלֹהֵי הַגִּלְעָדִי. בְּמַהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, יָבֵא אֱלֵינוּ; עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד, עִם מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד. אֱלֹהֵינוּ...</p> |
|---|---|

Elijah the prophet, Elijah the Tishbite. Elijah of Gilead. Soon, in
our days, Elijah will come with the Messiah, the son of David.

What is the origin of Havdalah?

Havdalah is first mentioned in the Mishnah.²⁴ Looking back on such early rabbinic material, Maimonides explained the logic of Havdalah by referring to the rabbis' interpretation of the Shabbat commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8) According to Maimonides, the rabbis reasoned that "remembering" Shabbat required "sanctifying" Shabbat and that this ought to take place both as Shabbat arrived (with Friday evening Kiddush) and as it departed (with Saturday evening's Havdalah).²⁵

When should Havdalah be said?

Just as most Reform Jews begin Shabbat when they start their Friday evening meal and light the candles, Reform Jews can also perform Havdalah in accordance with the rhythm of their own households. For some that will mean doing Havdalah after the sun has set and when three stars appear in the sky to signify that night has fully arrived.²⁶ Others may choose to do Havdalah toward the end of Saturday afternoon whenever the special activities they associate with Shabbat have come to an end.

What is the purpose of the introductory biblical verses in Havdalah?

The verses found at the beginning of Havdalah are taken from the biblical books of Isaiah, Psalms, and Esther. Each verse stresses the hope for deliverance or salvation, and in this way complements the traditional expectation that the Messiah will arrive for the redemption of the world right after Havdalah.

Even though one participant in the Havdalah service may begin the introductory verses on his or her own, it is customary for everyone present to join in saying the words from Esther 8:16, "The Jews had light, joy, delight, and honor." The group then continues with the wish—"So may it be for us."

Why is there a blessing for wine in this service?

To understand this practice, you need to recall the way in which wine is used on Friday evening. The goal at that time is to transform a weekday into the holy day of Shabbat, and wine is the vehicle by which a Jew accomplishes this process. That is why the Friday evening Kiddush contains two blessings: the longer one, which establishes that the seventh day is to be sanctified, plus the shorter one over the wine (...*borei peri hagafen*), which is necessary because consuming the wine is the act which actually initiates the sanctification of the day.

During Havdalah wine plays a similar role. It helps demarcate time—in this case the movement from the holy time of Shabbat back into the regular weekdays. As is the case on Friday evening, the wine blessing sets the stage for saying the blessing over the day (...*hamavdil bein kodesh lechol*). When that is done, the wine can be drunk, bringing the holy time of Shabbat to a close.

Why are

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Why are there blessings for spices and light in this service?

Blessings for spices and light may be found in Havdalah to remind us of the ancient domestic custom of bringing spices on burning coals into the room at the end of a meal. Since the sages began their third Shabbat meal on Saturday afternoon, they would delay concluding the meal until Shabbat was over and the coals for heating the spices could be lit. The blessings then recited for the spices and the "light" (i.e., fire) that warmed them eventually became a part of Havdalah.

Another explanation for the use of spices:

Rabbinic legend offers an additional explanation for the use of spices. It suggests that, as a result of the peace and quiet of Shabbat, every Jew receives an additional soul (*neshama yeteira*). When this extra soul leaves at the end of Shabbat, the remaining soul of the Jew suffers a letdown. The smell of the spices at Havdalah is an attempt to buoy up the soul as it prepares for the coming week of work.²⁷

Another explanation for use of light:

Rabbinic legend also offers several further explanations for the use of light at Havdalah. One source presents the blessing of light on Saturday night as a commemoration of what happened to Adam when it grew dark at the end of the first Shabbat. Because the first human being was afraid of the dark, God provided him with the knowledge to strike two stones together and create fire.²⁸ We remember the discovery of fire with the blessing of light at Havdalah.

Another text draws on the fact that, after Havdalah is said on Saturday, the first day of the next Jewish week begins. The text suggests that just as light was created on the first day of the first week in the Torah, a blessing for light ought to be included in Havdalah when the first day of all subsequent weeks arrives.²⁹

Why is the Havdalah candle braided?

Since the blessing of light at Havdalah literally refers to God as "Creator of the lights of fire," the rabbis taught that the Havdalah candle should have at least two (if not more) wicks.³⁰ The result was the braided candle in today's Havdalah service. If such a candle is not available, two ordinary candles may be held together, so long as their separate wicks are brought together for one large flame.

Why do we look at our hands after the blessing for the light?

According to Jewish tradition, it is inappropriate to recite a blessing without following through on what you have blessed. In order to avoid such a blessing in vain (*beracha levatala*), it has become customary to "use" the light of the Havdalah candle after the blessing for light has been said. We accomplish this by extending our cupped hands toward the candle. The resulting interplay of light and shadow on our hands constitutes the "use" of the light.

How does the biblical prophet Elijah find his way into Havdalah?

Since Shabbat was understood to be a foretaste of the messianic era, over the centuries Jews have always hoped that Elijah, who was believed to be the forerunner of the Messiah, would arrive with the new week to announce the coming of a time that would be "all Shabbat."

Although Reform Jews have not literally subscribed to the notion of an individual Messiah descended from King David, the song "Eliyahu Hanavi" (Elijah the Prophet) is still sung here and at the Pesach Seder to express the desire for an era when Elijah's passion for justice becomes a universal human commitment. For us, this would constitute the "coming of the Messiah."

Havdalah sounds wonderful. However, what if my observance of Shabbat is only partial? Is it hypocritical to do Havdalah if I haven't fully observed Shabbat up until this point?

No, it isn't. The premise of this guide is that the observance of Shabbat is not static. It changes and, hopefully, deepens for all Jews. Most importantly, every aspect of Shabbat is always available as an avenue for Jewish expression. For some readers of this guide, therefore, Havdalah may prove to be one of the most accessible aspects of Shabbat. Even though it comes at the end of Shabbat, Havdalah may commend itself because it so magnificently combines rituals that appeal to each of the senses while communicating the ultimate Jewish concern for wholeness and justice on our planet.

Unit Three: Connection

Enduring Understandings:

- The theme of connection in Shabbat liturgy can engage us in discussing real life issues which occur in a family as a child grows.

Essential Questions

- What are some of the different ideas of connection?
- How can the theme of connection be found in our own lives?

Goals

- To expose the student to a variety of notions of connection in both their own lives and in prayer.
- To provide students with an opportunity to access the plain meaning of each of the prayers in this unit. (For example: *Ma'ariv* is about evening creation)
- To offer students the opportunity to personalize the themes of the prayers.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar or different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Give a one sentence summary of each of the prayers studied in this unit.
- Define "connection"
- Connect prayers to their own lives through journals, discussions and projects.

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Activities:

The following are a list of prayers that could be studied in this unit. Some of these prayers were studied in the previous unit. Although it will be difficult to avoid a conversation about the differences or similarity between these studies, try to avoid speaking about the tension between these themes at this point in the year. The class should not spend a significant amount of time studying the meaning of prayers which were already studied in the previous unit. Under each prayer is listed at least one activity specific for that prayer.

*Each lesson should begin with a short text study about the prayer being studied.

L'cha Dodi (Shabbat bride and Shabbat)

(Talmud page 1)

In *Kabbalah* it is thought that when we sing *L'cha Dodi* on Friday evening, we are welcoming the Shabbat Bride. The prayer was written by a Medieval poet, Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz, who designed this poem so that the first letter of each line spells out his name.

“The theme of Shabbat as *kallah* is related to a *midrash* which states that each of the six weekdays has a partner: the first day has the second, the third has the fourth and the fifth has the sixth. When Shabbat complained that it didn't have a partner, God responded, ‘The community of Israel is your partner’ (B'reishit Rabbah 11:8).” (Teaching T'filah page 88)

Split the families into 6 groups. Give each group one of the six psalms said during Kabbalat Shabbat. (Psalms 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 29) Ask each group to write one paragraph to describe the various themes that can be found in the psalm they were assigned. You can use the psalms sheets I have provided at the end of this unit.

After each group is finished, pair the group with the group who has the matching psalm (so that 95 and 96 are together, 97 and 98 are together, and 99 and 29 are together.) Ask each to share their paragraphs with their group and then answer the following question: Why do you think these two psalms are paired up?

When everyone is finished, ask the whole group to come back together. Ask each group to share their answers. Then individual families group together.

L'cha dodi is not paired with another psalm or prayer, but rather it is paired with humans. Read through *L'cha dodi* together as a family and pick out themes in the prayer that you see in your own life. You may want to distribute copies of *L'cha Dodi* from My People's Prayer Book which I have provided at the end of this unit.

After everyone is done, offer for families to share. At the end, make sure to mention; we are not only connected to *L'cha Dodi*, but also there are themes of connectiveness within the prayer.

Conclude by giving the families time to complete their Talmud Page.

Shma

(Talmud page 2)

The *Shma* is one of the most central prayers in the Jewish tradition. Because almost every Jew knows the *Shma*, it connects Jews to other Jews throughout the world. One of the biggest concepts that connects *Klal Israel* is the idea that no matter where you pray, what you believe or what your politics are, Jews say *Shma*. This connects Jew to Jews all over the world.

Although Jews throughout the world recite the *Shma*, not all have really thought about what it means. The *Shma* is a prayer which can be meditated on. It is also a haiku.

Ask people to spread out around the room, sit in a chair or on the floor, and close their eyes. Using Lawrence Kushner's book The Book of Letters, break the word *Shma* apart. (Shin, Mem, Ayin.) Read the meditation for each letter out loud to the students. (These meditations are provided in the resources for this unit.) After each one is read leave a moment of silent time. After reading all of the letter, ask the students to slowly sing the *Shma* together, singing each word until you have no breath.

Ask the families to group back together. Talk with your family members about how this exercise felt. Ask them to share with their family what they were thinking about.

Finally, ask the families the follow questions:

1. What connects your family together?
2. Which of these do you think is universal to most families and which do you think is unique to your own family?

Provide each family with a poster board. Ask them to create a family poster which answers the first question above. As part of their poster they should create a family haiku about connection and what connects them to their family. As an entire group, ask families to share if they would like.

Conclude this lesson by allowing the families time to complete the Talmud Page for this lesson.

Amida (Avot V'imohot) See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity
(Talmud page 3)

In the first paragraph of the *Amida*, we say “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Sara, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and God of Leah.” This prayer connects us to our Jewish ancestors. Begin with a text study of this section of the *Amida*. (The text and commentary are included at the end of this unit.)

Begin by asking the families to (as a family) brainstorm questions a person would ask to learn more about another family’s history. These questions should not be answered yet. The teens should write down this list of questions. Then pair families together (so that there are two families in each group.)

The teen of the family will pair with the parents of another family and begin asking the questions which his/her own family listed. In other words, the teen is learning about another family.

After everyone is done with this exercise, the teens should pair together and share the information they acquired about the other family (so that each teen is now learning about his/her own family through the other teen.)

At the same time, the parents should now pair up with the other parents in their group. Most parents name their children after someone in their family. The parents should discuss with the other parents how they came about naming their child. If their child is named after someone, discuss if the child now displays some of the same characteristics of the person they were named after. If they did not name their child after someone, explain how they decided on their name and if it still applies to this child today.

The families should now come back together. As a family they should now put together a “family history book.” This can be a notebook or a just a few pages bound by string. Families can put stories, pictures, art, or anything else that would fit into a family history book in this book. The students might also want to put a family tree on the cover of this book. The book should end with an explanation or some form of illustration to tell how the teen got his/her name.

Conclude this lesson by allowing the families time to complete the Talmud Page for this lesson.

Hinei Mah Tov

(Talmud page 4)

How good it is that we are here together today. Here we emphasize the fact that we are here together as a group.

Music is often something that can bring Jews together. For this activity the teacher will need a variety of recordings of *Hinei Mah Tov* or be able to sing a variety of versions.

Provide each student with paper and pen. As each version is played for the students, ask them to reflect on how they feel after each version. Does this tune give you the feeling of connectiveness? Why or why not?

Some suggested tunes are:

1. Version 66A in the UAHC chordster (written by unknown)
2. Version 66C in the UAHC chordster (written by unknown)
3. Version 66D in the UAHC chordster (written by unknown)
4. The version by Rick Recht which can be found on his CD entitled "Shabbat Alive" (2001)
5. To the tune of "In the Jungle"
6. By Steven Dropkin
7. By Dan Nichols on the CD entitled "Kol HaShabbat" (2002)
8. The *New Hinei Mah Tov* on the CD entitled "Jeff Klepper Live in Concert" (2002)

Afterwards, give students the time to share their answers as a family. Discuss how music can help connect family members, people of the same religion, people of the same generation...etc. Ask each family to pick one version which they all like and which makes them feel more connected to Judaism and to each other.

Take survey at the end to which version most families felt connected to. Remember this for the end of the class when they will participate in their own service.

Conclude this lesson by allowing the families time to complete the Talmud Page for this lesson.

Blessing of the children

(Talmud page 5)

During Shabbat dinner, many families have the tradition of blessing their children. There is a specific blessing which many families use, but often parents like to add their own hopes and wishes for the child. This blessing reminds us on a weekly basis of the bond and love between parent and child. It connects families together.

Begin this activity by listening to *Parent's Prayer* by the group Mah Tovv. Hand out the words to this prayer which can be found on the website:

<http://www.mahtovu.com/TurnItLyrics.html#Parents> (or in the resource section.) Discuss the themes and messages that come out of this version of the prayer.

Then hand out the prayer from Gates of Shabbat (which is provided at the end of this unit) and discuss the themes which are found in this blessing. How are they different from or similar to the previous version which was sung?

Ask the teens to write a blessing for their parents and the parents to write a blessing for their teen. Ask them to take about 15 minutes alone to do this. Have them think about what they appreciate about the other person or people, what they thank them for, and what they hope for in their future. Give each person an envelope. Have them put their blessing into the envelope and save it until Friday night.

All the students should give the appropriate person in their family the envelope the following Shabbat. The next week ask students to report on how they felt when they heard and read the letters.

Conclude this lesson by allowing the families time to complete the Talmud Page for this lesson.

Morning Blessing (B'tzelim Elohim...we are ALL created in the image of God.)

(Talmud page 6)

This activity can be started at the beginning of the unit and completed as the last activity of the unit.

During the morning blessings, we are reminded that all people are created in God's image. This is not only to remind us that we are connected to our family, to our community and to all Jews, but also that we are connected to all humanity.

After having a short text study on this blessing, listen to "B'tzelim Elohim" by Dan Nichols. What is the main idea we get from this song? What do you think the message is?

We are not only connected to Jews and our family, but also connected to the entire world. Ask the students to get together with their families. As a family brainstorm some *tikkun olam* projects that would help other people. Hopefully these will be projects that will help the students feel connected to other people. During this lesson ask them to make a plan of what the family is going to do and how they are going to do it. It might even be helpful to use the internet or city resources to call places and set up their projects with them right there.

Over the course of the unit, ask the students to complete their *tikkun olam* projects as a family. They can use the teacher as a resource or someone to check in with as needed, but it should be something they do as a family either at home or at an organization.

During the last lesson of the unit, the student should come together to discuss their projects. Each family should present what they did and how they think it helped connect them to their family and the larger community.

Conclude this lesson by allowing the families time to complete the Talmud Page for this lesson.

Authentic Assessment:

After completing the last lesson, where the families present their *tikkun olam* projects, students should do the following:

Have the individual students think about something they would like to still feel connected to in five years (i.e. family, friends, a particular sport, a musical instrument...etc.) Identify which of the prayers they think connects to this idea the best. Ask the students to come up with a five year plan for how they will make this happen. Encourage them to think about how the prayer they connected this idea to will help in this plan (i.e. they will be reminded of their plan every Shabbat when saying a certain prayer.) Ask the students to turn in this assignment. Over the course of the week, the teacher should read over all the papers to ensure that the students were able to connect the ideas of prayer and connection to their own lives. Hand it back at the following class and ask them to put it in their binders.

Resources

Activity 1: L'cha Dodi

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 8*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing. 2005. Pages 115-138.
2. Kadden, Bruce and Barbara Binder Kadden. *Teaching Tefilah*. A.R.E. Publishing Inc. 2004. Page 88.
3. *Kol Haneshamah*. Wyncote, Penn: The Reconstructionist Press, 1996. Pages 40-47.

Activity 2: Shma

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 1*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997. Pages 87-99.
2. Kushner, Lawrence. *The Book of Letters*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1975. Pages 16-19, 72-73, 51-53 and 58-60

Activity 3: Avot V'imahot

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 2*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998. Pages 60-71.

Activity 4: Hinei Mah Tov

1. Eglash, Joel N. *Complete Jewish Songbook, The: Shireinu*. New York: URJ Press. Version 66A-D.

Activity 4: Blessing of the children

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 7*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004. Pages 57-64.
2. Mah Tov. "Parents' Prayer" From the CD *Turn It*
3. Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis. 1996. Pages 20-21.
4. Website: <http://www.mahtovu.com/TurnItLyrics.html#Parents>

Activity 5: Morning Blessing (B'tzelim Elohim)

"B'tzelim Elohim" by Dan Nichols.

Lesson Plan for Unit 3 (Connection): The Amida (Avot V'imohot)

Goal:

- To help students explore their own family history
- To offer students the opportunity to learn how other people understand their family history
- To connect the idea of connection with the Avot V'imohot
- To connect the Avot V'imohot with their own lives.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a one sentence summary of the Avot V'imohot
- Give a short summary of their own family history
- Identify what their family thinks about the *Avot V'imohot* prayer.
- Identify one way the *Avot V'imohot* prayer deals with the idea of connection.

Time:

0:00-0:05 Settling in, setting up
0:05-0:20 Part I: Text Study
0:20-0:25 Part II: Brainstorming
0:25-0:35 Part III: Learning about each other
0:35-0:50 Part IV: Sharing
0:50-1:10 Part V: Family history book
1:10-1:15 Part VI: Talmud page

Materials:

Construction paper
String
Hole puncher
Magazines
Pictures
Markers/crayons
White paper
Pens
Various other art materials
Sheets with Avot v'imohot on it.
Talmud page

Activity:

In the first paragraph of the Amida, we say “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Sara, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and God of Leah.” This prayer connects us to our Jewish ancestors.

PART I: Text Study (15 minutes)

Begin with a text study of this section of the Avot V'imihot using the sheets from The People's Prayer Book provided in the resource section. Begin the text study by reading the prayer (these sheets do not include the women, so this is something you should either add in or discuss why they are not in this version.)

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think the prayer says God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of Sara, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and Leah instead of saying God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah?
2. How do you think that the Amida expresses the idea of connectiveness?

The final piece to the text study is to read the commentary around the prayer on the prayer sheets provided. It is not necessary to read all of them. Since the teacher knows his/her students best, please choose whichever you would like to read with them.

PART II: The brainstorming (5 minutes)

Ask the families to gather as a family. Together brainstorm questions which a person would ask in order to learn more about another family's history. Do not answer these questions, just write them down. Make sure that the teens are the ones who will end up with this list.

PART III: Learning about each other. (10 minutes)

Each teen should pair with a different parent(s). The teens should now interview the parents using the questions which they just brainstormed. They should take notes and be prepared to present what they found later.

PART IV: Sharing (15 minutes)

For this part of the activity the teens will share what they learned about a family's history with the teen of that family. Teens will sit down together and share everything the parents told them about their family history. The teen is now learning about their own family history through the eyes of someone else.

At the same time the parent(s) should pair up with another parent(s). This can be done either as parental units or as individual parents. Most parents name their children after someone. If this is not true, there is usually some reason they picked the name. The parent should discuss with the other parents how they came about naming their child and if they are named after someone discuss if the child now displays some of the same characteristics of the person they were named after. This is another way of sharing family history and connecting past to the future.

PART V: The family history book (20 minutes)

The families should now come back together. They will be creating a "family history book." This can be set up as a note book or just a few pages bound together with string. Families can put stories, pictures, art or anything else that they want into this family history book.

The book should include:

A family tree

An explanation of how the teen was named and how this connects him/her to the past.

An understanding of how the Avot V'imohot is a reminder of the theme of connection.

PART VI: The Talmud Page

Conclude the lesson by providing time for the families to put together their Talmud page. They might want to make a copy of this page and add it to the family history book or they might want to add their family history book to their Family Siddur.

L'cha Dodi

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>לְכֵה דוֹדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כָּלֶּה. פָּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה: שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוֹר אֶחָד, הַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ אֶל הַמִּיחָד. יְיָ אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד. לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֲרַת וּלְתַהֲלָה: לְכֵה לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכָּה. כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה. מֵרֵאשׁ מְקַדְּמִים נְסוּכָה. סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תִּחְלָה: לְכֵה הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי. כִּי בָּא אֲוֵרָךְ קוֹמֵי אֲוֵרֵי. עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבָרֵי. כְּבוֹד יְיָ עֲלֶיךָ נִגְלָה: לְכֵה בּוֹאֵי בְּשָׁלוֹם עֲטֹרַת בַּעֲלָה. גַּם בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבְצַהֲלָה. תוֹךְ אֲמוּנֵי עִם סִגְלָה. בּוֹאֵי כָלֶּה, בּוֹאֵי כָלֶּה: לְכֵה:</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

Sh'ma

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <p>שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY THINKS</u> | |
| | |

Avot V'imahot

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"><p style="text-align: center;">בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵי שְׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רַבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל וְאֱלֹהֵי לָאָה. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אָבוֹת וְאִמּוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה: מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מְגַן אַבְרָהָם וְעִזְרַת שְׂרָה: אַתָּה גִבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ: מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים, סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וּמְקַיֵּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עֶפֶר, מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּעַל גְּבוּרֹת וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ, מְלַךְ מְמִית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה: וְנֶאֱמַן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת הַכֹּל. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מְחַיֶּה הַכֹּל:</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

Hinei Mah Toy

| <u>PARENTS THINK</u> | <u>TEEN THINKS</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| | |
| <p>הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וַיְמָה וְנָעִים שְׁבֵת אֲחִים גַּם יַחַד</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY THINKS</u> | |
| | |

Children's Blessing

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| <table border="1"><tr><td><p>יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה. יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֶּקָה רַחֵל, וְלֵאָה יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ יְאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ. יֵשׂא פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.</p></td></tr></table> | | <p>יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה. יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֶּקָה רַחֵל, וְלֵאָה יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ יְאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ. יֵשׂא פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.</p> |
| <p>יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה. יְשׁוּבָה אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֶּקָה רַחֵל, וְלֵאָה יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ יְאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ. יֵשׂא פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.</p> | | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | | |
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From Nisim B'chol Yom

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| | |
| בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁעָשִׂנִי בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

L'khab Dodi The Bible has no equivalent prayer; it does not view the Sabbath as a bride and never uses the rhyme scheme AAAB (or with the refrain, AAABBB). The poem draws on biblical language, however, changing it where necessary to fit the rhyme scheme, and using it creatively to mean new things. (p. 122)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

¹ "Go forth my love to meet the bride" The metaphor of marriage goes back to the Prophets (Hos. 2:4, 18, 21-22; Isa. 54:5-8, 62:4-5), who see God as the groom and Israel as God's bride. Rabbi Akiba (*Avot D'Rabbi Natan*, 1) expands the metaphor by (p. 122)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

¹ "Go forth my love" The patent mysticism of *L'khab Dodi* was anathema to early Reform rationalists. So was its blatant imagery of a desolate Jerusalem awaiting redemptive restoration at the (p. 123)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

¹ "Go forth my love to meet the bride" Shabbat here becomes a feminine expression of the divine will manifest in our lives. Such, of course, was the intention of the kabbalist who wrote this poem, Solomon Alkabetz, who was intoxicated, as were his mystic (p. 126)

GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

¹ "Go forth my love to meet the bride" The opening line of *L'khab Dodi* is reminiscent of R. Chanina's practice of wrapping himself in his cloak close to sunset on Friday and saying, "Come and let us go out to greet the Shabbat Queen," and of R. Yannai's similar practice of saying "Come O bride! Come O bride!" (Shabbat 119a; see Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, pp. 148, 152; Gray, "Shabbat Hamalkah").

² "Observe" and "remember"—two words as one" The first version (p. 127)

II. L'KHAH DODI ("GO FORTH MY LOVE..."): THE DIVINE UNION OF BRIDE AND GROOM

¹ Go forth my love to meet the bride. Shabbat's reception has arrived!

² "Observe" and "remember"—two words as one, Proclaimed by the Only, forgotten by none. Adonai is One. His name is One. Praised, and renowned, and glorified.

KIMELMAN (KABBALAH)

L'khab Dodi Other kabbalistic Sabbath songs are characterized by Aramaisms and technical kabbalistic terminology, but *L'khab Dodi* is written in virtually pure biblical Hebrew, along the model of Spanish Hebrew poetry. The masking of its kabbalistic message is so successful that only a kabbalist attuned to its theology can unlock its meaning. Much depends on prior understanding of the kabbalistic system of *sefirot* (see Koren, pp. 33-42).

Since the six introductory (p. 128)

KUSHNER & POLEN (GEMATRIA)

L'khab Dodi Gematria: system of assigning equivalent to each Heb on its sequential place (It is the most popular, the only, system of extra meaning from the letter the holy language.) T first letter, is 1; *bet*, the 2; *gimel*, the third letter until we get to *yod*, wh then on, letters increase reach *kuf*, which is 100

Unit 3 Activity 1

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"Observe" and "remember" (*shamor*) refers to t categories of profl "Remember" (*zakhor*) i proclamation of Shabb (1) *Kiddush* at the be Shabbat ("over wine, f man is that he is stirred feasts and makes Hachinukh, *Mitzvah Havadalah* at its conclusi For Rabbi Samson the leader of ninete

DIC HERITAGE)

to meet the bride" The of *L'khab Dodi* is .. Chanina's practice of lf in his cloak close to y and saying, "Come t to greet the Shabbat f R. Yannai's similar ing "Come O bride!" (Shabbat 119a; see *bat at Home*, pp. 148, *bat Hamalkah*).

and 'remember'—two ie first version (p. 127)

H MY LOVE..."): IDE AND GROOM

—two words as one, ten by none.

orified.

BALAH)

ner kabbalistic Sabbath rterized by Aramaisms bbalistic terminology, is written in virtually brew, along the model ebrew poetry. The abbalistic message is so nly a kabbalist attuned an unlock its meaning- on prior understanding tem of *sefirot* (see

introductory (p. 128)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

L'khab Dodi Gematria is an ancient system of assigning a numerical equivalent to each Hebrew letter based on its sequential place in the alphabet. (It is the most popular, but by no means the only, system of extracting additional meaning from the letters and words of the holy language.) Thus, *aleph*, the first letter, is 1; *bet*, the second letter, is 2; *gimel*, the third letter, 3; and so forth until we get to *yod*, which is 10. From then on, letters increase by tens until we reach *kuf*, which is 100. The (p. 132)

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"Observe' and 'remember'" "Observe" (*shamor*) refers to the thirty-nine categories of prohibited labor. "Remember" (*zakhor*) is the articulated proclamation of Shabbat's sanctity via (1) *Kiddush* at the beginning of the Shabbat ("over wine, for the nature of man is that he is stirred greatly when he feasts and makes merry"—Sefer Hachinukh, *Mitzvah* 31) and (2) *Havdalah* at its conclusion.

For Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch, the leader of nineteenth- (p. 133)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

L'KHAH DODI CONCLUDES THE KABBALISTIC SECTION OF KABBALAT SHABBAT. IT FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY UPON ANA B'KHO'ACH (THE MYSTICAL MEDITATION ABOVE) AND IS MEANT TO COINCIDE WITH SUNSET, SERVING AS A WELCOME FOR SHABBAT.

L'khab Dodi This poem contains multiple esoteric meanings (see Kimelman). Probably the best-loved composition in all of Jewish liturgy, it appears in almost every rite. None other than Heinrich Heine translated it into German. (p. 134)

לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאָת כְּלָה,
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה.
שְׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד
הַשְּׂמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמִּיחָד;
יְי אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד
לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֳרָת וּלְתִהְלָה.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

L'khab Dodi I cannot resist a personal note about the almost unbelievable beauty of *L'khab Dodi*, in my mind the most perfect poem in our liturgy. The structure of the poem is flawless, adhering to strict rhyme and meter. The words themselves are composed almost entirely of biblical passages, sometimes rearranged for variety, yet they convey outstanding novel imagery and kabbalistic nuances beyond compare. Further investigation into the poem reveals not only an acrostic of the author's name but an oblique numeric reference to the unification of God (see Kimelman). Any one of these qualities would be enough to make *L'khab Dodi* a gem. Their combination puts the poem at the apex of our liturgy—our (p. 135)

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

³ Go forth my love...

⁴ To meet Shabbat, come, let us go
For she is the source from which
blessings flow.

From creation's beginning a royal
veiled glow,
The last thought created, the first
sanctified.

⁵ Go forth my love...

⁶ Regal city, the king's holy shrine
Rise up and leave your upheaval
behind.

Too long in the valley of tears have
you pined.

The Compassionate One will
compassion provide.

⁷ Go forth my love...

⁸ Shake off the ashes. Rise up from
them!

Wear glorious clothes, my people, my
gem.

Through the son of Yishai of
Bethlehem

Redeem my soul. Draw near to my
side.

⁹ Go forth my love...

¹⁰ Awake, awake! Your light is here.
Arise, shine out light bold and clear.
Wake up! Wake up! Sing verse to
hear.

Through you the presence of God
comes alive.

¹¹ Go forth my love...

¹² Be not despondent. Be not cast
down.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לְכוּ וְנִלְכֵה

כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה;

מֵרֵאשׁ מִקְדָּם נְסוּכָה

סוּף מְעֻשָׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תְּחִלָּה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
מִקְדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מְלוּכָה

קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַהֶפְכָּה;

רַב לָךְ שַׁבָּת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָא

וְהוּא יַחְמַל עָלֶיךָ חֲמֵלָה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
הַתְּנַצְרִי מֵעַפָּר קוּמִי

לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תְּפָאֲרֶתְךָ עִמִּי;

עַל יַד בֶּן יִשִׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמִי

קִרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי

כִּי בָא אֹרֶךְ קוּמִי אֹרֶי;

עוּרִי עוּרִי שִׁיר דְּבָרֵי

כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
לֹא תִבְשִׂי וְלֹא תִכְלָמִי

מִה תִּשְׁתַּחֲחִי וּמִה תִּהְיִי;

כָּךְ יַחְסוּ עֵינַי עִמִּי

וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלָה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
לֹא תִבְשִׂי וְלֹא תִכְלָמִי

מִה תִּשְׁתַּחֲחִי וּמִה תִּהְיִי;

כָּךְ יַחְסוּ עֵינַי עִמִּי

וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלָה.

לְכֵה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כְּלָה...
וְתִיּוֹ לְמִשְׁפַּחַת שְׂאֵסוּף

וְתִיּוֹ לְמִשְׁפַּחַת שְׂאֵסוּף

וְתִיּוֹ לְמִשְׁפַּחַת שְׂאֵסוּף

וְתִיּוֹ לְמִשְׁפַּחַת שְׂאֵסוּף

SECTION I

לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא³
 לְקַרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לְכוּ⁴
 כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרֶכֶת
 מֵרֹאשׁ מְקַדֵּם גְּסוּכָד
 סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבוֹ
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁵
 מִמְּקַדֵּשׁ מְלֹךְ עִיר מִי
 קוֹמֵי צְאֵי מִתּוֹךְ הַהַר
 רַב לָךְ שַׁבַּת בְּעַמְּךָ
 וְהוּא יַחְמַל עָלֶיךָ חֵן
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁷
 הַתְּנַצְרֵי מַעֲפֹת⁸
 לְבָשֵׁי בְּגָדֵי תְּקֵינָה
 עַל יַד בֶּן יִשִׁי בֵּית ו
 קָרְבָה אֵל נַפְשֵׁי גְּאֵי
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא⁹
 הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי¹⁰
 כִּי בָּא אֹרֶךְ קוֹמֵי אֵ
 עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבַר
 כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלֶיךָ נִגְלָה
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְא¹¹
 לֹא תִבְשִׂי וְלֹא תִכְּפִי¹²
 מֵהַ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוִּי וּמֵהַ תִּ
 כִּי יַחֲסוּ עֲנֵי עַמִּי
 וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלוּ
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְרִירָא¹³
 וְהָיוּ לְמִשְׁפָּה¹⁴
 וְרַחֲמוּ כָּל מְבַלְעֵיךָ

Why be dejected; why face the
 ground?
 In a city rebuilt on its own ancient
 mound,
 The poor of my people find shelter
 inside.
¹³Go forth my love...
¹⁴Shunned are all who would shun
 you.
 Gone are those who'd overrun you.
 The joy of your God shines upon you
 Like the joy of a groom and a bride.
¹⁵Go forth my love...
¹⁶Spread out to the left and the right
 Proclaiming the Holy One's might.
 We'll revel in our delight
 Through Peretz's son magnified.
¹⁷Go forth my love...
*[Worshippers rise and turn toward the
 sanctuary door to welcome Shabbat. They bow
 in welcome at "Come forth O bride; come forth
 O bride!"]*
¹⁸Come forth in peace her husband's
 pride,
 Joyful, happy, gratified.
 Into the midst of the faithful tribe,
 Come forth O bride; come forth O
 bride!
¹⁹Go forth my love...
*[Traditionally, mourners observing their period
 of shivah now join the community in Shabbat
 worship. As they enter the room they are
 greeted as follows.]*
²⁰May God comfort you with the rest
 of Zion and Jerusalem's mourners.

יִשִׁישׁ עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ חַתָּן עַל כְּלָה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כְּלָה...¹⁵
 יִמִּין וּשְׂמָאל תִּפְרוּצֵי¹⁶
 וְאֵת יְיָ תַעֲרִיצֵי;
 עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פְּרָצֵי
 וְנִשְׁמַחָה וְנִגְיָלָה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כְּלָה...¹⁷

*[Worshippers rise and turn toward the
 sanctuary door to welcome Shabbat. They bow
 in welcome at "Come forth O bride; come forth
 O bride!"]*

בּוֹאֵי בְּשִׁלוֹם עֲטַרְת בְּעָלָה¹⁸
 גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִהָלָה;
 תּוֹךְ אַמּוּנֵי עַם סְגָלָה
 בָּאֵי כְּלָה, בָּאֵי כְּלָה.
 לָכֶּה דוֹדֵי לְקַרְאֵת כְּלָה...¹⁹

*[Traditionally, mourners observing their period
 of shivah now join the community in Shabbat
 worship. As they enter the room they are
 greeted as follows.]*

הַמְּקוֹם יִנַּחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר
 אֲבְלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלָיִם.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹ “*My love*” From Song of Songs 7:12, “Come, my love, let us go into the open.” In medieval Safed, *Lkhab Dodi* was recited “in the open,” outside in the fields (see Koren “The Mystical Spirituality of Safed,” pp. 33–42).

² “*Praised ... renowned*” Stock biblical descriptions (see Deut. 26:19; Jer. 13:11 33:9), but always in reference to Israel, never God, as here.

⁴ “*Come, let us go*” Used twice in the Bible, in 1 Samuel 9:9, of seeking a prophet and in Isaiah 2:5, of seeking God’s light.

⁴ “*From creation’s beginning* [merosh ... n’suchah]” A paraphrase of Proverbs 8:23.

¹⁰ “*Wake up!... Sing verse* [uri ... daber]” From the Song of Deborah (Jgs. 5:12) but radically recontextualized. Words addressed to Deborah are here addressed to Jerusalem.

¹⁰ “*The presence of God comes alive* [k’vod niglah]” A modification of Isaiah 40:5, predicting the return from Babylonian exile, and used here for a still later hoped-for restoration, perhaps modeled after the biblical one.

¹⁶ “*We’ll revel in our delight* [v’nism’chah v’nagilah]” Similar to Isaiah 25:9, Psalm 118:24, and Song of Songs 1:4; but the poet flips the verbal order for the sake of rhyme.

¹⁶ “*Peretz’s son*” Several biblical texts name Peretz as David’s ancestor.

¹⁸ “*Faithful* [s’gulah]” From Akkadian, meaning “private possession;” Deuteronomy (7:6; 14:2; 26:18) describes Israel as *am s’gulah*, God’s “private possession.”

²⁰ “*God [Hamakom] comfort you*” Before the Babylonian exile, even secular inscriptions contained the tetragrammaton (the four-letter name of God, YHWH). People started avoiding it in the Second Temple period, after which the Rabbis felt the need to develop surrogates. This one, “the place,” may come from the fact that God resides in a sacred place. It may also reflect Esther 4:14, where “from another place” refers to divine intervention.

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

defining the biblical book Song of Songs as a graphic depiction of their love. Separately, however, a second tradition emerged. Genesis Rabbah (11:8) tells us that every day of the week was given a partner, except for Shabbat. God rectified the injustice by making Israel the Sabbath’s husband, and the Sabbath Israel’s bride. Kabbalists expanded the wedding imagery further by applying it to the *sefirot* (see Koren, “The Mystical Spirituality of Safed,” pp. 33–42)

²“*Observe’ and ‘remember’—two words as one*” The two versions of the Ten Commandments bid us to “remember” the Sabbath day (Exod. 20:8) and to “observe” it (Deut. 5:12), leading the Rabbis to declare that God uttered both commands at once. This duality emphasizes the need to approach the Sabbath with both *keva* and *kavannah*, observing the commandments governing the day but doing so with full intention of remembering to make it holy.

²“*Adonai is One. His Name is One*” Since the Sabbath is “a foretaste of the world to come” (Gen. Rab. 17:5 [17:7 in some editions]; *Mekhilta* to Exod. 31:13), this Shabbat song emphasizes Jewish messianism. According to the prophet Zechariah (14:9), “On that day [in messianic times] Adonai shall be one and his name shall be one”—that is, all peoples on earth will recognize Adonai as God. We repeat this messianic line daily to conclude *Alenu* (see Volume 6, *Tachanun* and Concluding Prayers, p. 133) and repeat the idea in the *Minchah* service for Shabbat, where the middle section of the Shabbat *Amidah* for *Minchah* begins: “You are one and your name is one” (see above, “More revered than all other gods” for comments on monotheism and henotheism).

⁶“*Regal city ... rise up*” Prophetic messianism promised a rebuilding of Jerusalem and an ingathering of the exiles. As an inhabitant of Safed, and knowing first hand exactly how downtrodden Jerusalem was, the poet describes its hoped-for renaissance in powerful, poetic terms.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

hands of a personal messiah, all of which made early modern Jews nervous lest their liturgy imply they did not feel fully at home in their host countries.

As a result, the pioneering Hamburg Temple Prayer Books of 1819 and 1845 replaced *L'khab Dodi* with a creative composition in German. Most nineteenth-century liberal prayer book authors followed suit in one way or another. In his earlier (and more traditional) liturgy, Abraham Geiger included at least a truncated version (see below for commentary on these selections), as did the 1940 *Union Prayer Book* (American Reform), but earlier versions of that book (1895, 1924) had omitted it, following both Isaac Mayer Wise and David Einhorn, the two primary liturgical influences from the nineteenth century here.

Interestingly, in their 1885 *Abodath Israel*, one antecedent for American Conservative liturgy, Benjamin Szold and Marcus Jastrow provided even a more abbreviated version of *L'khab Dodi* than that presented by Geiger. They too had hesitations about the poem's traditional theology. The full version was restored to American Reform liturgy with its 1975 *Gates of Prayer* and then found its way into Israeli (*Ha'avodah Shebalev*, 1982) and German (*Seder Hatefillot*, 2001) Reform. But an abbreviated version still marks the 1977 British Reform (*Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*) as well as the British Liberal Movement's *Lev Chadash*.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

¹ “My love” In her *Book of Blessings*, feminist author Marcia Falk substitutes *re’ot* (“friends,” feminine) in the first line and *re’im* (“friends,” masculine) in the second, for “my love.” In accord with her preference for non-hierarchical relationships, Falk translates the refrain, “Let us go, friends, to greet the bride, let us welcome the Sabbath.”

² “Observe’ and ‘remember’” In his 1854 Siddur, Abraham Geiger selected five stanzas of *L’khah Dodi*, including this one, for inclusion. The other four were verses 4, 10, 12, and 18. In light of his omission of *L’khah Dodi* altogether in his 1870 prayer book, and in view of the decision made by most nineteenth-century Reform prayer book authors to delete this prayer altogether, Geiger’s decision to include so many of the traditional stanzas in 1854 is notable. It reflects the role that Geiger then played as a community rabbi in Breslau who felt that Reform must proceed with caution lest it be deemed too radical. The complete removal of *L’khah Dodi* would have shocked the many Jews who regarded this prayer as a staple of Friday night worship.

But he omitted verses 6, 8, 14, and 16. Geiger was clearly balancing his anti-messianic and anti-nationalistic sensibilities against received and expected liturgical practice. He obviously selected those stanzas that focus on the Sabbath itself, while eschewing those that expressed a belief in a personal messiah and the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem. Where necessary (see below, “Awake awake!... Be not despondent”), he employed “translation” as a means for obviating the manifest content of prayers he felt he had to include even though he disagreed with what they had to say.

Interestingly, several other Reform and liberal prayer books that have included *L’khah Dodi* have followed Geiger’s 1854 pattern by offering their own abbreviated versions. For example, early Conservative rabbis Szold and Jastrow—and the *UPB* of 1940, too—included stanzas 4, 6, and 18. This newly revised version of *UPB* at least included that much: its 1895 and 1921 predecessors had omitted the poem altogether.

In the contemporary period, virtually all liberal Siddurim—all Reconstructionist and Conservative prayer books as well as most present-day Reform ones (like *GOP* and *Ha’avodah Shebalev*)—include all the stanzas. Clearly, nineteenth-century liberal opposition to classical notions of redemption and Jewish nationalism has been muted, if not overturned altogether.

The two current British non-Orthodox prayer books, *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship* and *Lev Chadash*, are the exceptions to this rule. In each, only four stanzas (2, 3, 10, and 18) have been included.

Part of the poem’s popularity (and a good reason in itself to include it) is the plethora of popular “singable” melodies that are used for it. When *UPB* 1924 introduced it, the editors were careful to assign it to the choir. Congregations today insist on singing it.

^{10, 12} “Awake, awake!... Be not despondent” One of the most notable facets of Geiger’s editorship was his decision to include these two stanzas in 1854. He apparently also felt the need to mute the meaning even of the stanzas he included, especially here! To

Falk substitutes *re'ot* (e) in the second, for relationships, Falk let us welcome the

Geiger selected five or four were verses 4, in his 1870 prayer liturgy Reform prayer to include so many of Geiger then played as if with caution lest it would have shocked the ship.

balancing his anti-expected liturgical Sabbath itself, while incorporation of Zion (despondent"), he content of prayers he felt say.

that have included their own abbreviated w—and the UPB of revision of UPB at least the poem altogether. All Reconstructionist ones (like GOP and nineteenth-century liberal ism has been muted,

s of Prayer for Jewish only four stanzas (2,

to include it) is the When UPB 1924 Congregations today

in facets of Geiger's . It apparently also d, especially here! To

do so, he employed the time-honored method of creatively "translating" the Hebrew to obviate its plain meaning. "Awake, awake" by itself was not necessarily troublesome, since it contains reference to light, a favorite liberal image of the "Enlightenment" and, therefore, universal overtones of redemption and hope. Still, the obvious reference was to Jerusalem lying asleep and awaiting messianic light to dawn. "Be not despondent" (v. 12) is an equally clear personification of Jerusalem in ruins. Seeing their common theme, Geiger collapsed the two stanzas together and offered a paraphrase that removed all references to Zion. Instead, he spoke of "God's kingdom (*Gottesreich*)" being built for all peoples and emphasized how "the love and unity of mankind (*die Menschen*)" would one day emerge (see below, "A city rebuilt").

¹²"*A city rebuilt*" Like "Awake, awake" and "Be not despondent" (see above), Geiger included this line in 1854 but avoided its particularistic meaning as a prayer for the rebuilding of Zion and Jerusalem by paraphrasing it in universal terms. (Geiger went the easier route of omitting the whole prayer from his 1870 prayer book.)

One hundred years after Geiger's initial liturgy, Jewish nationalism was no longer a scandal. In the wake of Hitler, almost all Jews were ardent Zionists. Conservative Judaism had always been so, and its 1945 Rabbinical Assembly Siddur speaks clearly of Zionist dreams when it renders the line "Zion, my city, in thee shall find rest." More recently, Falk's *Book of Blessings* states directly, "Jerusalem will be rebuilt on its hill." The controversy surrounding references to Zion that so wracked nineteenth-century liberal Judaism has long since passed.

¹⁴"*The joy of your God shines upon you*" Seeing "God" as necessarily masculine in popular consciousness, Marcia Falk substitutes *ziv hashekhinah alayich niglah*, which she translates as "*Shekhinah's radiance is revealed in you*," for the traditional "joy of your God." Her choice also bespeaks her emphasis upon immanence, rather than the distance inherent in traditional transcendent imagery. Joy need not shine on us from without. It can be "revealed in" us.

¹⁸"*Her husband's pride*" Falk substitutes *ateret shekhinah*, which she translates "crown of *Shekhinah*." The 1985 Conservative *Sim Shalom* provides "soul mate, sweet gift of the Lord." By 1998, "the Lord" was too sexist, so the revised version translates "soul mate, sweet bride so adored." The Reconstructionist *Kol han'shamah* answers the gender issue by using "divine crown." Sexism was not perceived as an issue for British Reform in 1977 (which, however, uses a poetic paraphrase for the whole poem). Nor, quite obviously, did sexism matter for the various editions of the Union Prayer Book (1895, 1924, 1940). But the Chicago Sinai modern rendering of the book (2000), which frequently alters the English to demonstrate gender sensitivity, nonetheless leaves "crown of your husband" untouched. Current British Liberal liturgy (1995) selects "creation's crown."

²⁰"*Mourners*" The conclusion of the 1985 *Sim Shalom* (Conservative) offers the following instruction: "Mourners do not observe public forms of mourning on Shabbat."

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

On the Shabbat during the period of *shivah*, when mourners attend synagogue services they are greeted after the singing of *L'khab Dodi*, by all other members of the congregation, with these words....” The traditional greeting offered to mourners during the *shivah* period follows, with a literal translation, “May God comfort you together with all the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” The Israeli Masorti *Va’ani T’filla* includes this greeting as well, but so, already, did 1945 Conservative liturgy. However, the Israeli *Va’ani T’fillati* considers the classical greeting inappropriate for a world in which the Jewish State has been rebuilt. Consequently, it alters the Hebrew to read *Hamakon y’nakhem etchem b’tokh sh’ar ha’avelim b’tziyon u’vi’rushalayim*: “May God comfort you among the mourners *who are in* Zion and Jerusalem.” One should no longer mourn *for* Zion and Jerusalem. These are no longer “dead.”

FRANKEL (A WOMAN’S VOICE)

companions in Safed, with the notion of God as a multitude of divine selves, acting upon the world in various ways. The self closest to our own experience is the *shekhinah*, God’s feminine dimension, here associated with Shabbat as a bride. Although God is also depicted in masculine form—as a bridegroom—the mystic tone of the poem suggests that we, as the People Israel, are guests at a heavenly wedding, witnessing the union of two aspects of divine holiness.

Women are also present at this wedding, either at the synagogue on Friday night or at home, where many Sabbath hymns likewise adopt this metaphor. Yet, until now it was believed that Jewish men alone could fathom the deeper kabbalistic secrets only hinted at in poems such as *L’khab Dodi*. Women, traditionally seen as more earthbound to the world of materiality, and intellectually incapable of understanding esoteric mysteries, were to be excluded from mystic study and practice. However, it has recently come to light that between 1648 and 1720, many editions of Jewish prayer books throughout the Ashkenazi world were printed with a Yiddish supplement intended specifically for women, and that this supplement is infused with kabbalistic content. Known as *Seyder Tkhines* and of anonymous authorship, this collection of Yiddish prayers expressed the widespread belief that the coming of the messiah was at hand, if only Jewish men *and women* would turn to God in prayer and devotion. This inclusive outlook was short-lived, however. Following the devastating conversion of the false messiah Shabbetai Zevi in 1666 and the scandal of religious heresies in its wake, Jewish messianic hopes became suspect, and by 1720, *Seyder Tkhines* was no longer being added to the standard Siddur. With its absence, we lost the widespread acceptance of Jewish women as valued spiritual partners in hastening redemption.

Following is a stanza from a prayer from *Seyder Tkhines*, to be recited by a Jewish woman after lighting the Shabbat candles.

tend synagogue services, other members of the congregation are invited to mourners during the service and comfort you together in prayer. This is the *Masorti Va'ani T'fillati* liturgy. However, it is not appropriate for a world in which the Hebrew is read, *Yerushalayim*: "May God be with you in Jerusalem." One should not read it."

of divine selves, acting as the *shekhinah*, the presence of God. Although God is the tone of the poem at the wedding, witnessing the

synagogue on Friday night is a metaphor. Yet, until now, the kabbalistic secrets only seen as more earthbound, without understanding esoteric. However, it has recently in Jewish prayer books which supplement intended with kabbalistic content. This collection of Yiddish the messiah was at hand, if not devotion. This inclusive of conversion of the false creeds in its wake, Jewish *prayers* was no longer being widespread acceptance of prayer.

recited by a Jewish

You have singled out
The Sabbath for rest,
So we may honor it
And rejoice in it,
And illuminate it
With candle light,
To serve you joyfully today
On Your holy Sabbath,
Which we are bound to honor
And keep in all things,
Like a king his queen
Or a bridegroom his bride,
Because in the words of our sages:
The Sabbath is queen and bride.

(Translated by Devra Kay, *Seyder Tkhines: The Forgotten Book of Common Prayer for Jewish Women* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004], p. 256.)

The speaker in this prayer, like those who recite *L'khab Dodi*, identifies herself with king and bridegroom as she welcomes the Sabbath. She is not allowed to lead the congregation in the public worship that formally initiates Shabbat, but she sees herself as empowered to invite in Shabbat anyway, on behalf of the People Israel.

GRAY (OUR TALMUDIC HERITAGE)

of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8) says, "Remember the Sabbath day," but the second version (Deuteronomy 5:15) says, "Observe the Sabbath day." The Talmud (Shev. 20b) reconciles the two by saying that God proclaimed them simultaneously, something that "the [human] mouth cannot say, nor the ear bear to hear."

⁴ "The source from which blessings flow" When properly observed, Shabbat bestows blessing on Israel (Shab. 119a; see Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, p. 84: Gray, "Eshet Chayil").

⁴ "From creation's beginning a royal veiled glow ... the first sanctified" The last line is usually translated literally as "last in creation, first in God's plan." Baruch Halevi Epstein paraphrases a midrash according to which the purpose of the creation of the days of the week was to lead up to the creation of Shabbat. Shabbat is thus the ultimate purpose behind the creation of the week; in that sense, although it was the last created, it was first in God's thoughts. Epstein further compares this to preparations for a wedding: first we prepare all the wedding necessities, and only then do we bring the bride underneath the *chuppah*. As the ultimate purpose of the wedding preparations is the entrance of the bride, so was the ultimate purpose of the creation of the week the entrance of Shabbat.

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

KIMELMAN (KABBALAH)

psalms correspond to the six days of the week, the end of Psalm 29 (the last of them) marks the end of Friday. It should have immediately ushered us into Psalm 92, "A musical song for the Sabbath day," instead of *L'khah Dodi*. By coming between Psalm 29 (p. 29) and Psalm 92 (p. 139), *L'khah Dodi* serves as the bridge between the end of Friday and the beginning of Shabbat, thereby linking profane and holy time.

How is *L'khah Dodi* a bridge between the profane and the holy? Since the profane represents the unredeemed, or not-yet-redeemed, and the holy the redeemed, the question becomes, How does *L'khah Dodi* create a bridge to redemption? To answer this, much needs to be known about *L'khah Dodi*. We can begin it here, but all the comments that follow, regarding individual verses, bear on the subject.

The poem's language speaks to us on four levels. Its explicit subjects are Shabbat and Jerusalem, which address the dimensions of time and space. Its implicit subjects are the People Israel and the realm of the *sefirot* (which mirrors the other three). The goal is to bring all four under the canopy of the holy. Its redemptive vision is both utopian (looking toward the end of time) and restorative (recapitulating the perfection of Eden).

To impart this message, *L'khah Dodi* weaves together strands of biblical verses, rabbinic midrash, liturgical *piyyut*, Spanish Hebrew poetry, Renaissance meditative poetry, and marriage madrigals into a kabbalistic lyric of redemption. A comparable poem is Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion," composed a generation later in 1595.

Poetically speaking, *L'khah Dodi* has nine stanzas, corresponding to the nine lower *sefirot*, and a repeating refrain corresponding to the tenth *sefirah*, *Keter*. As the refrain energizes each stanza, so too, in the kabbalistic system, *Keter* energizes each *sefirah*.

Each stanza contains four lines. Assigning letters to the closing sounds of each line (a = *ah*, b = *ee*, and c = *ayikh*), we can see a carefully laid out rhyme scheme. The refrain (vv. 1, 3, 5, etc., here) is *aa*; verses 2, 4, 6, and 18 (stanzas 2, 3, and 9) are *aaaa*; verses 8, 10, 12, and 16 (stanzas 4, 5, 6, and 8) are *bbba*; and verse 14 (stanza 7) is *ccca*.

The poem is attributed to Solomon Alkabetz. There is, however, no direct evidence from the period that he or Cordovero actually recited it. It first appears in a Moroccan document from 1577 and a prayer book from 1584. Nonetheless, other liturgical poetry from their time—especially by Mordecai Dato, who studied with Cordovero from 1555 to 1560—is so similar that there is no reason to suspect the traditional attribution of authorship to Alkabetz. Moreover, all the ideology implicit in it had already been applied by the kabbalists to the Shabbat recitation of the Song of Songs.

¹ "Go forth my love [1]" On one level the love expressed here is the love of Israel for God, the love of God for Israel, and the love of both for Shabbat, which is both the *sefirah Shekhinah* and Israel's bride.

On another level, the poem is about the love of groom and bride. Both levels converge in the word *Dodi*, "my love," for *Dodi* is not just an earthly husband but the divine groom too. Indeed, reversing the Hebrew letters of *Dodi* (DVDY → YDVD) and exchanging the *dalet* for a *heh* (both common abbreviations for the divine name¹)

results in YHVH: the divine name applied to *Tiferet* (the masculine principle in the sefirotic realm).

¹“Go forth my love [2]” Both Israel (collectively and individually) and God are urged to welcome Shabbat by approaching their brides. As the earthly husband greets his earthly wife, so *Tiferet* greets *Binah*, the *sefirah* in the upper triad that corresponds to *Malkhut* in the final triad below (also called *Shekhinah*). Both husbands also greet *Shekhinah*, the sefirotic equivalent of Shabbat. The two movements occur in tandem. Both the human and sefirotic male (*Tiferet*) are surrounded by two females, one lower and one higher. The earthly husband is situated between wife (lower) and *Shekhinah* (higher). *Tiferet* is situated between *Shekhinah* (lower) and *Binah* (higher). It is the link with the respective lower female that allows for merging with the upper one. Ultimately, the souls of husband and wife will merge with *Shekhinah*, which itself merges with *Tiferet*, which in turn merges with *Binah*. Ultimate redemption is this merging of all into *Binah*. In the meantime, *Shekhinah* is the bride of both God and Israel. Her temporal expression is Shabbat. There are three partners in the marriage metaphor for Shabbat: God, Shabbat, and Israel. Since the Hebrew “to sanctify” also means “to marry,” when God sanctified Shabbat and Israel, God took them as brides. Similarly, when Israel sanctifies Shabbat, Israel takes Shabbat as bride. Thus, Shabbat becomes the rendezvous of God and Israel. On Shabbat both human and divine meet. The meeting that takes place with *Shekhinah* in this world takes place on a grander scale with *Binah* (known as *Shabbat Hagadol*, the Great Sabbath) in the world to come. Hence, Shabbat is a foretaste of the world to come, *Shabbat Hagadol*.

The theme of union is reflected in the number of letters in the seven Hebrew words of the refrain, which add up to twenty-six, the numerical value of the tetragrammaton. These twenty-six letters are divided between two lines, the first with fifteen and the second eleven, reflecting the unification of the divine name (YH = 15; VH = 11; YH+VH = 15+11).

Each time we verbalize the refrain, we perform—in love—the unification of the divine by bringing together what was once torn asunder. Nothing can be whole without having been rent.

²“Observe [shamor] and remember [zakhor]” Shabbat is really composed of three Shabbats. The Hebrew for masculine is *zakhar*, so *zakhor* represents the masculine. *Shamor* is then the feminine. The feminine *shamor* is identified with the Shabbat of Sabbath eve, represented by *Malkhut* and called “name” (*shem*). The masculine *zakhor* is identified with the Shabbat of Sabbath day, represented by *Tiferet* and called YHVH. As night precedes day, so *shamor* precedes *zakhor*. By observing Shabbat properly, through incorporating both feminine and masculine, *Malkhut* and *Tiferet* unite with each other, bringing about redemption. This is the third Shabbat which occurs at the end of the Sabbath, represented by *Binah*. That is why in the last service of Shabbat, *Minchah*, the *Amidah* states: “You (*Tiferet*) are one (*atah echad*) and your name (*Malkhut*) is one (*v’shimkha echad*).” Unification makes Shabbat the day of redemption,

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FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

as it says: "On that day YHVH (= *Tiferet*) shall be one and His name (= *Malkhut*) one" (Zec. 14:8). The human parallel is the verse "Therefore a man should ... cleave to his wife and become *one* flesh" (Gen. 2:24). When God is one and humanity is one, they meet as one. Some rites even cite the *Zohar* (II, 135a-b) to expound this idea of oneness. It states: "The secret of Shabbat: she is Shabbat, united in the secret of One to draw down upon Her the secret of One." Shabbat enables one and one to be one.

⁶ "Regal city" Jerusalem. The opening two stanzas and closing ninth (vv. 2, 4, 18) spotlight Shabbat (sacred time), whereas the middle six (vv. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16) feature Jerusalem (sacred space). Though human beings perceive time and space as separate dimensions, Kabbalah sees them as one continuum. Jerusalem is the *spatialization* of the holy; Shabbat is its *temporalization*. Desacralizing Shabbat brings about the destruction of Jerusalem and exile from the holiness of space. Sanctifying Shabbat brings about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and restoration to the holiness of space. *L'khah Dodi* thus allocates exactly six stanzas to reversing a Jerusalem destroyed, for a Jerusalem in ruins is to space what the six days of the week are to time. Jerusalem rebuilt, however, is to space what Shabbat is to time. As Jerusalem is a holy day in space, Shabbat is a sanctuary in time.

¹⁴ "Shunned" The last of five stanzas (vv. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) all deal with Jerusalem, *Shekhinah*, and the People Israel—they are interchangeable. Each stanza seeks a reversal of the lachrymose present, which it contrasts with redemption. Verse 6 commands, "Rise up.... Too long in the valley of tears have you pined." Verse 8 beseeches, "Shake off the ashes.... Wear glorious clothes." Verse 10 pleads, "Awake, awake ... Arise, shine." Verse 12 continues, "Be not despondent," and verse 14 predicts the riddance of all would-be despoilers, "who'd overrun you." Taken together, the five stanzas spell out the remedy: "The Compassionate One will compassion provide.... Through the son of Yishai of Bethlehem ... Through [Jerusalem] the presence of God comes alive ... The poor of my people find shelter inside.... The joy of your God shines upon you like the joy of a groom and a bride." The glory of God will thus be revealed to Jerusalem, the soul, and (in the sefirotic realm) the *Shekhinah*, too, for Jerusalem rebuilt signifies repair of the soul and the reconstitution of the divine name. To consummate the process, verse 14 reiterates the poem's primary metaphor: God will rejoice over Jerusalem/soul/*Shekhinah* as a groom over the bride.

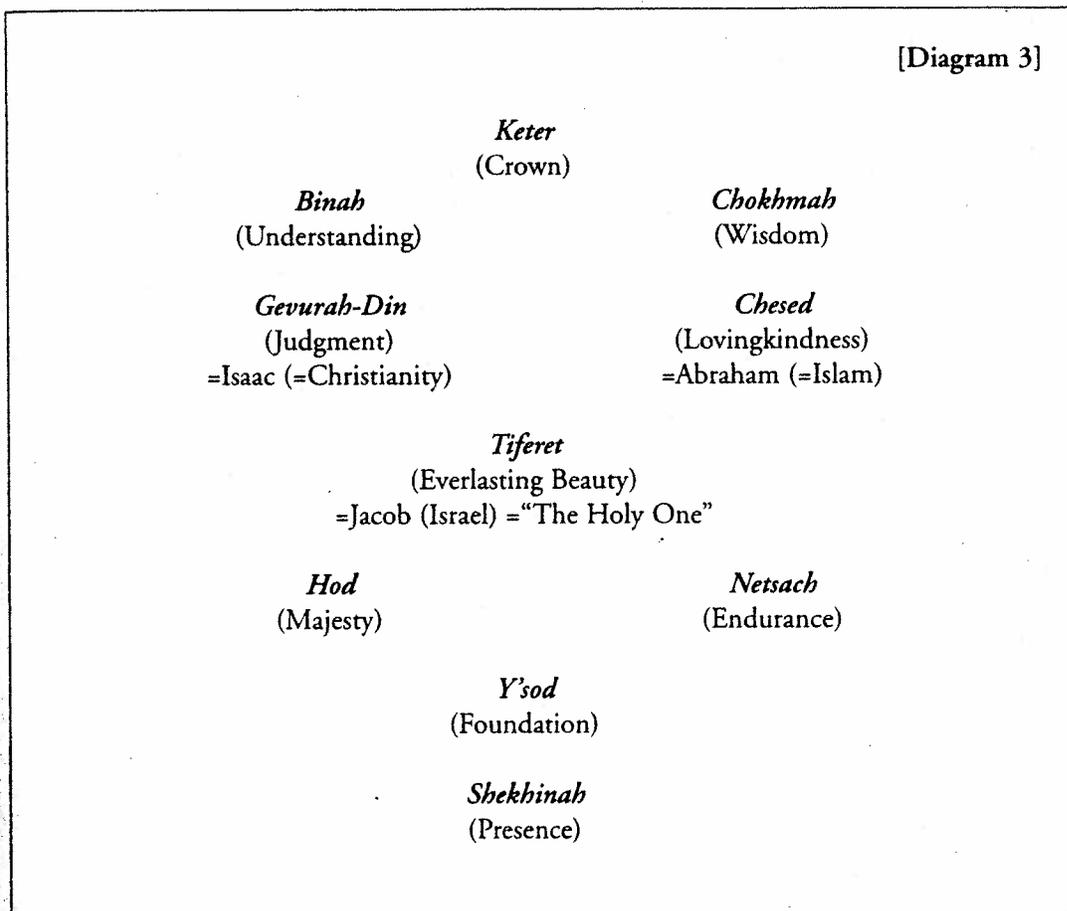
¹⁴ "The joy of your God ... like the joy of a groom and a bride" Genesis 1:27 explains, "God created *Adam* in his image, in the image of God did He create it, male and female did He create them." As the original human being was both male and female, so too is God. As the human image was divided into male and female, so is its divine counterpart split into "King" and "Bride." The unification of earthly husband and wife can prompt a corresponding unification in God. Connubial life can thus be an insight into divine reality.

¹⁶ "Left and right ... the Holy One ... We'll revel ... Peretz" Here all four kabbalistic dimensions of *Shekhinah* are addressed: (1) Jerusalem, (2) the Sabbath, (3) the People

SECTION 1

Israel, and (4) the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*. All four function as centers of their respective domains. Jerusalem is the sacred center of the world; Shabbat is the sacred center of the week; Israel is the sacred center of the nations. And *Malkhut*, which is portrayed as the center of ten encircling *sefirot*, stands for all of the above: Jerusalem (spatially), Shabbat (temporally), and the People Israel (humanely).

Expanding "left and right" is a spatial reference to the way the *sefirot* are arranged:



The *sefirot* are said to correspond to biblical personalities. Thus, *Chesed* (on the right) is Abraham; *G'vurah* (on the left) is Isaac; *Tiferet* (in the middle) is Jacob—that is, the People Israel. Israel (through Jacob) expands to the right and left of the sefirotic structure embracing the *sefirot* of *Chesed* and *G'vurah* respectively. By virtue of its link with Abraham and thus his first-born, Ishmael, *Chesed* stands for Islam; similarly, by virtue of its link with Isaac and thus his first-born, Esau, *G'vurah* stands for Christianity. *Chesed* and *G'vurah* are, as it were, the arms of the sefirotic structure and thus cannot break through the restraining shoulders to get to the head, the uppermost *sefirah* of *Keter*. Only *Tiferet* can do so by virtue of being located in the middle.

Peretz (verse 16) is the messiah who will repair the breach created by Adam and restore things to their original state. Restoration of the pre-Adamic situation creates a

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

world in which evil (the *kliipot*) will be redeemed. As Israel brings about redemption through *Tiferet*, it spreads out to the left and right sides of the diagram, encompassing the rest of the universe. Thus, all of humanity, epitomized by Islam and Christianity, will return to the worship of God, for which, verse 16 says, "We'll revel in our delight."

Appropriately, the Sabbaths of Islam (Friday) and of Christianity (Sunday) are the first days to the right and to the left of the Sabbath of creation. In sum, the spatial sanctity of Eretz Yisrael will expand throughout the world; the temporal sanctity of Shabbat will radiate through the week; the human sanctity of Israel will extend to all nations from right to left (see J. Hoffman, "Left and right"); the divine *sefirot* will reunite; and redemption will have occurred.

¹⁶"*Peretz*" Peretz, the messiah who brings redemption, precedes his descendant King David by ten generations. As David stands for the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*, Peretz stands for *Keter*, ten *sefirot* above. Redemption radiates down from Peretz to David, encompassing all ten *sefirot*.

¹⁸"*Come forth in peace*" Stanza 9 (v. 18) brings everything to consummation. All four dimensions of the feminine, the Sabbath, Jerusalem, the People Israel, and the *Shekhinah*, are invited in/with/by means of *shalom*, for they are at once crown and spouse of their consort, human and divine. "Come forth O bride" occurs twice: for bride and queen, for just married and consummated; and for human and divine. Some make this explicit by adding: "Come my bride, the Sabbath queen."

KUSHNER & POLEN (GHASIDISM)

increments now progress by hundreds until we reach the last letter, *tau*, which is 400.

Perhaps the single most commonly noted *gematria* is the numerical equivalent for the *shem ham'forash*, the ineffable name of God, the tetragrammaton: *yod*, *hey*, *vav*, and *hey*. The numeric value of God's most awesome name is thus 10+5+6+5, totaling 26. And, while it strikes most moderns as arcane, it is difficult for even a beginning student of Kabbalah to encounter this number without taking pause. It is, in other words, a very significant number. Kabbalistic tradition furthermore often explains the broken state of our present world as a manifestation of the brokenness of God's ineffable name into its first two letters (*yod* and *hey*: 10+5=15) and its last two letters (*vav* and *hey*: 6+5=11). The messianic goal then would be to reunite the two broken halves, bringing them back to the ultimate total of 26, and thereby repair the cosmos.

Professor Reuven Kimelman (see "Go forth my love [2]"), in his *The Mystical Meaning of Lekhab Dodi and Kabbalat Shabbat*, points out that the four Hebrew words in the first line of the stanza (*L'khab dodi likrat kallah*) have 15 Hebrew letters, while the three words of the second line (*p'nai shabbat n'kallah*) have 11, totaling 26, the divine name. At last the unity is restored!

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

century modern Orthodoxy, *zakhor* is verbal expression, while *shamor* is physical demonstration. Since they were “uttered as one expression” at Sinai, they remain inseparable. *Zakhor* alone would be a “mere ‘theoretical’ observance of the Sabbath,” while *shamor* alone would mean that Shabbat would “neither be taken to heart nor accepted by the spirit” (commentary on the Siddur).

¹⁸ “*Come forth in peace*” As they say this line, some communities move, physically, to an antechamber or even outside, to greet the Shabbat Bride (Chaim ben Israel Benveniste, 1603–1673, Smyrna, Turkey: *K’nesset Hag’dolah* to Sh. A., O. Ch. 262).

Our general custom is to stand for this stanza even if praying alone (Chaim Kanevsky, B’nei B’rak, Israel, contemporary authority). One faces west (Mishnah Berurah 262:10). According to Yechiel Michael Halevi Epstein (nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Lithuania; *Arukh Hashulchan*, O. Ch. 262:5), one faces the door of the room. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe*, O. Ch. Vol. 5, #16) holds that if the door is not in the west, one should turn westward anyway. “People will do what they wish, and as long as the intent is to honor Shabbat, it is fine, but, in my humble opinion, turning specifically toward the door has no significance” (O. Ch. 263:45). These practices derive from Shabbat 119a: “R. Chanina would wrap himself in his cloak and stand at sunset of Sabbath eve, proclaiming, ‘Come, let us go forth to welcome Queen Shabbat!’ R. Yannai put on his Sabbath cloak on Sabbath eve and exclaimed: ‘Come forth, O Bride, Come forth, O Bride!’”

From this quotation, authorities also conclude that one should dress up in one’s Sabbath finery at this point (*Tzitz Eliezer* vol. 14:34) and that *Kabbalat Shabbat* should be chanted *b’simchah*, “joyfully” (*M’kor Chayim Hashalem*, Vol. 3: 112:6, by R. Chayim David Halevi, Chief Sefardi Rabbi of Tel Aviv, mid- to late twentieth century).

¹⁸ “*Come forth O bride; come forth O bride [bo’i khallah]*” Repetition of *bo’i khallah* is a sign of affection (*Barukh she’amar*, commentary on the Siddur by R. Baruch Halevi Epstein, Pinsk, Russia, late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries).

²⁰ “*May God comfort you*” During *shivah* (pronounced shee-VAH, but, popularly, SHIH-vah), the week of mourning that follows burial, mourners remain home and worship services take place there with them. They are not present at synagogue services during *Kabbalat Shabbat*, either, because it is service of joy, and it is not yet Shabbat. After *L’khab Dodi*, however, Shabbat has been accepted and they can no longer publicly display their mourning (*Siddur Y’sodei Yeshurun—Shabbat*, p. 262; by Rabbi Gedalia Felder, Canada, mid-to late twentieth century).

²⁰ “*God (hamakom)*” Rabbi Meir Juzient (mid- to late twentieth century, Lithuania and Chicago) a master of Musar (pronounced moo-SHR, but, popularly, MOO-sahr), the traditional Jewish ethical literature rooted in Halakhah, explained that we call God *Hamakom* (“The Place”) here because mourners have “no place.” Traditionally, during *shivah* (the first seven days of their mourning period), they sit on the floor, and

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FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

when they come to synagogue, it is customary for them not to sit in their regular seats for all eleven months of mourning. Understanding the feelings of dismay occasioned by having lost their bearings, we bless the mourners with the prayer that the source of *place* should grant them a renewed place among family, community, and Israel (conversation as I sat *shivah* for my father, Chicago, 1987).

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

It was composed by Solomon ben Moses Halevi Alkabetz (ca. 1505–1584), whose grave in a haunting medieval cemetery in Safed is still clearly marked and visited. Along with Joseph Caro, author of the *Shulchan Arukh*, Alkabetz is also credited with initiating the custom of spending the entire night before the festival of Shavuot in Torah study (*Tikkun leil shavuot*).

¹⁸“*Her husband’s pride* [ateret ba’alah]” The sexual metaphor is graphic. “Pride” is literally “crown.” Shabbat (which is also the last of the *sefirot*, God’s feminine part, *Shekhinah*) is designated “crown.” As a crown circles the head of a king, so the feminine aspect of God, *Shekhinah*, circles the divine phallus belonging to *ba’alah* (“her husband”).

²⁰“*May God comfort you with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners*” The syntax of the sentence leaves ambiguity as to whether the subject is “people who are part of Zion and Jerusalem [who] are mourning, or people [who] are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem” (see J. Hoffman). But a similarly worded prayer for comforting the sick is given in the Talmud (Shab. 12b): not “May God (*hamakom*) comfort (*y’nachem*) you with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners” but “May God (*hamakom*) show compassion (*yrachem*) to you with the rest of Israel’s sick.” If our prayer for mourners is based on the similarly structured sentence of the Talmud, as it seems to be, the sense can only be “people [who] are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem.”

That is what we would have expected. “Mourners of Zion” is a technical term, corresponding to a medieval movement of ascetics mourning the Temple’s destruction. The trend went back to the years following the destruction itself, as can be seen by the Talmud’s concern with people who mourn overly much. By the eighth or ninth century, many of these people were Karaites, the geonic opponents who denied the oral law by, among other things, darkening their homes on Friday night instead of celebrating with Shabbat joy (*oneg*) (see L. Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy of *Kabbalat Shabbat*: Politics, Piety and Poetry,” p. 1–20; and below, “What may we use”).

With Kabbalah, “mourning for Zion” was given a new twist. “Zion and Jerusalem” were identified with the tenth *sefirah* (also known as *Malkhut* and *Shekhinah*, the feminine aspect of God). More than bemoaning the physical destruction of geographical sites, it meant mourning the alienation of God’s feminine aspect from her male consort (the *sefirah Tiferet*).

SECTION I

Our custom of welcoming mourners to the service just before *Ma'ariv* is probably kabbalistic. Asking God to comfort them "along with the rest of Zion and Jerusalem's mourners" was tantamount to welcoming them into the worshipping congregation, where *everyone* was a mourner of Zion, but where such mourning ceased with the coming of Shabbat, because Shabbat as *Shekhinah* was reunited with *Tiferet* now, so there was nothing to mourn for. On a personal level, mourners were shown that their loss would not be permanent; their personal trauma was part and parcel of God's own sorrow, shared by every other Jew as well.

²⁰ "God [hamakom]" Calling God *hamakom* is talmudic. But kabbalists emphasize its numerological consequences: If YHVH is divided letter by letter (Y=10 + H=5 + V=6 + H=5), and if each of these is squared (100 + 25 + 36 + 25), the *gematria* adds up to *MaKOM*. In Hebrew—מקום—the "a" is a vowel but the "o" is the consonant *vav*. Only consonants get counted. So we get M=40 + K=100 + V=6 + M=40.)

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

liturgy's crown, as it were. It is therefore especially appropriate, it seems to me, that it is this poem that celebrates the arrival of Shabbat.

I am particularly grateful to my students Ethan Franzel, Wendi Geffen, Elisa Koppel, Eric Lazar, and Julie Saxe, who created this poetic translation of *L'khah Dodi* with me. As with *Y'did Nefesh* (Volume 7, *Shabbat at Home*, p. 135), we felt that the poetic impact of *L'khah Dodi* was more important than the literal meaning of the words. Accordingly, we set out to find an English translation that, at least in part, conveyed not only the words of the poem but its poetry. Because the version presented here follows the poetry of the original so closely, it can be sung to any of the melodies composed for *L'khah Dodi* in the original Hebrew. It also mostly captures not just the poetry but also the meaning of the original.

In terms of rhythm, all the verses (except verses 7, 8, and 9) consist of four lines, each with four heavy syllables and no more than two light syllables between each heavy syllable. The chorus consists of two such lines. In verses 7, 8, and 9, each line lacks one heavy syllable. Our translation similarly follows this strict rhythm. In terms of rhyme, the first three lines of each verse rhyme with each other, and the last lines of all the verses rhyme with each other. The rhyme that ends the last lines of all the verses also ends both lines of the chorus, and indeed all four lines of the last verse. Although we resorted occasionally to weak rhymes, our translation follows the same rhyme scheme.

We hope we have captured at least some of the lyric beauty of the original. We have done our best to include the kabbalistic references in the poem, but many of these depend on technical terms in Hebrew that we felt could not be translated into English; we have noted our omissions in the notes. Additionally, in Hebrew, the first two lines form a mystical reference to the unification of God (see Kimelman), a trick we could not replicate.

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1505–1584), whose
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FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

The first letter of each of the verses in Hebrew spells out the original author's name. If our verses spell anything, we have been unable to discern it.

¹ "My love" Often translated "my beloved," probably in an attempt to remove sexual love from the liturgy.

¹ "Shabbat's reception has arrived!" More accurately, "Let us welcome Shabbat." or, literally, "Let us accept the face of Shabbat." To "accept the face" is a common idiom in Hebrew, meaning "to welcome." In Psalm 95 we saw similar language. We chose "reception" here in keeping with the imagery of a wedding that pervades *L'khab Dodi*.

² "Two words as one" There are two versions of the Ten Commandments in the Torah. They are mostly the same, but in Exodus the command is to "remember" the Sabbath, while in Deuteronomy it is to "observe" it. Tradition holds that both words were uttered simultaneously as part of the same command. The Hebrew literally reads "as one speech act."

² "Only" The Hebrew *M'yuchad*, or "united," reflects the kabbalistic notion that God is composed of male and female parts, which must be united to form one complete God. The Hebrew word for "united" (*m'yuchad*) is related to the Hebrew word for "one" (*echad*) in much the same way that our English word "only" relates to the English word "one." Hence our choice of "Only" as a description of God here.

² "Forgotten by none" We added this concept for euphony; it does not appear in the original, which reads simply "proclaimed to us by the 'united' God."

² "Renowned" The Hebrew word for "renown" is actually the same as the word for "name," reflecting an ancient ontology that conflated the two concepts. Our translation misses that play on words.

² "Glorified" Hebrew: *Tiferet*, one of the ten *sefirot*.

⁴ "Creation's beginning" Hebrew: *merosh mikedem*, "from the beginning, from *kedem*." *Kedem* means "before," but also "east," and (according to Genesis 2:8) is where God planted the Garden in Eden. In light of the rest of this verse, it is likely that *kedem* here forms a play on words that refers to creation.

⁴ "A royal veiled glow" The Hebrew is simply *n'sukhab*, a word that has two relevant meanings. The root letters *n.s.kh* form the words for "prince" (*nasikh*) and "princess" (*n'sikha*) but also the word for "mask" (*massekha*—the "n" assimilates to the following "s"). Our translation spells out the play on words, which suggests that Shabbat was both "hidden" and "princely" (or, more accurately, "princessly"). In the next verse, we will see that Jerusalem is a "kingly city."

⁴ "The last thought created, the first sanctified" More literally, "the last created, the first thought."

original author's name.

tempt to remove sexual

welcome Shabbat," or, "to be" is a common idiom in many languages. We chose "to be" because it pervades *L'khah Dodi*.

Commandments in the Torah is to "remember" the commandments. It holds that both words are from the same Hebrew root. Hebrew literally reads

cabbalistic notion that "to be" and "to have" form one complete word. The Hebrew word for "one" is "yeh" which is the English word "one."

does not appear in the Torah.

is the same as the word for "to be" in our translation.

at the beginning, from the beginning (Genesis 2:8) is where the earth was, it is likely that *kedem*

is a word that has two relevant meanings: "princess" and "princess." It relates to the following commandments that Shabbat was both a commandment and the next verse, we will

the last created, the

⁶ "Regal city" Following the theme of "princess" above, in which Shabbat is "princely," the city is now "kingly."

⁶ "Shrine" Literally, "city."

⁶ "Valley of tears" More literally, "valley of Bacca." Bacca is a type of tree, but its name sounds like *bakhah*, the Hebrew word for "crying." The reference is to Psalms 84:7. "Valley of weeping willows" is a tempting translation that unfortunately rhymes with nothing.

⁶ "The Compassionate One will compassion provide" From Jeremiah 15:5, in which the author, after describing the horrors of the time when God will abandon Jerusalem, asks, "Who will be compassionate to you, Jerusalem?" Hebrew often prefers doubling of roots (as in "He dreamed a dream") and that is what we get here: "He will compassion you with compassion." We try to double the word in English, too.

⁸ "My gem" Added only for euphony.

⁸ "Yishai" Or "Jesse." King David, who built Jerusalem and who, according to the liturgy, will rebuild it, is the son of Yishai.

¹⁰ "Bold and clear" Added for euphony.

¹⁰ "Wake up! Wake up! Sing verse" The Hebrew for "awake" in the line above (*hitor'ri*) and "wake up" here (*uri*) come from the same root, as do their English translations.

¹⁰ "Through you the presence of God comes alive" Adapted from Isaiah 60:1. The original quote from Isaiah reads, "The presence of God shines upon you" while the Hebrew in *L'khah Dodi* is "The presence of God is revealed through you." (The Hebrew word for "upon" and "through" is the same, making the two versions seem closer in Hebrew than in English.)

¹² "Why be dejected; Why face the ground?" More literally, as in Birnbaum, "Why are you downcast? Why do you moan?"

¹² "In a city rebuilt on its own ancient mound" Its "ancient mound" is a *tel*, a technical term (identical in English and in Hebrew, though more familiar in Hebrew) for a city repeatedly rebuilt on its older ruins so as to form a hill.

¹² "The poor of my people find shelter inside" Isaiah 14:32. In the original poem, this line precedes Jeremiah 30:18. We reversed the order to make the rhyme work.

¹⁴ "Shunned are all who would shun you" This line sets the stage for a word play that permeates the entire verse. The original reads, "Destroyed are those who would destroy you." But the words for "destroy" both times contain the sounds "sh" and "s" (*m'shi'sah* and *shosayich*), a use of sibilance that is continued in the following line, where the words for "joy" are *yasis* and *m'sos*. ("She sells sea shells by the sea shore" comes to mind.) We

FROM THE KABBALISTS OF SAFED

try to capture the same word play in English with “shun” and “shine.”

¹⁴ “*Overrun*” Literally, “devour.”

¹⁴ “*The joy of your God ... Like the joy of a groom and a bride*” In the Hebrew, the parallelism of the last two lines is complete. “The joy of your God shines upon you like the joy of a groom shines upon a bride” would better capture the close relationship but contains too many syllables.

¹⁶ “*Left and right*” Literally, “right and left.”

¹⁶ “*Proclaiming the Holy One’s might*” More literally, “Proclaiming Adonai’s glory,” but “glory” doesn’t rhyme with “right” (or “left”).

¹⁶ “*We’ll revel in our delight* [nagilah v’nism’chah]” From Isaiah 25:9, where, however, the verse reads, *nagilah v’nism’chah bishu’ato*, making it clear that the delight here is occasioned by God’s deliverance, which Peretz, David’s descendant, will bring.

¹⁶ “*Through Peretz’s son magnified*” A continuation of the messianic allusion from Isaiah 25:9 (see above, “We’ll revel in our delight”). In the original poem, this line comes first, so that the reference to Peretz precedes Isaiah 25:9. We reversed them to complete the rhyme scheme.

¹⁸ “*Her husband’s pride*” Literally, “her husband’s crown.” It is particularly unfortunate that we couldn’t keep the word “crown,” but we needed “pride” to rhyme with all the other words ending in “-ide.”

¹⁸ “*Faithful*” Hebrew, *s’gulah*, a word whose exact meaning (see Brettler) has been lost.

¹⁸ “*Tribe*” Literally, people.

²⁰ “*God*” Literally, “the place.” *Hamakom* (“The Place”) is one of God’s appellations.

²⁰ “*Zion and Jerusalem’s mourners*” Like the Hebrew, our English translation leaves open two possibilities: people who are part of Zion and Jerusalem are mourning, or people are mourning for Zion and Jerusalem.

2

A
E
Ps

A. PSALM 92: A

¹ A musical psalm for the
is good to praise A
your name, O Most High, ³t
love by morning, and
faithfulness, ⁴ on harps of
melodious lutes. ⁵ For your
me happy, and I celebrate
your hands. ⁶ How great
Adonai! Your thoughts are
simpleton will not know
understand this: ⁸ When th
like weeds and all evildoers
they be destroyed foreve
exalted forever, Adonai. ¹⁰
enemies, Adonai, surely yo
perish, all evildoers scatter
horn like a wild ox. I am so
¹² My eyes shall see those w
me, as those who rise up a
evil will be heard by my ears
bloom like a date tree, thrive
cedar. ¹⁴ Planted in God
blossom in our God’s cour
old age they will produ
invigorated, and fresh, ¹⁶ to
Adonai is upright, my rock, i
no flaw.

Levi'im in the Temple on Shabbat, and Psalm 93 was recited on Fridays (*Tamid* 7:4). Although neither psalm appears in the earliest *siddurim*, Maimonides claims that their recitation on *erev Shabbat* is an ancient custom.

When Shabbat coincides with a festival or with one of the intermediate days of a festival, or if a festival is to begin on *Motza'ay Shabbat* (Saturday evening) as Shabbat ends, it is traditional to omit the first six psalms and *L'cha Dodi*, and to begin the service with Psalm 92. This change, which only occurs in the Ashkenazic tradition, reflects an attempt to refrain from overshadowing the festival. In the Sephardic tradition, the service begins with Psalm 29 and only the first two and last two stanzas of *L'cha Dodi* are sung.

While mourners remain at home during *shiva*, mourning is suspended on Shabbat, and mourners are encouraged to attend the synagogue. Since Shabbat is considered to begin officially with the completion of *L'cha Dodi*, it is a custom in some congregations for the mourners to enter the synagogue at this point of the service. As they enter, the leader, on behalf of the congregation, greets them with the words: "May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." The *Beit HaMikdash* contained a special gate for mourners.

INSIGHTS FROM THE TRADITION

A. Medieval Jewish poets often used acrostics in their poetry. Rabbi Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz wrote *L'cha Dodi* so that the first letter of each verse (except the last) spells out his name (Shlomo Halevi). Another approach was to write each word, phrase, or verse so that they begin with the letters of the alphabet in order. Examples from the liturgy are *Ashrei, El Baruch*, which is part of the traditional *Yotzer*, and *Ashamnu* and *Al Cheit* from the Yom Kippur *Amidah*. The Tanach also contains acrostics, for example, Psalms 111, 112, and 119; Proverbs 31:10-31; Lamentations 1.

B. The first verse of *L'cha Dodi* reads, "*Shamor V'zachor B'dibur Echad*," reflecting the rabbinic

understanding that God said "*Shamor*," keep Shabbat (Deuteronomy 5:12) and "*Zachor*," remember Shabbat (Exodus 20:8) at the same time. This teaching attempts to explain why the *mitzvah* pertaining to Shabbat differs in the two versions of the Ten Commandments.

C. The theme of Shabbat as *kallah* is related to a *midrash* which states that each of the six weekdays has a partner: the first day has the second, the third has the fourth, and the fifth has the sixth. When Shabbat complained that it didn't have a partner, God responded, "The community of Israel is your partner" (*B'reishit Rabbah* 11:8). It was once a custom to chant Song of Songs prior to Shabbat, as if one were wooing the Sabbath bride with these ancient songs of love.

D. The Talmud cites Psalm 29 as the source of the tradition that the weekday *Amidah* contained eighteen *brachot* and the Shabbat *Amidah* seven *brachot*. These numbers correspond to the number of times God's name occurs in this psalm and to the number of times the phrase "voice of God" occurs, respectively (*Brachot* 28b-29a). This connection explains its place in Kabbalat Shabbat as a transition from the weekday to Shabbat, as well as the custom of standing when reciting it.

E. Jewish mystics added the prayer *Ana B'choach* following Psalm 29. Ascribed to the Talmudic sage Nechunya ben Hakanah, it contains forty-two words, the initial letters of which form the secret forty-two letter name of God, which was once used in place of YHVH (*Kiddushin* 71a). In addition, the initials of each verse form seven divine names corresponding to the seven voices of God in Psalm 29.

F. In some congregations it is customary during Kabbalat Shabbat to read all or part of the second chapter of *Mishnah Shabbat*, known by its opening words "*Bameh Madlikin*" (With what may we light?). First introduced into the service in ninth century Babylonia, it is usually read between Psalm 93 and the *Bar'chu*. However, it was originally read at the conclusion of the service, probably to lengthen it so that latecomers

לְקַה דּוּדִי

לְקַה דּוּדִי לְקִרְאָת פְּלֵה פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָהּ:

שָׁמֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבְּרוֹ אָחֵךְ

הַשְּׂמִיעֵנוּ אֶל הַמִּיחֵךְ

יְהוֹה אָחֵךְ וְשָׁמוּ אָחֵךְ

לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרַת וּלְתִהְלֵהּ:

←... לכה דודי

Leḥah dodi likrat kalah peney shabbat nekabelah.

Shamor vezahor bedibur eḥad

Hishmi'anu el hamyuhad

Adonay eḥad ushmo eḥad

Leshem ultiferet ve'lit-hilah

Leḥah dodi... ↪

NOTE. Biblical references include Isaiah 52:2, 51:17, 60:1; Judges 5:12; Isaiah 60:1, 54:4; Psalm 42:12; Isaiah 14:32, Jeremiah 30:18, 16; Isaiah 49:19, 62:5, 54:3, and 25:9.

NOTE. The first stanza of *Leḥah Dodi* attempts to reconcile two versions (in the Ten Commandments) of the mitzvah to observe Shabbat. The integrity of both "remember the Sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8) and "keep the Sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:12) is maintained when the song proclaims that God—in whom all things unite—uttered both simultaneously (Babylonian Talmud, Shevuot 20b).

S.S.

LEḤAH DODI / O, COME, MY FRIEND

This translation can be sung to the same melody as the Hebrew.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

"Keep" and "Remember" in a sole command
the solitary God did us command
"I AM!" is one, the Name is one,
in name, in splendor, and in praise.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside. ↪

COMMENTARY. Six psalms, one for each weekday, open the traditional *Kabbalat Shabbat* service. The seventh element, the Shabbat psalm, is introduced by the song *Leḥah Dodi*, "Come, My Friend." As Shabbat eve drew near, the Safed Kabbalists used to walk into the fields at the edge of their mountain village in order to greet the day of rest. There they could survey the beauty of creation apparent in the panorama spread before them: mountain, valley, forest, sky, and sea. Through the preceding psalms they gave voice to their praise of creation, and they honored Shabbat with specially composed hymns sung as they escorted Shabbat to their homes.

Leḥah Dodi—a hymn to honor and escort Shabbat—was composed by Shelomo Halevi Alkabetz, a member of the Safed Kabbalists. The initial letters of the poem's first eight stanzas spell out his name: *לְהַלְלוּהוּ*. The opening refrain and closing verse of the poem reflect the customs of R. Ḥanina and R. Yanay. Their images of Shabbat as queen and bride combine to link the formal and intimate aspects of Shabbat, the source of all blessing and ultimate intention of creation.

The hymn draws heavily upon prophecies of Israel's redemption and renewal in the messianic era—likened, in Jewish tradition, to a Shabbat without end. Shabbat stands in relation to the week as the messianic era stands in relation to the flow of world time. It is at once a celebration of the world's beginning and a foretaste of the world to come, a reservoir of past and future held in a single moment.

S.S.

Unit 2
Foresight
10-17

לְקַרְאֵת שְׁבֹת לְכוּ וְנִלְכָה
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה
מֵרֵאשׁ מִקְדָּם גִּסוּבָה
סוּף מִצְעָה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תְּחִלָּה:

... לכה דודי ...

מְקַדָּשׁ מְלֶךְ עִיר מְלוּכָה
קוּמִי צְאִי מִתּוֹךְ הַתְּפִכָּה
רַב לְךָ שְׂבֹת מְצַמֵּק הַבְּכָא
הוּוֹא יִחְמַל עֲלֶיךָ תְּחִלָּה:

... לכה דודי ...

הַתְּנַצְרִי מִצְפָּר קוּמִי
לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תְּפָאֲרֹתֶיךָ עִמִּי
עֲלֵי־יָד מִן יְשִׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמִי
קִרְבָּה אֶל נַפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה:

←... לכה דודי ...

Likrat shabbat lehu venelḥah
Ki hi mekor haberahah
Merosh mikedem nesuḥah
Sof ma'aseh bemahashavah tehilah. Leḥah dodi...

Mikdash meleḥ ir meluḥah
Kumi tze'i mitoh hahafeḥa
Rav laḥ shevet be'emek habaḥa
Vehu yaḥamol alayih ḥemlah.

Hitna'ari me'afar kumi
Livshi bigdey tifarteh ami
Al yad ben yishay beyt halahmi
Korvah el nafshi ge'alah.

Leḥah dodi...

Leḥah dodi...↪

Toward the Sabbath, come, make haste,
for she has every blessing's taste,
ordained at first, and long ago,
the last thing made, the first in mind.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

O, Sovereign's abode, O, holy, regal town,
rise up, emerge, where once cast down,
enough of sitting in the vale of tears,
God pities you, yes you God spares,

O, come my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

Be stirred, rise up, throw off the dust,
my people, don your clothes of eminence,
by hand of Bethle'mite Jesse's child,
draw near my soul, redeem it, too.

O, come my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.↪

KAVANAH. The lovesong of *Kabbalat Shabbat* continues from *Yedid Nefesh*,
Beloved of My Soul, to the Song of Songs, My Beloved is Mine, to *Leḥah*
Dodi, Come My Beloved. Stripped away of the work, worry and stress of
the week, all that remains is love—love in myriad verbal garments, in myr-
iad melodies. Our pause on the seventh day allows us to fill our beings
with love, ever flowing forth from creation. S.P.W.

Arouse yourself, arouse yourself,
your light has come, arise and shine,
awake, awake, pour forth your song,
on you now shines the Glorious One.

לכה דודי ...

הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי

כִּי בָּא אֹרֶךְ יְמֵי אֹרִי

עֲוִרִי עֲוִרִי שִׁיר דְּפָרִי

כְּבוֹד יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ נִגְלָה:

לֹא תִבְשִׂי וְלֹא תִפְלָמִי

מֵהַ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶהוּ וּמֵהַ תִּהְיֶמֶי

כָּךְ יִחַסוּ צַנִּי עִמִּי

וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלָה:

לכה דודי ...

וְהָיוּ לְמִשְׁפָּה שְׂאֵמֶיךָ

וְרַחֲמֶיךָ כְּלִמְבֻלַּעֲיֶיךָ

יִשֵּׁשׂ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ

כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ חָתָן עַל פִּלָּה:

לכה דודי ...

Hitoreri hitoreri

Ki va oreḥ kumi ori

Uri uri shir daberi

Kevod adonay alayih niglah.

Leḥah dodi...

Lo tevoshi velo tikalemi

Mah tishtoḥaḥi umah tehemi

Baḥ yeḥesu aniyey ami

Venivnetah ir al tilah.

Vehayu limshisah shosayih

Veraḥaku kol mevale'ayih

Yasis alayih elohayih

Kimsoṣ ḥatan al kalah.

Leḥah dodi...

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

Don't be ashamed, don't be ashamed,
why be downcast, why do you sigh?
In you my people's poor find shade,
a city rebuilt where her ruins lay.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

Your robbers shall be robbed themselves,
all your devourers will be removed,
your God rejoices at your side,
the joy of a bridegroom with his bride.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

COMMENTARY. Shabbat is here depicted in a glorious array of symbols that derive from the many terms Kabbalistic tradition has used to describe the Sheḥinah. She is the bride, the queen, Jerusalem the holy city too long prisoner in the vale of tears, the people Israel about to be crowned with the glory of God. All of these draw together in the single figure of Shabbat as we welcome her into our hearts.

A.G.

KAVANAH. God should be so real to us that, in place of the fear and distrust which overcloud our lives, we should be possessed of such peace, poise, and power as to render us free and joyful and give us a sense of dominion.

M.M.K.

קָמִין וְשׂוֹמֵל תְּפָרְצִי
נֹאֵת יְהוָה תַּעֲרִיצִי
עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פְּרָצִי
וְנִשְׁמַחָה וְנִגְלִיָּה:

לכה דודי...

We rise and face the entrance to welcome the Shabbat bride.

פֹּאֵי בְּשֵׁלוֹם עֲטַרְת בְּעִלָּה
גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִדָּה
תּוֹךְ אֲמוּנֵי עַם סְגֻלָּה
פֹּאֵי כְּלָה פֹּאֵי כְּלָה:

לכה דודי...

Yamin usmol tifrotzi
Ve'et adonay ta'aritzi
Al yad ish ben partzi
Venismehah venagilah.

Bo'i veshalom ateret balah
Gam besimhah uvtzoholah
Toh emuney am segulah
Bo'i halah bo'i halah.

Leḥah dodi...

Leḥah dodi...

DERASH. There is a Yiddish saying: רַעַר אֲרַעמָן רַעַר אֲרַעמָן שֵׁיטֵיט רַעַר אֲרַעמָן אֵיבִין אָן אָן. "During Shabbos prayers, when the entire congregation turns its back to the altar, the pauper standing at the back is suddenly in front." When the entire congregation turns to the back, inviting the Shabbos queen to come in peace, it is the poor, the shy, and the stranger in the back rows who are given the honor of welcoming her first. She comes in peace only where Jews act responsibly toward those who receive this honor.

E.M.

To right and left you shall burst forth,
revering God, to south and north,
by hand of one from Peretz's line,
we shall rejoice and find delight.

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

We rise and face the entrance to welcome the Shabbat bride.

O, come in peace, O divine crown,
with joy, rejoicing, and with mirth,
amid the faithful, loved by God,
come in, O bride, come in, O bride!

O, come, my friend, let's greet the bride,
the Sabbath Presence bring inside.

פֹּאֵי בְּשֵׁלוֹם / Bo'i veshalom, the last verse of *Leḥah Dodi*, should be recited outdoors. Where this is not possible, a turn toward the doorway is traditional. At Bo'i *halah* (Come in, O bride), we receive into ourselves the *neshamah yeterah*, an extra measure of soul, that is not present to us during the week. This extra Shabbat soul may be viewed as the greater sensitivity allowed us by the restful and unpressured pace of Shabbat. Indeed, that extra soul may be inside us all the time, and *Leḥah Dodi* may be seen as a love song that coaxes our most sensitive self to come out of hiding, in the assurance that on Shabbat it will not be harmed or threatened. A.G.

Hoffman,
 Lawrence
 My People's
 Prayer Book
 Vol. 1
 pg 87-99
 Unit 3
 Activity 2

MARC BRETTLER

"Hear O Israel" Strange as it may seem to us, the *Sh'ma* (Deut. 6:4) is of no particular significance within the Hebrew Bible. It did, however, rise to prominence in the early post-biblical period, as we see from the Nash papyrus (2nd-1st cent. (p. 88)

ELLIOT N. DORFF

"Hear O Israel" The three paragraphs that make up the entire *Sh'ma* do not appear consecutively in the Torah, and do not even follow the (p. 88)

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

"Hear O Israel: Adonai is our God; Adonai is One" The persecutions, expulsions and difficulties experienced by the Jews of Ashkenaz and France gave special meaning to the *Sh'ma*. Familiar with the rabbinic story of R. Akiba, who was said to have uttered these words when he was tortured to death during the Hadrianic persecutions following the Bar Kokhba revolt, Ashkenazi Jews adopted them as a kind of martyrs' creed. The *Sh'ma* thus came to sum up and crown (p. 90)

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

"God, steadfast ruler" Or perhaps, the affirmation, "God is a steadfast ruler." "Hear O Israel . . . Adonai is One" Biblically, *Sh'ma* ("hear") is more an introduction than a verb of hearing, like the archaic "Hear ye, hear ye," the collo- (p. 91)

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

THE CENTRAL FEATURE IN THE SH'MA AND ITS BLESSINGS IS THE SH'MA ITSELF, THE FIRST SECTION OF WHICH (DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9) IS CALLED "ACCEPTING THE YOKE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" (KABBALAT OL MALKHUT SHAMAYIM). ITS FIRST (p. 91)

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

"Adonai is One" The theology of Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe of Lubavitch Chasidism (1745-1813, (p. 93)

DANIEL LANDES

"God, steadfast ruler" When recited privately, the *Sh'ma* is preceded with

El melekh ne'eman ("God, steadfast ruler"), because the *Sh'ma* in total has 245 words and the addition (p. 95)

JUDITH PLASKOW

"Adonai is One" As the first-learned and most familiar Jewish prayer, the *Sh'ma* comes to the tongue so effortlessly that it is easy to lose sight of what it is affirming. What does it mean to assert (p. 98)

¹ (אל מלך נאמן.)

² שמע ישראל. "אלהינו, יי אחד.

³ ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

¹ (God, steadfast ruler . . .)

² Hear O Israel: Adonai is our God; Adonai is One.

³ Blessed is the One the glory of whose kingdom is renowned forever:

SH'MA

MARC BRETTLER

B.C.E.) which contains the decalogue as well as Deuteronomy 6:4–5. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Bible from Alexandria, as well as the Nash papyrus introduce the *Sh'ma* with a verse not found in the Hebrew, but intended to highlight the *Sh'ma's* growing importance: "These are the laws and the rule which Adonai commanded Israel in the desert when they left Egypt."

The introduction ("Hear O Israel") is a typical opening for a speech in Deuteronomy, occurring not only here, but also in vv. 5:1, 9:1, 20:3, and 27:9, and might have been one of the ways of introducing what some have called "a sermon." This particular sermon makes two points: "Adonai is our God" and "You shall love Adonai your God." There then follows a chain of implications: Internalizing these commandments and teaching them to your children, binding them upon your arms and head, and writing them upon your doorposts.

ELLIOT N. DORFF

order of the Torah's books (since Numbers, the fourth book of the Torah, precedes Deuteronomy, the fifth). Although all the parts of the *Sh'ma* appear in the Torah, then, the prayer as we have it is not biblical in origin, but rather a prayer created by the Rabbis. Why then did the Rabbis choose these paragraphs, not others (the Ten Commandments, say) for this central prayer? And why did they put these paragraphs in the order they did?

One reason they chose the first two paragraphs is undoubtedly because they contain verses requiring that "you should speak about these things when you lie down and when you stand up." In context, "these things" refers to the entire covenant described in Deuteronomy, which we are to speak of always. I prefer my own translation here ("*Speak of them*" not "*use them*," and "when you lie down and when you *rise up*," not "when you *stand up*") because "when you lie down and when you rise up" is a "merism," a literary device by which the Torah specifies two ends of a spectrum and means everything in between as well. Here, then, we are to think and speak about the words of the Torah during every waking moment. (Another famous example of that literary device is the opening verse of Genesis: "When God began to create the heaven and earth" — meaning everything in between as well.) A narrow reading of these verses, however, leads to the view that every night and every morning we should recite the paragraphs where those verses are embedded, and this is undoubtedly one of the reasons motivating the Rabbis to use the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* as we have it.

That, though, only pushes the question back to the next level, namely, why did the Rabbis choose to interpret these verses in that narrow way rather than in their broader and probably more accurate meaning? And how are we to understand the choice of the third paragraph, where this demand to speak of "them" day and night does not appear?

The Siddur serves as the handbook of theology for the Jewish masses. The Rabbis deliberately chose these paragraphs primarily because *they were convinced that these*

-5. The Septuagint, Nash papyrus introduced to highlight the Adonai commanded

g for a speech in 20:3, and 27:9, and led "a sermon." This you shall love Adonai using these commandments your arms and head,

Torah, precedes the Torah, then, created by the Rabbis. Ten Commandments, in the order they did? because they contain you lie down and when covenant described in own translation here when you *rise up*," not *rise up*" is a "merism," and means every- out the words of the of that literary device heaven and earth" — these verses, however, recite the paragraphs the reasons motivate it.

namely, why did the than in their broader and the choice of the does not appear? ses. The Rabbis convinced that these

paragraphs articulated the heart of Jewish faith. They say explicitly (M. Ber. 2:2) that the first paragraph proclaims the sovereignty of God; the second, the duty to obey the commandments; and the third, the obligation to heed the commandments specific to the day time (because of the verse, "When you see it," which, in the days before electricity, presupposed daylight). I agree with their understanding of the first two paragraphs, although for a somewhat different reason than they provide, but I disagree with their explanation of what the third paragraph was meant to add. After all, if you are already obligated by the second paragraph to obey all the commandments, why do you need the third paragraph to restate your duty to obey only part of them?

Understanding the point of the first two paragraphs demands attention to the antecedents of their pronouns. In each, we are called upon to teach "them" to our children. In the first paragraph, though, the verses preceding that command (which tell us what we should teach) speak of our belief in one God and our duty to love and be loyal to that One God. In the second paragraph, the obligation to teach our children is preceded by the demand that we obey the commandments. We must, then, teach our children, and affirm ourselves, both Jewish beliefs and Jewish practices.

The third paragraph then establishes the educational system by which we are to remember these assertions of faith and these demands of action: we are to use tassels, an unusual dress, as a reminder system — a communal string around our fingers, as it were. The Torah then explicitly spells out the educational process that a tassel will enable: "When you see it, you shall remember all of Adonai's commandments and do them." A concrete and odd object called a tassel will be a physical reminder of your obligations to God; just seeing them will jar your memory of what you are to do. In case you missed the rationale the first time, the paragraph repeats, "Thus you will remember and do all of Adonai's commandments."

That paragraph also specifies the ultimate promise in doing so — that we will be holy to our God. English is a Christian language: those who created it were Christian, and to this day over 90% of those who speak it as their native tongue are Christian. It should not be surprising, then, that English words, especially religious words — like "messiah," "savior," "salvation," and even "holy" — have Christian connotations. Although I am a rabbi and have studied the Jewish tradition extensively, when I say "holy," I still think of "the Holy Ghost." The Hebrew word "*kadosh*," however, means set apart from all others, as in the Hebrew word for betrothal, *kiddushin*, which declares that bride and groom set each other apart from all other potential mates. The Prophets take this human phenomenon of marriage as the model for the relationship between God and the People Israel. Being holy to God means being in a monogamous relationship together.

The first paragraph of the *Sh'ma* is phrased in the second person *singular*, while the second paragraph refers to some of the same commandments (teaching children, *t'fillin*, *m'zuzah*) in the second person *plural*. Both individually and collectively, then, we affirm the beliefs and obey the commandments articulated in the *Sh'ma*, so as to merit the promise contained in the third paragraph of being God's People.

SH'MA

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

the experience of religious martyrdom known technically now as *k'dushat hashem*, "sanctification of the name [of God]."

Ashkenaz Jewry at the end of the eleventh century and into the twelfth was a thriving community of urban centers; recent scholarship stresses the degree that Jewish attitudes and behaviors reflect the general cultural "renaissance" that characterize the period. The intellectual atmosphere gave rise to new critical attitudes towards interpreting texts — hence our great Jewish commentator, Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of France, 1040–1105) and the school of commentators he developed, known as the Tosafists. It also spawned new types of writing, like the prose narrative, and a new interest in the portrayal of individuals and their inner thoughts. At the same time, however, religious extremism in the Christian culture found expression in a series of crusading expeditions, and these too found their Jewish analogue in an extreme response of martyrdom. The First Crusade, in particular, cut a path of destruction through the major Jewish communities along the Rhine. Both Christian and Jewish chroniclers describe the Christian decision to attack the Jews in the same way: "Behold we travel to a distant land to do battle . . . to kill and to subjugate all those kingdoms that do not believe in the Crucified. How much more so [should we kill and subjugate] the Jews, who killed and crucified him!" (translation, Robert Chazan, *The Destruction of European Jewry*). To a degree even more remarkable for its lack of precedent in Jewish history (medieval Jews did not even know the story of Masada), Jewish men, women and children chose martyrdom, either at their own hands or at the hands of their slaughterers. Over and over, their rallying cry at death is the single verse of the *Sh'ma*. Like their Sefardic counterparts, and medieval Muslims, Ashkenazi Jews understood the Christian concept of the divine Trinity as a case of polytheism; thus their insistence on God's unity is a vehement repudiation of Christian doctrine.

Furthermore, three surviving Hebrew prose records narrate the ravages of the First Crusade (1096) on the Rhine Jewish communities. For all of them, the martyrs' proclamation of God's unity in the *Sh'ma* has a literary force as well, emerging from the multitude of voices that compose a human community — men, women and children; rich and poor; learned and unlearned; communal leaders and marginal characters; those who fight valiantly, those whose defiance is passive, and even those who try to run away. All of this human variety is "unified" itself in the moment it meets its God. The story of the Jews of Worms makes this point vividly. Having sought shelter in the bishop's chambers, the Jews are attacked there by the Christian mob, and they choose willingly to die. Some are killed by the mob and some take their own lives. The chronicle of Solomon ben Simson continues: "Indeed fathers also fell with their children, for they were slaughtered together. They slaughtered brethren, relatives, wives and children. Bridegrooms [slaughtered] their intended and merciful mothers their own children. All of them accepted the heavenly decree unreservedly. As they commended their souls to their Creator, they cried out: "Hear O Israel! Adonai is our God; Adonai is One!" (Chazan translation).

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

quial “listen up,” or the scholarly “N.B.” Accordingly, a more accurate translation might begin, “Hear this,” “Listen up” or “Please note.” By the time it was introduced into the liturgy, however, the first line of the *Sh'ma* had become a familiar quotation; so reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that our translation remains familiar. So the usual “hear” is retained, along with the archaic vocative “O Israel” that follows (as in FOP, GOP, SLC, Birnbaum, SSS and Artsroll; KH uses simply “Israel.”) As for “Adonai is one,” KH has “Adonai alone,” an accurate enough rendering of the meaning, but missing the affect of the parallel structure in the Hebrew *Adonai eloheinu, Adonai echad*—which is captured nicely in “Adonai is our God, Adonai is one.” Artsroll suggests “the one and only.”

“*Blessed is the One . . .*” Almost every aspect of this line is problematic. At a word-for-word level, the sentence—literally, “Blessed name glory his-kingdom forever”—is almost ungrammatical. The only possible grammatical reading (“Blessed is the One the name of the glory of whose kingdom is everlasting”) is so convoluted that it is unlikely to represent the original intention. Lawrence Hoffman suggests that we may have two sentences here, *barukh shem* (“Blessed is the name [of God?]”) followed by *k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed*, “The glory of his kingdom is everlasting.” Birnbaum notes that *Barukh shem k'vod* was “regularly used in the Temple,” again suggesting that we have incorrectly punctuated the line by not breaking it up. But because current tradition and practice presupposes a single sentence, we ignore this possibility; for ease of reading, however, the sentence is rewritten.

Other translations include, “Praised be his glorious sovereignty throughout all time” (SS); “Blessed be the name and glory of God’s realm, forever” (KH); and “Blessed be the name of his glorious majesty forever and ever” (Birnbaum). We have retained “kingdom,” because its connotations are far more majestic than are those of the rivals “realm,” “sovereignty” or “majesty.”

We also face the particular problem that we do not know fully what “name” (*shem*) connoted in antiquity. It surely meant more than it does today. A change in name was a change in essence, for example (as with Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah), so declaring God’s name to be blessed was tantamount to acknowledging God’s very being.

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

VERSE (DEUT. 6:4), “HEAR O ISRAEL . . .” AND THE RESPONSE, “BLESSED IS . . .” STAND OUT LITURGICALLY AS AN APT SUMMARY OF JUDAISM’S BASIC MONOTHEISTIC PRINCIPLE AND THE HOPE FOR ALL HUMANITY THAT FLOWS FROM IT.

“Reform congregations say ‘Hear O Israel . . .’ and ‘Blessed is . . .’ standing” Halakhah prescribes sitting not standing for the *Sh'ma*. The issue goes back to a debate between Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai, in which Bet Hillel ruled (successfully) that the *Sh'ma* should be said in whatever position one happened to be when the time of its recitation arrived. In the ninth century, the Babylonian Gaon, Amram, enforced that position, as part of

as *k'dushat hashem*,

twelfth was a thriving that Jewish attitudes characterize the attitudes towards intercommunion ben Isaac of Sephard, known as the narrative, and a new

At the same time, session in a series of dialogue in an extreme path of destruction Christian and Jewish same way: “Behold all those kingdoms that we kill and subju-

Chazan, *The* lack of precedence of Masada), Jewish hands or at the hands of a single verse of the takenazi Jews under polytheism; thus their doctrine.

ravages of the First the martyrs’ proclaiming from the multitudes and children; rich characters; those who try to run away. All God. The story of the bishop’s chambers, willingly to die. Some of Solomon ben they were slaughtered bridegrooms [slaughtered them accepted the Creator, they cried (ation).

SH'MA

his religio-political attack on the Palestinians who still said the *Sh'ma* standing. His successful championing of the Hillelite perspective eventually entered the codes of Jewish law, which justified the Hillelite-Amram position with a variety of *ex post facto* arguments, that became standard Halakhah. When the Crusaders overran Palestine, destroying native Palestinian Jewish custom in the process, the Palestinian practice of standing died too, so that Jews round the world now sat for the *Sh'ma* as Amram had insisted.

Reform Jews, however, saw the *Sh'ma* as central to their claim that Judaism's uniqueness lay in its discovery of ethical monotheism. Wanting to acknowledge the centrality of the *Sh'ma*, and recognizing that people generally stand for the prayers that matter most, they began standing for the *Sh'ma* despite the Halakhah. They justified their position by arguing that the halakhic *act* of sitting for the "watchword of Jewish faith" was inconsistent with the halakhic *principle* of accepting the yoke of heaven: how could one not stand to proclaim God one?

Simultaneously, they began reciting the second line "Blessed be . . ." aloud as well, whereas traditional practice insisted on saying it quietly. They reasoned (with the Halakhah) that the second line was an accessory statement to the first, a verbal acceptance of God's reign, and should likewise be recited with full intentionality, but (against the Halakhah) that doing so could not be accomplished if it was recited quietly.

"*God, steadfast ruler (El melekh ne'eman)*" The phrase is cited in the midrash and the Talmud, because the Hebrew initials of these three words spell *amen*. "Resh Lakish said, 'If you say *amen* with all your might, the gates to the Garden of Eden will be open to you.' What does *amen* mean? Rabbi Chanina said, 'God steadfast ruler'" (Shab. 119b). The Tosafot (12th-century France) explain, "Whenever you say *amen*, you should think, 'God steadfast ruler.'" By the time of the Tosafot, however, the phrase had become associated with the *Sh'ma* as well, on account of a ninth-century midrashic teaching: "Let the recitation of *Sh'ma* not be light in your eyes, for its 248 words tally with the 248 parts of a human body. God says, 'If you guard the 248 words of the *Sh'ma* by reading them right, I will guard your 248 anatomical parts.'" Eleventh-century rabbis in Italy and France noted, however, that the midrashist's count was off! The *Sh'ma* has only 245 words. They therefore advocated adding *El melekh ne'eman* to make up the missing three. By the twelfth century, the practice spread to Provence, where a visiting Spanish rabbi, Zerachiah Halevi, encountered it. He brought it back to Spain with him, where he encountered fierce opposition. Most Spanish authorities (including the Zohar) railed against the custom, and by the sixteenth century, it was dying. Joseph Caro omitted it from his *Shulchan Arukh*, and Moses Isserles, the chief Polish authority who made the *Shulchan Arukh* decisive for Ashkenazi Jews too, mentions it only to caution against it. Joel Sirkes of Poland (1561–1640) says, "The custom has ceased; we do not say 'God steadfast ruler.'" Technically speaking, therefore, Neither the Spanish-Portuguese rite nor the Ashkenazi rite officially includes it, but Sefardi custom did retain it, and the practice is so widespread today despite the sources opposing it that we include it here.

"*Hear O Israel*" The *Sh'ma* comprises three biblical passages: Deuteronomy 6:4–9 — "accepting the yoke of the kingdom of heaven" (*kabbalat ol malkhut shamayim*);

Deuteronomy 11:13–21 — “accepting the yoke of the commandments” (*kabbalat ol hamitzvot*); and Numbers 15:37–41 — “the section on tassels” (*parashat tsitsit*), where *tsitsit* are described as a visible reminder that “I am Adonai your God,” precisely what “Hear O Israel: Adonai is our God; Adonai is One” asserts.

Jews were saying the *Sh'ma* twice daily as early as the first century (though possibly without all three paragraphs, at first).

The first line is often written with a large *ayin* (the last letter of *Sh'ma*), and a large *dalet* (the last letter of *echad*). Tradition explains it as an attempt to spell out *ed*, “witness,” since the *Sh'ma* is a testimony to the one true God. Others hold that the two enlarged letters prevent heretical error, since the *ayin* might be confused with an *alef* (which sounds similar), and the *dalet* might be read as a *resh* (which looks similar) — giving us, “*SHEma* (written with *alef*) *yisrael, Adonai elohainu Adonai acher*, “Maybe, Israel, Adonai our God is another deity.”

“*Blessed is the One the glory of whose kingdom is renowned forever*” Again, a doxology (see above, “Blessed be Adonai who is blessed forever and ever”), this one patterned after the end of the second book of Psalms (Ps. 72:19), “Blessed be his glorious name forever” (*Barukh shem k'vodo l'olam*). It also follows a pattern laid down in Nehemiah 9:5: “The Levites said, ‘Arise and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting; Blessed be your glorious name that is high above all blessing and praise.’”

The added concept “kingdom” intrudes upon the syntax to make translation difficult, if not impossible. It may be, then, that this new element, a single word in Hebrew (*malkhuto*) is a late addition. Originally, the invitation, “Hear O Israel,” evoked a psalm-like doxology without it: “Blessed be his glorious name forever and ever” (*Barukh shem k'vodo l'olam va'ed*).

The accent on God's ultimate reign on earth is usually viewed as a response to Roman rule. Jesus too preached “the coming of the kingdom” which must have been an important doctrine as early as the first century, and became more so, as the wars against Rome were fought.

This particular doxology was said in the Temple, following the high priest's recitation of the ineffable name of God (M. Yoma 3:8), possibly as two sentences: “Blessed be the name” (*Barukh shem*). “The glory of his kingdom is renowned forever” (*K'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed*).

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

known also as *Ba'al Hatanya* — “author of *The Tanya*,” the masterwork of Chabad Chasidism) maintains that nothing exists but God. This “acosmism” denies the reality of the cosmos. God is not only the basis of reality, God is the *only* reality; God is all there is. Creation is continuously brought into being through the divine word. If our eyes could

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SH'MA

truly see reality we would see no material world at all, but instead, behold God's continuous utterance of the Hebrew letters, the real matrix of all being.

In such a radical monism, the *Sh'ma*, the declaration of God's unity, means effectively that nothing exists besides God.

"In the heavens above and on the earth below, *Ein od*—there is nothing else [besides G-d]."
This means that even the material earth, which appears to the eyes of all to be actually existing is naught and complete nothingness in relation to the Holy One, blessed be He.

As his editor explains in the English translation: "The unity of God does not mean only that there are no other gods, but that there is nothing apart from God, i.e., there is no existence whatsoever apart from God's existence; the whole Creation is nullified within God as the rays of the sun within the orb of the sun. This is the meaning of *yichuda ila'a* ('higher unity')."

But how do we reconcile the apparent contradiction between this acosmic theory of reality and the inescapable experience of living in an obviously material world? Anyone can have a vision of the unity of all creation. It could be in a forest or by the shore of the sea. It could be during the concluding service of Yom Kippur or at the birth of a child. The question is how do we bring the awareness of that higher unity into the everyday reality of *this* world? That is the challenge of sacred living: to realize more unity — with patience and devotion, to make *this* world resemble the one on High. And this is where Judaism parts company with the religions of the East. Judaism understands this yearning as a sacred obligation, a requirement for holy living, a commandment.

This is the problem that the Ba'al Hatanya teaches is solved with the second line of the *Sh'ma*, the *Barukh shem* which is not in the biblical text itself, but was added by the Rabbis as a congregational response. The *Barukh shem*, he says, is our attempt to bring back into this world the supernal unity spoken of in the first line. We have a vision of ultimate unity when we utter *Sh'ma Yisra'el Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad* ("Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God; Adonai is One"). And when we recite *Barukh shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed* ("Blessed is the One the glory of whose kingdom is renowned forever"), we try to bring that unity into everyday reality.

"We may now understand," he suggests, "the statement in the Zohar (2:134a) that the verse *Sh'ma Yisra'el* is *yichuda ila'a* ('higher Unity'), and *Baruch shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va'ed* is *yichuda tata'a* ('lower unity')." The Ba'al Hatanya's editor goes on to explain that according to traditional rules of Hebrew grammar, the alphabet is divided into groups of letters, such that the letters in any single group are interchangeable with one another. The letters *alef*, *hay*, *vav*, and *yod* fall into one group, permitting *alef* to be interchanged with *vav*. The letters *aleph*, *chet*, *hay*, and *ayin* fall into another group, permitting *chet* to be interchanged with *ayin*. In this way *echad* (*alef*, *chet*, *dalet*) becomes *va'ed* (*vav*, *ayin*, *dalet*).

So the *echad* of the *Sh'ma* is the *yichuda ila'a*, the higher unity, seemingly unattainable in this world, only a dim memory of a sacred moment. But the *va'ed* of the *Baruch shem k'vod* is the *yichuda tata'a*, the lower unity, our bringing the oneness of the Holy One into our daily lives. Now we are ready to recite the *Sh'ma* and its response.

DANIEL LANDES

of these 3 make up 248, the number of positive *mitzvot*. In public recitation the prayer leader repeats the last three words, *a-do-nai e-loheikhem emet* to produce the desired total.

“Hear O Israel” The *Sh'ma* is prior to the *Amidah*, not only in the time of its recitation, but also in halakhic importance, as the *Sh'ma* comprises two biblically ordained laws while the *Amidah*, and perhaps even prayer itself, is only rabbinically commanded. The habitual recital of the *Sh'ma* (known as *K'riyat Sh'ma*, and sometimes shortened to “the *k'riyah*”) renews and confirms the believer’s faith, and frames the day by explaining how the world is to be perceived. There are actually two *mitzvot* here, one doctrinal and one ritual.

The *doctrinal mitzvah* is the affirmation of God’s unity, as commanded in the first verse (Deut. 6:4). By unity, we mean that God is incorporeal, indivisible and utterly unique (Maimonides [1135–1204], Jacob Emden [1697–1776]) and that the God of Israel will eventually be the God of the entire world (Rashi [1040–1105]).

The *ritual mitzvah* is the actual recitation which is also termed *l'yached et hashem*, “to unify the name [of God],” or *l'kabel ol malkhut shamayim*, “to accept the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.” This *mitzvah* applies passively to *B'nai Noah* (“descendants of Noah,” that is, covenanted non-Jews) also, for they may not practice idolatry. But unlike Jews, they are not required to affirm God’s unity actively. Maimonides calls this the “great principle upon which everything is predicated.”

Sh'ma requires *kavvanah*, meaning “direction” (literally), and by extension, “intent.” An ongoing halakhic debate questions whether *mitzvot* in general require *kavvanah*, or whether they “count” even if performed without it. But in any case, this *mitzvah* which affirms God’s unity presupposes thoughtfulness, so must be accompanied by *kavvanat halev*, “heartfelt intentionality.” If we fail to achieve this full intentionality, we do not fulfill the *mitzvah*, and must wait a moment — so as to avoid the semblance of affirming two gods — and then repeat the *Sh'ma* with proper intention.

Minimally, this *kavvanah* must accompany the first sentence of *Sh'ma*, the verse that affirms God’s unity. The next line, *Barukh shem*, though post-biblical and therefore recited silently, is also understood as a reflection upon God’s unity, so it too requires *kavvanah*. Ritually speaking, people who do not understand Hebrew, and so cannot attain intentionality when they read it, may use any language that they “hear,” that is, “understand,” but should use the Hebrew names for God. From a doctrinal point of view also, an exact rendering into another language fulfills the *mitzvah*, but a proper translation may be unavailable or even impossible in practice. Halakhah thus prefers using the original liturgical Hebrew for doctrinal purposes. One need not know the exact translation of the words, since all that is required is a sense of the general content of what is being said, and the liturgical context alone is assumed to provide that basic understanding, since one recognizes at least that this is the liturgical place where we affirm God’s unity. The presence

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of translation and commentaries on the Siddur page enhances *kavvanah* by providing fuller comprehension.

Kavvanah also demands vocal articulation and certain body language. The plain sense of "Hear" implies saying *Sh'ma* loudly enough to be heard, and *kavvanah* generates the requirement to say it ourselves, rather than to depend on "hearing" it from others in the congregation, even the prayer leader. Ordinarily, "hearing a blessing from another obligated person is the same as saying it oneself," but the *Sh'ma* differs, because we require each person's own active acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven. Custom today actually demands shouting the first verse in a full voice. The loud shout breaking through one's regular whispered chant drives home this special intent of affirming God's unity, and satisfies the characterization of the *Sh'ma* that we find in the *Tur* (code of Jewish law, 14th cent.), where it is called a "proclamation" ordered by our King out of "reverence and trepidation."

Doctrinally speaking, we need only recite the first verse with full *kavvanah*, but ritually considered, we do so as part of a *k'riyah*, a "recitation," that includes three biblical citations and the *Barukh shem* response. Opinions vary on how much of all this is the necessary minimum to count as a *k'riyah*. Early authorities cite either the first verse alone, the first paragraph, or the first two paragraphs. Maimonides includes the third paragraph too, while most everyone else agrees that the third paragraph was included liturgically in order to fulfill the daily commandment to remember the Exodus, but not, strictly speaking, as part of the *mitzvah* of reciting the *Sh'ma*. Some even hold that no specific paragraph is specified, and that any section of Torah would do! The final halakhic decision is that the *k'riyah* requires all three paragraphs.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903–1993) differentiates *k'riyat Sh'ma* from other biblically ordained portions that are to be read, the priestly benediction, for instance. These others must be read exactly as they appear in the Torah, so that if even one word or letter is skipped, it is as if we have performed no *mitzvah* at all. With the *Sh'ma*, however, even though we must say it as written, if we do not complete the portion, we still fulfill the obligation of "reciting." To be sure, we do not thereby do all we should: We do not fulfill the complete obligation to recite the three portions. But we do fulfill the *mitzvah* of *k'riyat Sh'ma*.

But Rabbi Soloveitchik differentiates *ex post facto* fulfillment (*b'di'avad*) from the *ab initio* ideal (*l'chatchilah*). Ideally, the *Sh'ma* should be recited with every word pronounced properly. Successive words that share the same consonant at the end of the first and the beginning of the second (like *b'khol l'vav'kha*) should be separated clearly. Words inadvertently slurred, misspoken or omitted should be corrected either on the spot or by returning to the beginning of the verse and continuing again from there. The portions should be read in the order of the Siddur, with its imposed hierarchy of value: first, the *mitzvot* of affirming God's unity, loving God and learning Torah; second, accepting all *mitzvot*; and third, the *mitzvah* of *tsitsit*, specifically, as a reminder of the other *mitzvot*.

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Since the *k'riyat Sh'ma* is bracketed by blessings, many authorities extend the biblical obligation to include the blessings as well. Ordinary conversation is banned, for exam- ple, in between the paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* (unless it is undertaken out of fear that fail- ure to initiate it will result in punishment from the person slighted, or if the conversa- tion is a response to someone who deserves honor); so too it is disallowed between the *Sh'ma* and its blessings, or between the blessings themselves.

The integrity of the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings raises other issues too. Why, for example, is there no introductory blessing of command, as we find with other ritual obligations: Something like, ". . . who has sanctified us with his commandments and has com- manded us to recite the *Sh'ma*"? Moreover, we saw above that the *mitzvah* of affirming God's unity (in the first sentence) requires *kavvanat halev*, deep intention of the heart. There is, however, a simpler form of intentionality to consider: *kavvanah latseit*, the intention simply to fulfill the *mitzvah* in question. The *Chazon Ish* rules that if some- one recites *k'riyat Sh'ma* in the proper liturgical order, even without the intention of ful- filling the *mitzvah*, the obligation has nonetheless been fulfilled, since the very doing of the *mitzvah* (that is, reciting the blessings with the biblical paragraphs embedded within them) assumes that one had the prior purpose of fulfilling it, at least implicitly. Regarding the absent blessing, then, we might say that the explicit formulation of com- mand that a blessing would convey is implicitly present in the very saying of the *Sh'ma* within its liturgical structure.

Various customs are attached to the recitation of the first line.

1. It is said in a loud voice, initiated by the prayer leader, with all following together as befits the coronation of the King.
2. Care is taken not to run words together, especially *Yisra'el* and *A-do-nai*, and *A-do- nai* and *echad*.
3. *Echad* is recited with a slight elongation of the *chet*, and greater elongation of the *dalet*, emphasizing that the last letter is not a *resh*, since instead of *echad* ("one") we would have *acher* ("other") as if to say that God is "the other deity." The *dalet*, how- ever, should not be pronounced with excessive force, lest it become gibberish, like *echadeh*.
4. *Sh'ma Yisra'el* is recited with the right hand covering the eyes, to achieve *kavvanah*.
5. We say it in awe and trepidation, with a sense of newly proclaiming God king, and with the resolve that we would give up life rather than violate this belief.

Other than the doctrinal and the ritual *mitzvot* mentioned above, we find in the *Sh'ma* also the following commandments: 1) Loving God ("You shall love A-do-nai your God" [Deut. 6:5]). This means directing one's heart to the reality of God as our ultimate source of joy. Desire for any material object or affirming any spiritual goal that does not make love for God central violates this commandment. 2) *Talmud torah*, "learning and teaching Torah" ("Instruct them to your children" [Deut. 6:7]). Our obligation is first to our own children, but students become honorary children. We should learn Torah all our life and teach Torah to all Jews. The community is

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obliged to establish schools that every Jew may learn the texts and practices of our people.

Some say the *Sh'ma* while using the following words within it to remind them of the Ten Commandments (not in order of the Decalogue itself):

From paragraph 1: "A-do-nai your God" = 1st commandment ("I am A-do-nai your God"); "A-do-nai is One" = 2nd commandment ("You shall have no other Gods before Me"); "You shall love" = 3rd commandment ("Do not take A-do-nai's name in vain"); "Your house" = 10th commandment ("Do not covet your neighbor's house)."

From paragraph 2: "Gather your grain" = 8th commandment ("Do not steal"); "You will quickly perish" = 6th commandment ("Do not murder"); "That your days and your children's days . . . may be numerous" = 5th commandment ("Honor your father and mother that your days may be numerous").

From paragraph 3: "And not follow your mind and eyes" = 7th commandment ("Do not commit adultery"); "Thus will you remember" = 4th commandment ("Remember the Sabbath Day"); "I am A-do-nai your God" = 9th commandment ("Do not bear false witness" — the Midrash explains, "God knows when we lie").

"*Blessed is the One . . .*" Being post-biblical, *Barukh shem* is recited in an undertone, after a short pause, with the intent of saying that God's reign is eternal.

JUDITH PLASKOW

that God is One? On the simplest level, the *Sh'ma* can be understood as a passionate rejection of polytheism. In the context of the commandment, "You shall have no other gods besides Me," it is a polemic against foreign worship. It is reminiscent of the familiar midrash (which, like the *Sh'ma*, is also often learned early) that depicts Abraham destroying his father's idols because he knows instinctively that there is only one deity.

Viewed in this way, the *Sh'ma* supports a popular (although inaccurate) reading of Jewish history, according to which Israel, from its very beginnings, brought to the world the idea of one God who was creator and ruler of the universe.

This understanding of the *Sh'ma*, however, does not address the issue of God's oneness. It defines "one" in opposition to "many," but it never really specifies what it means to say that God/Adonai/the One who is and will be is one. Is God's oneness mere numerical singularity? Does it signify simply that rather than many forces ruling the universe, there is only one? A simple numerical definition of oneness is compatible with idolatry, if it is just the worship of one finite God imaged as infinite — as if the chief deity of the Canaanite pantheon were suddenly elevated to the only one, the king of all the earth.

We can, of course, say that we associate numerical uniqueness with our particular God, Adonai, affirming here both 1) that there is only one God, and 2) that Adonai is

his (sic) name. On this view, however, attempts to name God in new ways or to broaden the range of imagery used for God are experienced as assaults on monotheism. If God is so singular as to necessitate identification with a particular image, other images must be assumed to refer to other deities.

There is another way to understand oneness, however, and that is as inclusiveness. In Marcia Falk's words, "The authentic expression of an authentic monotheism is not a singularity of image but an embracing unity of a multiplicity of images." Rather than being the chief deity in the pantheon, God includes the qualities and characteristics of the whole pantheon, with nothing remaining outside. God is all in all. This is the God who "forms light and creates darkness, who makes peace and creates everything," because there can be no power other than or in opposition to God who could possibly be responsible for evil. This is the God who is male and female, both and neither, because there is no genderedness outside of God that is not made in God's image. On this understanding of oneness, extending the range of images we use for God challenges us to find God in ever-new aspects of creation. Monotheism is about the capacity to glimpse the One in and through the changing forms of the many, to see the whole in and through its infinite images. "Hear O Israel": despite the fractured, scattered, and conflicted nature of our experience, there is a unity that embraces and contains our diversity and that connects all things to each other.



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the creation of the world and are mysteriously linked with the creative process itself. It is told of the master builder of the wilderness tabernacle, Bezalel, that he knew how to combine the letters by which the heavens and the earth were made. And elsewhere we read that one of the last things God did before He rested on the seventh day from His world-work was to determine the precise shape of the letters.

The **TIPTIN OTIYOT** are more than just the signs for sounds. They are symbols whose shape & name, placement in the alphabet, & words they begin put them each at the center of a unique spiritual constellation. They are themselves holy. They are vessels carrying within the light of the Boundless One.

The **TIPTIN OTIYOT** have been sources of wisdom, meditation, and fantasy for the Jewish people all through their history. There have grown about each of them centuries-old traditions. One mystical alphabet after another. I hope with this book to keep that tradition alive for so many who have forgotten even some of the letters.

אָרְבֵּי

introduction

Before you try to read this book there are a few things about the letters of the Hebrew alphabet or the **TIPTIN OTIYOT** it will help you to know.

The **TIPTIN OTIYOT** exist independently of ink and paper or even words. We learn that when Moses shattered the first set of tablets, the letters ascended to the One who gave them. And in another place, the story is told of Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon that he was wrapped in a scroll of the Torah and burned at the stake. Moments before his death, his students cried out, "Master! What do you see?" He answered, "The parchment is burning, but the letters are flying toward the heavens!"

The **TIPTIN OTIYOT** have been around since before

After a while you will get to know each letter. You will come to greet its shape and its sound like an old friend. You will learn how to draw it and how to use it and how to converse with it. It will be open to you. And await your gaze.

גִּרְוֹן הַפְּלִקָּה אֶת גִּי
לְסֹפֵר אֶת הַאֲוִיִּיּוֹת

Praised be He who has taught
my hand to scribe the letters.

Erev Purim 5735
24 February 1975
Sudbury, Massachusetts

Amoshe Fushner
אָמוֹשֶׁה פּוּשְׁנֶר

I have chosen a Hebrew alphabet adapted from the one used in Eastern European Torah scrolls complete with the traditional scribal ornamentation. I think it is the holiest one. I have written the letters Bet בּ Traf טּ Pey פּ Shin שׁ and Tav תּ with a dagesh or dot since they are most frequently named and pronounced as if the dagesh or the dot were present.

The transliterations are according to the way it seems to me that most people could most easily pronounce the word — except in cases where a traditional transliteration has become commonly accepted.

The commentary and additional legends are written vertically on each page and are drawn from Talmudic and Midrashic sources. The specific traditions describing the details of how to write each letter come from Mishnat Sofetim which traditionally is printed in editions of Mishna Berura within the section dealing with the laws of Tefillin or phylacteries.

exile all those who have been banished. Gather together all the broken pieces.

Shin is the letter just before the end. It is the fitting together of all the parts. The restoration of all the scattered shards. This is Shin: PEACE **וְשָׁלוֹם** SHALOM. Completion. Wholeness.

So at last there is rest. The seventh day **שַׁבָּת** SHABBAT. The suspension of anxiety. Shin is the keeper of Shabbat **שַׁבָּת** SHOMER SHABBAT. Another lights the Shabbat lights and gathers in the **שֵׁפָא** SHEFA resplendent radiance of Shin into her home. And the presence of the Holy One is among us: **שְׁחִינָא** SHECHINA

On the doorstep of every Jewish home there is a Shin. This is the Skin of **שָׂדָד** SHADDAI God's most mysterious name. It is also the Skin of **וְשָׁלוֹם** SIM SHALOM. Let God be present in this home. "Let there be peace."



The Shin **ש** is composed of three letters. On the right there is a **וַי** whose head is bent back a little. In the middle there is a **ד** also leaning back a little. And on the left is a **זַי** with three crownlets.

Something of Shin **ש** is shattering. The breaking of the primal vessels **וְשִׁבְרָתָא** SH'VI-RAT HA-KALIM. The discord and confusion which is the beginning of growing. And then trying to get it all back together again.

Sound the great ram's horn. Sound the **וְשׁוֹפָר** SHOFAR. Bring home from

It is important that each of shin's **ש** three heads not intersect, and some put a crown on the center **ד**.

One tradition teaches that the ten utterances were written on the original tablets of stone in such a way that each letter went clear through to the other side. Rabbi Hisda taught that the letters final Mem and Samech ׀ ׀ which each enclose a space, nevertheless, remained intact by what we can only assume was a miracle.

work. Lest you forget for Whom you work.
 This then is the Mem's chariot מַמְשֵׁי מֶמֶךְ אֲבָרָה. Ascending unto the redeemer himself מַמְשֵׁי מַשְׁחִיחַ.



That is why Mem is the מַמְשֵׁי מַמְשֵׁי מַמְשֵׁי מַמְשֵׁי, the stuff by which life in this world is sustained: Food לֶחֶם מַאֲכָל, Water מַיִם מַיִם, Wilderness מִדְבָּר מִדְבָּר, And מַלְאָכָה מִלְאָכָה, And מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת.



And Mitzvot. Holy commandments. Given to us by the Holy One through Moses, our teacher: מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת, MOSHE RABEYNU, Covenant obligations.

Sacred laws like the lights of a מִנְדָּרָה מִנְדָּרָה מִנְדָּרָה מִנְדָּרָה, MENDRAH which transform the ordinary candlestick of everyday into the ecstasy of cleaving to God.

Mark it upon your doorposts מִזְוֹת מִזְוֹת, MEZZUZOT. Lest you forget why you

Since the final Mem ׀ and the Samech ׀ are so similar, great care must be taken to insure that the final Mem has easily recognizable corners on the bottom while the letter Samech, on the other hand, be rounded.

It is the silent humility **אָנאַוואַח** ANAVAH of serving the Master of the Universe. Serving. **מִשְׁרָבִים** MISHRABIM. Emptying yourself so that you can be filled with G-d.

BUT NOT ALL WHO SERVE, SERVE THE LIVING G-d. TO AYIN ALSO BELONGS THE AYIN OF THE golden calf **אֵינִי אֵינִי** AGEL and the Ayin of the perverse service of a fetish, of an idol: **אֵינִי אֵינִי אֵינִי** AVDAH ZARA. This is the Ayin of slavery which shames. **אֵינִי אֵינִי אֵינִי** AVADIM HA-YINU. "We were slaves..."

It is important that the two heads of Ayin **אֵינִי** not touch one another. This perhaps is because the Ayin is a joining of two letters: the Yod' and the Zayin (in the same way that other letters result from the combination of 2 and 3 letters) and their respective discreteness must be preserved.

BUT THERE IS ALSO AN AYIN OF SERVICE WHICH FREES. THE GREAT COLLAR, THE **אֵינִי** OHL BY WHICH THE OX SERVES HIS MASTER IS NOT HIS SHAME BUT HIS FULFILLMENT. THIS IS THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH



Ayin **אֵינִי** does not speak. It only sees. It is an eye **אֵינִי** AYIN. CLOSE YOUR EYES. OPEN YOUR MOUTH. NOW TRY TO SEE. THAT IS THE SOUND OF AYIN.

ON BELOW THE BASE LINE. TO THE LEFT OF THE YOD WE DRAW A ZAYIN WITH A VERY NARROW BODY WHICH IS THEN CONNECTED TO THE EXTENSION ON THE YOD.

THE AYIN BEGINS WITH A YOD WHOSE TAIL IS FIRST EXTENDED DOWN AND THEN ON AN ANGLE TOWARD THE LEFT. IT GRADUALLY THICKENS AND CONTINUES

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

"Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God" An infrequent biblical formula, never found in biblical prayers, but central to God's self-revelation to Moses in Exod. 3:6, 15, 16, and 4:5. Its prominence here reflects a rabbinic theological doctrine known as "merits of the ancestors" (*z'khut avot*), according to which the righteous actions of the patriarchs continue on to benefit their descendants. In biblical thought, it is the *promise* inherent in the *covenant* that continues through time, not the specific meritorious *deeds* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (p. 62)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

Traditionally, the *Amidah* is recited silently and then repeated by the prayer leader (= *chazarat*

hashatz, literally, "the repetition by the agent of the community"). This enables those who do not know the prayers to fulfill their obligation to pray by answering "Amen" after each of the reader's blessings. But repeating the *Amidah* that way takes time, and people are tempted to talk or let their minds wander during the repetition.

As a result, during the last several centuries, an alternative method for reciting the *Amidah* has emerged: the *Hoeche Kidushah* (pronounced HAY-chee k'-DOO-shah). This method eliminates the need to repeat (p. 63)

1. AVOT ("ANCESTORS")

¹ Blessed are You, Adonai, our God and our ancestors' God: Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God, great, mighty, and revered God, supreme God, who acts most piously, who is master of everything, who remembers the piety of our ancestors, and who brings a redeemer to their descendants for the sake of his name in love.

אבות

ing to the original in its context than the gender-neutral "ancestors." Although one would like to think (p. 67)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

"Our ancestors' God" The word *avot*, as Joel Hoffman notes, "in general, is clearly inclusive" and should be translated as "ancestors," not "fathers." Older non-Orthodox prayer books, however (Einhorn's *Olath Tamid*, the *Union Prayer Book*, and Reconstructionist and Conservative liturgies prior to *Kol Haneshamah* and *Siddur Sim* (p. 65)

FALK (FEMINISM)

"Our ancestors' God" As Joel Hoffman notes, *avot* may also be read as "fathers" or "patriarchs," and (contrary to Hoffman) I believe these are closer in mean-

HAUPTMAN (TALMUD)

Theoretically, we are in the section of the *Amidah* that is called *Shevach*, "Praise." But the very first blessing introduces the notion of a redeemer who has not yet appeared and whose task is still ahead. This means that even in this opening section, God is being petitioned for help. The second blessing too seems on the face of it merely to be describing God's attributes or ongoing activities, like sustaining life, healing the sick, and giving life to the dead. But here too, the entire blessing is a petition that is just worded so as to give (p. 68)

TURGIES)

The word *avot*, as "in general, is should be translated "fathers." Older books, however *amid*, the *Union* constructionist and es prior to *Kol* *ddur Sim* (p. 65)

As Joel Hoffman we read as "fathers" contrary to Hoff- re closer in mean- ing to the original *in its context* than the gender- neutral "ancestors." Although one would like to think (p. 67)

in the section of s called *Shevach*, very first blessing on of a redeemer peared and whose is means that even ion, God *is* being The second blessing e of it merely to be ributes or ongoing ing life, healing the dead. But ing is a petition o as to give (p. 68)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

"Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God . . . Abraham's protector" The *Amidah* is an anthology of blessings designed to walk us through a comprehensive spiritual regimen: parents, divine power, holiness, service, gratitude, peace. Much has been written about the importance of each theme and its place in the larger sequence, but Nosson Sternhartz, the amanuensis of Nachman of Bratslav, in his *Likkutei Halakhot* (O. Ch., section 1), asks, why begin with parents, specifically Abraham? Could it perhaps be because of some particularly "prayerful" characteristic of the first Jewish father? And does the unconditional, selfless love of a parent teach us something about the nature of prayer itself?

We know that the patriarchs (p. 69)

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"Blessed [Barukh] are You [atah], Ado-nai" At *Barukh*, bend the knees. At *atah*, bow from the waist with upper body and head (but not as far as the belt, for that would connote the arrogance of a prideful piety). At Ado-nai (God's name), bend back up straight, for it is written: "The Lord [Ado-nai] raises up those who are bowed down."

The *avot* (literally, "fathers," but here, as evidenced by the old Yiddish rabbinic-influenced translations that translate *avotainu* as *dic eltern* or (p. 70)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

THE FIRST THREE BLESSINGS, KNOWN TRADITIONALLY AS BLESSINGS OF PRAISE, NOW COMMENCE.

THE FIRST OF THE THREE ESTABLISHES OUR COVENANTAL CLAIM ON GOD, WHOM WE APPROACH KNOWING THAT WE ARE SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS OF THE BIBLICAL ANCESTORS WHO ESTABLISHED THE COVENANT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

"Our God and our ancestors' God" From time to time, the question has arisen as to whether converts may recite this blessing, in that they are not descended from Abraham as (presumably) born Jews are. (p. 70)

יְבָרַךְ אֱתָהּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹן
גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקִנְיָה הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנָי בְּנֵיהֶם
לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION) "Our ancestors' God" Others, "fathers," not "ances-

tors." The list of names makes it clear that the author meant only the "fathers," but the word *avot* can mean either "patriarchs" in the technical sense or "ancestors," depending on the context. Some versions (e.g., *Gates of Prayer* [Reform], *Siddur Lev Chadash* [Liberal, England]) insert *imoteinu*, giving us "our God and our fathers' and mothers' God," or "our patriarchs' and matriarchs' God."

Others, "God of our ancestors," but this translation misses the parallel structure in the Hebrew: *elohai-nu*, "God-[of]-us" and *elohai avoteinu*, (p. 71)

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF PRAISE

[From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

²Remember us for life, our king who delights in life, and write us in the book of life, for your sake, our living God.]

³Our king helps and saves and protects! ⁴Blessed are You, Adonai, Abraham's protector.

[From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

זְכֹרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים. מִלְּךָ חַפְצֵי
בְּחַיִּים. וְכַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים.
לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.]

מִלְּךָ עֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

"Great, mighty, and revered God" From Deut. 10:17, but quoted in the late biblical prayer of Neh. 9:32, and then used again here. Since there are other cases too where parts of the *Amidah* are found in Deuteronomy and/or Nehemiah 9, it has been suggested that some form of the *Amidah* goes back to the late biblical era; more likely, however, the similarities occur because the *Amidah* stands in a continuum of developing prayer language from the Bible to the Rabbis. In both Deuteronomy 10 and Nehemiah 9, "great, mighty, and revered" occurs in a context referring to the patriarchs (Deut. 10:15) or the covenant that God made with them (Neh. 9:32), so it was natural to include the phrase here.

According to biblical use, these attributes are listed in ascending order: *gadol* ("great") is a general term; *gibor* ("mighty") applies to God and humans; *nora* ("revered" or "awe-inspiring") is reserved for God.

"Supreme God [el elyon], who acts most piously, who is master of everything" A modification of the name through which Melchizedek blessed Abram (Gen. 14:19) — "Supreme God [el elyon], creator of heaven and earth" — and probably borrowed from the Canaanite deity El. In its biblical context, "Supreme God" elevates God over other deities, although by the time of the liturgy, this was no longer its sense, since by then a "purely" monotheistic context was taken for granted.

The biblical phrase "creator of heaven and earth" is an example of a literary device called a "merism," that is, two opposite terms that express totality by referring to the opposites as well as everything in between. Our blessing changes the initial phrase from Genesis into "master" (or "creator") "of everything," so as to avoid the possible misunderstanding that God has created *only* the heaven and earth. It also breaks the biblical epithet apart by inserting "who acts most piously" in the middle, a reference to God's *chesed*. *Chesed* is a biblical concept related to the idea of the covenant and denotes actions of loyalty performed by a strong party for a weaker one.

In sum, this phrase "Supreme God, who acts most piously, who is master of everything" is a remarkable example of how a pre-biblical phrase used of the Canaanite deity

Yom Kippur, add:

זְכוֹרְנוּ לַחַיִּים
בְּחַיִּים. וְכַתְּנֵה
לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהֵי

מִלְךָ עוֹזֵר
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה

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El came to be applied to God by a biblical author and was then further reinterpreted and modified in rabbinic liturgy.

"Who remembers the piety of our ancestors" It is assumed that, in a measure for measure way, we are the recipients of God's *chesed* ("steadfast love") because God was once the recipient of the patriarchs' *chesed*. We may therefore ask for God's beneficence, in the *Amidah* that follows, even if we believe that we do not deserve it through our own actions or merits.

"Remember us for life" The first of several insertions added during the ten days of repentance (the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur), a period with no special significance in the Bible, but very important to the Rabbis. Its main theme is God as judge; as such, God is depicted here as a king, since one of the king's main roles in antiquity was judicial. The notion of God's controlling our destiny through a book of life is biblical (Exod. 32:32–33; Isa. 4:3; Ps. 69:29; Mal. 3:16–18; Dan. 12:1), most likely borrowed from Mesopotamia.

"Abraham's protector" More literally "shield." God is often depicted as the psalmist's shield (e.g., Ps. 3:4), and "shield of Abraham" comes from Gen. 15:1, where God makes a covenant with Abraham, saying, "I am a shield to you." "Shield of Abraham" (*magen avraham*) was probably a frozen epithet for God even before the blessing was composed, since it is found in a prayer in a second-century B.C.E. extra-biblical work called Ben Sirah (51:12): "Praise the shield of Abraham."

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

the entire *Amidah*, but preserves the communal recitation of the third blessing, the *Kdushah*, a matter about which the Rabbis felt very strongly, because of the biblical mandate that they read in Prov. 14:28: "The glory of the Sovereign is in the multitude of people" — that is (as the Rabbis interpreted it), "Group sanctification honors God more than individual prayer does" (Ber. 53a).

The way it works is that in the morning services (*Shacharit*), the congregation and cantor sing the first two blessings together and chant the third one (the *Kdushah*) antiphonally, with the congregation joining in for (1) *Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh . . .*, (2) *Barukh k'vod . . .*, (3) *Yimlokh Adonai l'olam . . .*, and (4) the final line (the *chatimah*), *Barukh atah Adonai, ha'el hakadosh*. Everyone then continues silently to the end of the *Amidah*.

This method is consistent with the Rabbis' instructions that we not interrupt the flow that joins the first major rubric (the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings) to the following one (the *Amidah*). Attuned as they were to the emotional — almost musical — quality of the service, they ruled that nothing intercede between the blessing following the *Sh'ma* and the blessing that begins the *Amidah*. In the morning, therefore, congregations who use the *Hoeche Kdushah* go directly from the end of the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings into a communal singing of the first two blessings of the *Amidah*, as described.

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF PRAISE

The recitation of the *Amidah* for *Minchah* (the afternoon service) and *Musaf* (the additional service) differ. Since no *Sh'ma* precedes them, the concern to maintain continuity between the *Sh'ma* and the *Amidah* does not apply. In those services, then, if the *Hoeche K'dushah* is applied, the leader usually begins alone; the congregation (1) joins in for the *K'dushah* as described above, (2) recites the first two blessings (which it has not yet said) silently, (3) skips the public *K'dushah* (which it has already said) but says the private and silent version of it including the third blessing, and (4) recites the rest of the *Amidah* silently through to the end.

Proper recourse to the *Hoeche K'dushah* should be limited to congregations where there is reason to believe that people know how to pray the *Amidah* on their own. It is inappropriate also for *Shacharit* of Shabbat and Festivals, when there is no need to shorten prayer so as to rush off to work. Conservative congregations often use it for *Musaf*, however, partly to save time and partly to offset the discomfort that many Conservative rabbis and congregants have with a public and cantorial rendering of the middle blessing of *Musaf*, which requests (in the traditional liturgical text) the restoration of the sacrifices or (in the revised version of Conservative prayer books) at least the recollection of them.

Shevach: Blessings of Praise

Though the Rabbis explain the logic behind the paragraphs of the *Sh'ma*, they nowhere do so regarding the *Amidah*. It is a fact, however, that every *Amidah* begins and ends with the same two triads of blessings, while only the intermediary ones change. Moreover, the very name for our prayer book—*Siddur* (meaning “order”)—suggests that the Rabbis were conscious of sequence. I suggest three interpretations of why the Rabbis chose these particular prayers in this particular order to begin every *Amidah*.

1. *Temporal order*: The first blessing speaks of our link to God in the past; the second, of our hopes for salvation in the future; and the third, of how we experience God as holy and awesome in the present.
2. *The order of our relationships to God*: The first (*Avot* = “ancestors”) describes God as an old and familiar ancestral deity who shielded Abraham and who will remember his love for our ancestors in loving and protecting us. The second (*G'vurot* = “power”) describes a God who supports, sustains, and even revives us. The third (*K'dushah*) speaks of God as separate and apart from us, as wholly other, and as therefore deserving of respect and awe. The *Amidah* begins, then, by recognizing God's manifestation to us in all three of these ways.
3. *Identifying the players in the prayer to follow*: The three blessings identify the parties involved in prayer and the relationship among them. In the *Avot*, we are descendants of the patriarchs (and matriarchs), not mere strangers who appear before God with nothing to speak for us except our own merits; we come, rather, with *chasei avot*, our ancestors' acts of loyalty and loving-kindness, that we hope God will remember for our good. The third blessing acknowledges God as the *mysterium tremendum*, the mystery before whom even the angels quake in fear, and whose honor (*kavod*—literally, “heaviness”) fills the earth. Our reaction to this God, though, is not just fear, but praise, as we pray that He reign in Zion forever. The

first blessing identifies us; the third blessing acknowledges God; and the second blessing describes our primary relationship together: God can and does use His power to make it possible for us to live and thrive, perhaps even after death. Indeed, while only the second blessing speaks specifically of God's power, the other two refer to it obliquely, thus indicating that it is that aspect of the relationship between God and us that will be most invoked in the prayers that follow.

"Our ancestors' God . . . master of everything" This God of our ancestors is "master of everything" in the sense that He created and owns everything (the two meanings of the Hebrew verb *koneh*), and thus has supreme power, enough even to bring to the descendants of those ancestors a messianic redeemer. Jewish consciousness of time is not measured by moving repetitively from one day to the next, making each day identical to the one before. It operates with eras, from the past through the present to the anticipated redemptive future, providing roots to our present and hope for what is yet to come.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

Shalom), followed Orthodox custom and said "our fathers." Even the relatively modern *Service of the Heart*, the British predecessor to *Siddur Lev Chadash* and the first of the many liberal prayer books that have emerged since the 1970s, still offered "God of our fathers" as its English translation.

All contemporary liberal prayer books thereafter have rejected this option, preferring "our ancestors" or sometimes the poetic "God of all generations." Their unanimous commitment to gender inclusivity in prayer stands in sharp contrast to Orthodox prayer books like Artscroll and Birnbaum, which still say either "our forefathers" or "our fathers."

The latest change in many books (the gender-sensitive edition of *Gates of Prayer*, *Kol Haneshamah*, and *Siddur Lev Chadash*) is to add *v'imoteinu*, "and our mothers," not only in English but in Hebrew as well, followed by the names of the matriarchs, to match the patriarchs.

The Israeli Reform *Ha'avodah Shebalev* and the new Israeli Conservative Movement Siddur (1998), *Va'ani T'filati*, have no translation from the Hebrew, of course, but treat the Hebrew as the vernacular it is for Israeli worshipers. In a way, however, each does provide a "translation." Both prayer books divide the page in half and offer two options to their worshipers. Alongside the traditional text (which appears in large print), there appears, in the Israeli Reform text (in Hebrew), "God of our fathers and our mothers, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah." In *Va'ani T'filati*, the same egalitarian alternative is offered, though the text in the Conservative prayer book appears in the same-sized print as the traditional formula. The former option bespeaks the traditionalism that distinguishes liberal Judaism in Israel, while the latter choice indicates that the same forces that inform liberal Diaspora Judaism are present in Israel as well.

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF PRAISE

"Who remembers the piety of our ancestors." Isaac Mayer Wise found the rabbinic doctrine of *z'khut avot* ("the merit of the ancestors") morally repugnant because it assumed that God rewards us on account of the good deeds performed by our ancestors. As a follower of the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Wise believed that individuals could acquire merit only by their own autonomous moral stands. But Wise also clung fervently to the idea of covenant as the "immovable center" of Judaism. He held that the covenant between God and Israel is eternal, calling each generation and every individual Jew to strive to fulfill its conditions. Wise therefore substituted *b'rit* ("covenant") for "piety" and arrived at "and rememberest Thy covenant with our ancestors." He thereby managed to retain the rhythm of the traditional Hebrew while transforming its meaning to accord with his own principles.

On a different note, gender-inclusive prayer books like *Siddur Lev Chadash* and *Kol Haneshamah* have added *imahot* ("matriarchs") to *avot* ("patriarchs") in the Hebrew, lest Hebrew readers mistakenly think *avot* is "fathers" alone, rather than the more inclusive "ancestors," as we render it here.

"Redeemer" Since most liberal Jews have affirmed the ideal of a messianic era instead of the traditional belief in a personal messiah, all liberal liturgies of the past two hundred years have found this word problematic. A few, like the 1819 and 1841 editions of the *Hamburg Temple Prayer Book*, retained the traditional word *go'el* ("redeemer") for the Hebrew, but translated it *Erlosung*, German for "redemption." Their pattern is often followed to this day, namely, to leave the Hebrew text intact, while employing creative translations that remove or mute meanings that their authors find objectionable.

Others, however, too numerous to cite, reject this approach, preferring (at least here) to have the Hebrew say exactly what the translation does. They therefore substitute *g'ullah* ("redemption") for *go'el* ("redeemer") and translate accordingly, making Hebrew and English equally consistent with their belief. Interestingly, both Israeli non-Orthodox prayer books, *Ha'avodah Shebalev* and *Va'ani T'filati*, have opted for *g'ullah* as opposed to *go'el* in the texts of their liturgies.

"Abraham's protector" In response to the modern demand for gender equality, most liberal liturgies nowadays (Israel's *Ha'avodah Shebalev*, one of two optional versions of *Va'ani T'filati*, the British Liberal *Siddur Lev Chadash*, North American Reform's gender-sensitive *Gates of Prayer*, the Reconstructionist *Kol Haneshamah*) add the name of Sarah to that of Abraham. Some (*Ha'avodah Shebalev*) couple *magen Avraham* with *poked Sarah* ("who remembers Sarah"), a reference to Gen. 21:1, "And Adonai remembered (*pakad*) Sarah." This option achieves the symmetry of using biblical prototypes for both Abraham and Sarah, since *magen Avraham* reflects Gen. 14:20, where, however, *magen* is not just "shield" but the more aggressive "the One who delivers your enemies into your hand." Others, however, prefer *ezrat Sarah*, which they translate as "protector" or "help" of Sarah. They avoid *poked* ("remember") because the root meaning of *poked* is "to visit" and need not imply "visit in memory." It can also mean to visit for the sake of giving an order (hence, *pakid*, modern Hebrew for a clerk who takes orders), or to punish, or even to have sexual relations.

FALK (FEMINISM)

the Rabbis saw God as the protector of *all* our ancestors, the text itself, which goes on to enumerate the *avot* by name, including only the forefathers in the list, contradicts this reading. Sadly, there is not much evidence that the Rabbis gave thought to the foremothers when they composed or said these prayers; there is almost no mention of the foremothers by name anywhere in the liturgy.

Today, of course, many congregations add the names of the patriarchs' wives — Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah — into this part of the *Amidah*, an insertion that is sanctioned by all the non-Orthodox branches of Judaism. Despite more than ample authorization, however, many congregations still resist this first step toward recording the presence of Jewish women in history. This resistance is a telling sign of the tenacity with which patriarchal attitudes can pervade communal consciousness, such that the invisibility of women is taken to be normative, and even minimal attempts to address absences in the liturgy are regarded as intolerable. It tells us that, indeed, we need to go far beyond the token gesture of making four of our foremothers an optional reference in our prayers; we need to go beyond even making their inclusion mandatory. We need to bring women's lives *fully into the foreground* of our awareness in order to begin to correct the imbalance in our liturgy and, ultimately, to move toward the creation of a genuinely inclusive community.

Toward this end, I believe it is imperative that we begin to include the words of Jewish women in our synagogue prayers. For example, in my own prayer book (*The Book of Blessings*), I have incorporated the poems of Yiddish and Hebrew women poets into the body of the *Amidah*, where they serve as a form of *k'rovot* (supplementary liturgical poems). The first section of that *Amidah* includes the twentieth-century Yiddish poet Malka Heifetz Tussman's *Ikh Bin Froy*, "I Am Woman," which offers a sweeping account of the history of Jewish women reimagined in a personal voice. Opening each stanza with the words "I am . . .," Tussman claims her identity in a sequence of historical images, from "the exalted Rachel / whose love lit the way for Rabbi Akiba" to the twentieth-century Zionist pioneer, the "pampered girl / who set herself behind a plow / to force the gray desert into green life." To complete the catalogue, Tussman offers an image from her own life; referring to her experience as a teacher of Yiddish, she writes: "I am the one who stubbornly / carries around a strange alphabet / to impart to children's ears." The poem concludes with this affirmation: "I am all these and many more. / And everywhere, always, I am woman" (translations mine).

The recitation of Tussman's poem — or other writings by Jewish women — as part of communal prayer can be a powerful experience for both women and men. Saying or hearing these words read aloud, Jewish women may, for the first time, recognize themselves — or, at least, some reflection of their lives — within the tradition. Jewish men, too, can benefit by this more inclusive vision of Jewish history. Though it may sound jarring, at first, for a man to hear (or himself say) words like "I am woman," the effect can be both edifying and liberating. Attempting to read oneself into the voice of the "other" gives men an opportunity to experience what women have had to do as a matter of course. At the same time, it can be affirming to women to hear men in the congregation willing to speak in a female voice.

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AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF PRAISE

Of course, the poem *Ikh Bin Froy* will not speak to everyone — any more than *any* words speak to everyone; and this is as true for rabbinic texts as for those we introduce today. Bringing new voices into our prayers often serves to highlight the need for even *more* — not less — liturgical variation; adding women's poetry into the *Amidah* is just one example of how to keep the liturgy evolving and alive.

If we really intend the *Avot* section to refer to our “ancestors,” and if we want the whole community to feel connected to ancestral sources, we ought to begin by recalling *all* the biblical foremothers — including Bilhah and Zilpah, the concubines who bore four of Jacob's sons — and proceed from there to retracing the trail of their forgotten female descendants. We must do whatever we can to retrieve the lost stories of all the generations of foremothers and foresisters — including, of course, our own — if Jewish women's history is to be appreciated as a significant part of our heritage and if Jewish women today are to find points of nexus with the tradition.

HAUPTMAN (TALMUD)

the impression of being praise. When we say that God heals the sick, supports the fallen, or frees the captive, we are implicitly saying that this is what we expect God to continue to do. We even slip into the paragraph the fact that God gives life (or can give life) to the dead, clearly a statement about the future.

“*Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God*” This is God's means of self-identification in the Bible, most notably upon appearing to Moses to discuss the imminent fulfillment of the promise to take the Jewish People out of Egypt and bring them to the Land of Israel. We invoke the patriarchs to remind God of that divine promise, since it was to these three men that the promise was made. But, in addition, since God is all-powerful, we imply that God should remember the kind deeds (or *chesed*) for which they were responsible, credit that kindness to their children's children, their descendants (that is, us), and redeem them. If these descendants do not quite measure up on their own to merit God's intervention in history, then their forefathers can make up for their shortcomings.

Merit is apparently calculated collectively and cumulatively over time.

“*Ancestors*” Though translated here as “ancestors,” the word *avot* generally denotes “fathers” to modern readers. Perhaps, therefore, we should amend the blessing to say what it originally meant: forefathers. The question is, however, should we add the names of the *imahot*, the foremothers, to the blessing? Can we not also turn to God and claim special treatment because of the merit stored up by them? It might be that our blessing has in mind a series of acts that only the *fathers* did (like attempting to save Sodom from destruction). But it is more likely that the special piety in question is something more general: the way (we presume) that the *avot* and the *imahot* (the forefathers and the foremothers) lived their lives. Surely Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah

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also believed in God and did whatever God asked them to do. A reference to both would be a good way to express the totality of the Jewish People back then.

When our blessing was written, mentioning only the forefathers may have been sufficient because their wives were automatically included as members of the ancient household, who, like children and slaves, were cared for by the head of household. However, to make the same point today it is necessary to list the counterparts of the *avot*, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah. If we are asking God to be kind to us today because of the merit of our progenitors, then mentioning the matriarchs is critical.

“Who brings a redeemer to their descendants for the sake of his name in love” Stylistically, the first blessing builds to a crescendo as the phrases grow longer and longer. At first God’s attributes are described in single words, like “great” and “mighty”; then we get an entire phrase, “Supreme God”; and finally, the blessing climaxes with the lengthy claim, “who brings a redeemer to their descendants for the sake of his name in love.” As we see from later paragraphs, the reference here is to a messiah from the house of David who will lead the People back to Israel.

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

(and matriarchs), according to the Talmud (Ber. 26b), established the three daily services: Abraham “arose early” (Gen. 22:3), and so he initiated *Shacharit*; Isaac “walked in the afternoon” (Gen. 24:63) and began the *Minchah* prayers; and Jacob “came upon a place as the sun set” (Gen. 28:11) and was the first to pray *Ma’ariv*. But this only raises a larger problem. How could our fathers and mothers have known how to pray if the Torah had not yet been given? The answer, suggests Rabbi Nosson, was that even before the Torah was revealed at Sinai, there was divine *chesed* or love, which is the basis of Torah and therefore of creation itself. And our “parents,” Abraham and Sarah and their children and grandchildren, were therefore able to “pray” directly through loving service. And the core of this “service” was *chesed chinam*, or “freely given love,” love without any thought of return.

According to a similar tradition, not only was Abraham the first to begin to teach the world about the unity of God, but he is the very foundation of the world. In Gen. 2:4 we read, “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when He [God] created them” (*b’hibaram*). And according to Midrash Genesis Rabbah 12:9, the Hebrew letters that make up *b’hibaram* בְּהִבְרָאָם can be rearranged to spell “*b’Avraham*” בְּאַבְרָהָם, or, “with Abraham.” In such a way, Abraham and his service of “freely given love” are the very basis of creation itself!

Indeed, in Gen. 12:2, God blesses Abraham by saying, “Be a blessing.” What this means, says Nosson, is not merely that Abraham will bless other people, but that Abraham’s name will be used to literally conclude the first blessing of the *Amidah*, “Blessed are You, Adonai, *Abraham’s* protector.” So, this one, who knew of *chesed chinam*, “freely given love,” *even before* the Torah and who was also the first to understand that there

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF PRAISE

was only one God, is therefore the one in whose name we commence the *Amidah*. And when we, Abraham and Sarah's progeny, rise to recite the *Amidah*, our great, great-grandfather stands with us as we too invoke the source of all prayer: unconditioned, freely given love.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

grandparents, thereby implicitly including the foremothers as well) are connected to all Israel, by lineage (*yichus*), which is a central and prized halakhic category of status. What is maintained here is that all Jews share equally in that status. Indeed, Maimonides insists that the righteous convert shares it too, because such a person is literally, not just figuratively, a child of Abraham. As a meta-halakhic category, this passage on the *avot* refers to the concept of *z'khut avot*, "the merit of the ancestors," matriarchs as well as patriarchs, which constitutes a legal source of defense of Israel, on high.

"*Blessed [Barukh] are You [atah], Ado-nai, Abraham's protector*" At "Blessed are You" [*Barukh atah*], bow, and at Ado-nai, stand erect — as before, in the opening line of the blessing (see "Blessed are You, Ado-nai" above). We thus bow at both the beginning and end of the introductory blessing.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

Maimonides says they should, "for Abraham is also your father." He acknowledges further that becoming the spiritual offspring of Abraham does not demean life prior to conversion. "Do not think poorly of your own beginnings," he cautions. "We may be descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but you are descended from the Creator, as Isaiah writes, 'One shall say: I am the Lord's; and another shall use the name Jacob'" (Isa. 44:5).

"*Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God.*" Why is the word "God" repeated three times? We might more easily have said, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The most common explanation is that each patriarch knew God personally. The *Sh'ma* is philosophical, while the *Amidah* is personal — a conversation with God about our lives.

"*Great, mighty, and revered*" The adjectives are roughly synonymous, so seem redundant, but David Abudarham (fourteenth century, Spain) says we need all three because God's power (the subject of this blessing) is known differently by each of the three different categories of creation in which medieval Jews believed: the angels, the heavenly bodies, and earth-bound human beings.

Humans know God's power through the last attribute, *nora* ("awesome"), implying the miracles that God performs. The problem for us is that most of us do not believe

e the *Amidah*. And
b, our great, great-
er: unconditioned,

in miracles any more. The *Amidah* will therefore return to the topic of miracles in the second to last blessing, indicating that miracles need not be extraordinary, like burning bushes or falling manna. Miracles may equally be everyday things where God's presence is manifest: "miracles that are with us on each day . . . wonders and goodness at every time" (see below, Blessing 18, "Grateful Acknowledgment").

"For the sake of his name in love" The theological point of the prayer is that God will send us a redeemer not necessarily because we deserve it, but because our ancestors did. But if God will save us for the sake of our ancestors, why add, "For the sake of his name in love"? Maimonides actually omits the phrase, so as to give more credit to our ancestors.

are connected to all
ory of status. What
Maimonides insists
ally, not just figura-
on the *avot* refers to
as well as patriarchs,

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

"God [of] our ancestors." Using "God of our ancestors" would require "God of us," but that is not English.

at "Blessed are You"
ing line of the
beginning and

"Great, mighty [gibor], and revered God [el], supreme God [el]" "God" here is *el*, whereas until now we have had *elohim*. *El* seems to denote "god" (with a lowercase "g") and *elohim* is "God." Both words come from the same root, *elohim* probably being the plural of *el*, with the Hebrew letter *heh* stuck in the middle. It was not uncommon to insert the letter *heh* to symbolize the change of a name from a non-Jewish to a Jewish one. Abraham and Sarah too (originally Abram and Sarai) have their names changed by the insertion of a *heh*.

For *gibor*, *Kol Haneshamah* (Reconstructionist) uses "heroic," which is a nice thought based loosely on the Hebrew, but probably inaccurate as translation.

e acknowledges fur-
lemean life prior to
ations. "We may be
from the Creator, as
se the name Jacob"

"Who acts most piously . . . who remembers the piety of our ancestors" A radical departure from the usual translations, such as Birnbaum (Orthodox), "who bestow[s] lovingkindness," or *Kol Haneshamah* (Reconstructionist), "imparting deeds of kindness." At issue is the verb *g.m.l* and the noun *chesed*. Taken separately they mean, respectively, something like "reward" and "pious deeds," but together these seem to form a technical term in rabbinic thought, having something to do with rewarding pious deeds. According to the Mishnah (Pe'ah, 1:1), *g'milut chasadim* is one of the things "without measure." It also appears on one of the lists of the three things on which the world depends (Avot 1:2). *Gomel chasadim* likely means one who does *g'milut chasadim*, but we lack a term for that in English. Terms like "pious," "honorable," "charitable," "with lovingkindness," "in mercy," and "magnanimous" all approximate the original intent, but in isolation fail to convey the idea entirely.

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ac, and Jacob." The
onally. The *Shema* is
God about our lives.

ious, so seem redun-
ed all three because
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Whatever the case, it cannot be accidental that the very next thought in the prayer is that God "remembers the *chesed* of our ancestors." Our translation should capture the connection by using the same word in English in both cases.

ne"), implying
of us do not believe

Unit 3
Activity 4

Hinei Mah Tov



Eglash, Joel
Complete Jewish Songbook

Music: folk song
Text: Psalm 133:1

pg 89-91

Gently (♩ = 60)

Can be sung as a 2-part round

capo 3: I Am Cm

Hi - nei mah tov u - mah na - - - im she - vet a -

chim gam ya - chad. II Am Cm Dm Fm

Hi - nei mah

Am Cm E7 (Dm G7) (Fm) E7 (G7) Am Cm

tov she - vet a - chim gam ya - - - chad.

הִנֵּה מְדֵ-טוֹב וּמְדֵ-נִעִים שְׁבֵת אִחִים יַם יוֹדוּ. How good and pleasant it is for everyone to live together as one.

Hinei Mah Tov



Music: Steve Dropkin & Marni Dropkin
Text: Psalm 133:1; Steve Dropkin

Upbeat (♩ = 160)

capo 2: A7 B7 Ch G A D E G A D E G A

Hi - nei mah tov u - mah na - im she - vet a -

chim gam ya - chad. A (sus) B (sus) A7 (B7) D E

Hi - nei mah tov

G A D E G A D E To Coda E# A B

u - mah na - im she - vet a - chim gam ya - chad.

D E V C D G A D E

How ver - y good it all would be if we could get

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the world to see and find the way that is the key -
 to dwell to-gether. And yes it's good for us to share -
 so we can show how much we care. Hi - nei mah tov, -
 hi - nei mah tov, Hi - nei mah tov, gam ya - chad, -
 gam ya - chad, gam ya - chad.

Bm C#m *C D* *G A*
D E *A B* *G A*
D E *Bm C#m* *E F#*
A7 B7 *D.S. al Coda* *E F#* *A(sus) B(sus)*
D E *E F# A(sus) B(sus)* *D E* *G A D*
A B E

Hinei Mah Tov



Music: M. Jacobson-Drozi
 Text: Psalm 133:1

Moderately fast (♩ = 130)

capo 3:

A *(A7 C7)* *Dm Fm* *Am Cm* *Em Gm*
 Hi - nei mah tov u - mah na - im she - vet a-chim gam
Am Cm *(A7 C7)* *Dm Fm* *Am Cm*
 ya - chad. Hi - nei mah tov u - mah na - im
 (Last time: rit.) *Em Gm* *Am Cm* *Fine* *B* *Em Gm*
 she - vet a-chim gam ya - chad. Hi - nei mah tov, hi - nei mah

Am Cm Dm Fm Em (Am Em) Am Cm
 Gm Cm Gm

tov la la la la la la la la la la. Hi - nei mah

Em Am Dm Em (Am Em) Am
 Gm Cm Fm Gm Cm

tov, hi - nei mah tov la la la la la la la la la.

הַיְהִי כִּמְדַבְּרֵי טוֹב וְכִמְדַּבְּרֵי צָעִים שְׂבֵת אֲחֵים גַּם יַחַד. How good and pleasant it is for everyone to live together as one.

Hinei Mah Tov

Music: folk song
 Text: Psalm 133:1

Joyfully (♩ = 68)

A C G7

Hi - nei (hi - nei) mah tov (mah tov) u - mah (u' - mah) na - im (na - im)

C G7 1. C G7 C

she - vet a - chim, she - vet a - chim gam ya - chad.

2. C G7 C B C7 F G

gam ya - chad. Hi - nei mah tov (Hi - nei mah tov) u - mah na -

C G 1.

im (u - mah na - im) she - vet a - chim (she - vet a - chim) gam ya -

C (G C) 2. C (G C)

chad. (gam ya - chad.) chim gam ya - chad. (gam ya - chad.)

by People's Prayer Book
 at 7 pg 57-64
 mit 3 Activity 4

MAN'S VOICE)

"Blessing of Children")
 these three blessings—
 over his grandsons,
 Manasseh; an invocation
 for Leah, Sarah, Rebekah,
 Rachel; and *Birkat Kohanim*,
 the Priestly Blessing—are
 the most words in our liturgy.
 When recited by parents,
 they are on fresh currency and

families, however, these
 gain: the physical (p. 63)

"BLESSING OF CHILDREN")

[say]:

and Manasseh.

[say]:

Rah, Rebekah, Rachel,

[daughters, continue]:

Keep you.

"Blessing of Children")
 When arose naturally as a
 part of *bayit* ("peace in the
 home") the hallmark of Shabbat. The
 blessing of Abraham and Manasseh,
 over his sons, is particularly
 noted by his brothers into
 Joseph had not seen his father
 and his blessing ends with them
 united and Jacob joyfully
 blessing Joseph, but Joseph's
 blessing of the grandchildren
 is directed to meet. (p. 63)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children")
 Professor Isadore Twersky of Harvard
 University, the Talner rebbe of Boston,
 once cited Maimonides' son, Avraham
 Maimuni, saying that when Isaac
 blesses Jacob (Gen. 27:28): "And may
 God give you of dew of heaven, of fat
 of earth..." the word "And" implies
 that something has already been spoken
before the recorded words of the
 blessing. The actual words of blessing,
 he concludes, therefore are always
 preceded by something ineffable. (p. 63)

[For sons, say]:

יְשׁוּעָה אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

[For daughters, say]:

יְשׁוּעָה אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה.

[For both sons and daughters, continue]:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children")
 To show complete devotion, parents are
 to put both hands on their children,
 just as the *kohanim* ("priests") do when
 they bless the people (*Birkat Kohanim*,
 the "Priestly Blessing" in the *Amidah*;
 see Volume 2, *The Amidah*, pp.
 176-183). Parents say the blessing as a
 continuation of the patriarchal blessing
 in Genesis 48:20, for, as *kohanim*, they
 too transmit blessings from God. In
 some communities, children kiss their
 parents' hands upon the (p. 64)

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children")
 The Hebrew word *banim* means
 "children." Because it also means
 "sons," some people add *banot*
 ("daughters") here, making this the
 "blessing of sons and daughters." We
 prefer to group them together in
 English as we do in Hebrew, referring
 collectively to the "blessing of
 children."

Other examples where *banim*
 clearly means "children" and not "sons"
 include the *Avot* (Volume 2, *The
 Amidah*, pp. 60-61), where we translate
 "banim of their banim" as
 "descendants" and certainly
 not "male descendants."

¹⁻² "Make" Literally,
 "put."

³ "May Adonai bless you
 and keep you" See Volume 5,
*Birkhot Hashachar: Morning
 Blessings*, pp. 122-123,
 where we discuss the poetic
 impact of the original
 Hebrew.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹"Ephraim and Manasseh" From Genesis 48:20, where Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons. The patriarchs—or at least Judah, or Reuben, Jacob's first-born—might seem more likely sources of blessing for us. We get Ephraim and Manasseh instead, because the Bible introduces their blessing with the promise, "By you shall Israel invoke blessings...."

²"Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah" Unlike the three patriarchs, the four matriarchs are never mentioned together in the Bible. *Imahot* (matriarchs) as a category is post-biblical. This blessing is otherwise odd as well, in that at least two of the four matriarchs (Sarah and Rachel) did not (p. 60)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

¹⁻²"May God make you like..." Together or separately, parents put their hands on each child's head, and then recite the appropriate line for sons or daughters followed by the Priestly Blessing (see Volume 2, *The Amidah*, pp. 176-183). Some families bless children immediately (p. 60)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children") In keeping with the often heralded "return to tradition" that marks so much of contemporary liberal Judaism worldwide, the Priestly Blessing applied to children at home has begun to reappear in present-day (p. 61)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children") The sources of these three blessings—Jacob's blessing over his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh; an invocation of the matriarchs, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah; and *Birkat Kohanim*, the magical Priestly Blessing—are among the oldest words in our liturgy. Even today, when recited by parents, these words take on fresh currency and power.

For some families, however, these blessings evoke pain: the physical (p. 63)

B. BIRKAT BANIM ("BLESSING OF CHILDREN")

[For sons, say]:

¹ May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.

[For daughters, say]:

² May God make you like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah.

[For both sons and daughters, continue]:

³ May Adonai bless you and keep you.

GRAY (TALMUD)

Birkat Banim ("Blessing of Children") Blessing children arose naturally as a sign of *sh'lom bayit* ("peace in the home"), the hallmark of Shabbat. The citation of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's two sons, is particularly poignant. Sold by his brothers into slavery, Joseph had not seen his father for years. Genesis ends with them finally being reunited and Jacob joyfully blessing not only Joseph, but Joseph's children as well, the grandchildren whom he never expected to meet. (p. 63)

KUSHNER & POI

Birkat Banim ("E Professor Isadore University, the Ta once cited Maimo Maimuni, sayin blesses Jacob (Ge God give you of of earth..." the that something ha before the recor blessing. The actu he concludes, th preceded by somet

לְאֵהָרָה

[For both s

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

Birkat Banim ("Ble To show complete d to put both hands just as the *kohanim* they bless the peopl the "Priestly Blessin see Volume 2, 176-183). Parents s continuation of the p in Genesis 48:20, fo too transmit blessir some communities, parents' hands upo

WELCOMING SHABBAT

⁴ May Adonai shine his face toward you and treat you graciously.

⁵ May Adonai lift his face toward you and grant you peace.

יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֵינוּ וְיַחַנְּנֵנוּ.
יֵשָׁא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֵינוּ, וְיַשֵּׁם לָנוּ שְׁלוֹמִים.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

enjoy particularly good fortune. The blessing is, therefore, late in origin and modeled after the corresponding male biblical version ("May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh").

³ "May Adonai bless you" According to the Torah, this blessing (from Num. 6:24–26) was to be recited by "Aaron and his sons" (Num. 6:23)—that is, by priests—though when and where are not specified. It is here democratized to a familial, non-priestly setting. The paraphrase of this blessing in Psalm 67:2, "May God be gracious to us and bless us; may He shine his face at us," as well as elsewhere (e.g., Pss. 4; 6; 119:130–135; Mal. 1:6–2:9), suggests that it was widely known in the biblical period. It is compactly structured, with each verse longer than the one before it, as if to suggest the growing outpouring of divine blessings. We know of several Mesopotamian parallels, and a slightly shorter version, written on silver (probably an amulet) in the seventh or sixth century B.C.E., was found in a burial trove in Jerusalem.

⁴ "May Adonai shine his face" These verses are strikingly anthropomorphic: Adonai shines his face on and lifts it toward the blessing's recipient. Biblical texts are comfortable with anthropomorphisms, and even rabbinic culture, which is often thought to reject them, frequently views God in human form.

⁵ "May Adonai...grant you peace" *Shalom*, usually translated as "peace," is better understood—both in its original context, and (especially) in its familial setting here—in the sense of "(personal) well-being."

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

after candle lighting; others do it when they return home from synagogue but before sitting down for dinner; yet others do it after reciting *Eshet Chayil* ("A Worthy Woman"—see p. 74). Sometimes the mother blesses the children immediately after lighting candles, and the father does so after reciting *Eshet Chayil*. When children marry, it is permissible, even desirable, for parents to bless their children-in-law too.

¹⁻² "Ephraim and Manasseh" follows Jacob's promise to fulfill the promise to provide models for his sons. Some object that it is unduly to strive to be like children alone; rather, we should not be perfect, like them, but estimable, were had. We may aspire to be like the kind of person we see in the Bible. We have been told the

³⁻⁵ "May Adonai bless you" is a fuller discussion in [Blessings], pp. 122,

1. [In general, ...]
2. [When your ...]
3. [When your ...]

On ordinary we eat together; but we So while blessing or Pausing to put our whom we bless in re

ELLENSON (MODERN)

Reform liturgy. We British Reform's *Form the Doorposts of Your of the House*; and in parents are invited to As we see here, t

¹⁻² "Ephraim and Manasseh... Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah" The formula for sons follows Jacob's blessing of his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, said here to fulfill the promise of Genesis 48:20: "So shall Israel be blessed." The intent was clearly to provide models for children to emulate. For daughters, the model is the matriarchs. Some object that praying for our children to be like ancient worthies pressures them unduly to strive to be better than they are. But the formula asks nothing from the children alone; rather, God is to make them as worthy as our ancestors. Also, they need not be perfect, like God, but only as meritorious as our ancestors, who, though estimable, were hardly faultless. Most importantly, providing a model toward which to aspire may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Telling children, for example, "You are the kind of person who cares for others" (when that is not obviously true) helps them see themselves differently; liking what they see, they may strive to become what they have been told they already are.

³⁻⁵ "May Adonai..." Because we are commanded to emulate God, our understanding of what God is being asked to do here has consequences for human behavior. (For a fuller discussion, see my commentary in Volume 5, *Birkhot Hashachar* [Morning Blessings], pp. 122, 129-130.)

1. [In general,] may Adonai give you all life's good and keep you from the bad. (Consequence: we should strive to bring people blessing, not trouble.)
2. [When your relationship with God is good,] may Adonai smile on you and give you more than you deserve. (Consequence: we should treat others graciously even beyond what they deserve.)
3. [When your relationship with God is bad,] may God face you [rather than turn his back on you] and make peace with you. (Consequence: when we quarrel with others, we should look them in the face and make peace.)

On ordinary weekday nights, dinner may be so rushed that families do not even eat together; but with everyone at home together, Shabbat, as it were, stops the world. So while blessing our children is always in order, it is especially apt on Friday evening. Pausing to put our lives in perspective, we better appreciate the blessing of children, whom we bless in return.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

Reform liturgy. We find it first in American Reform's *Gates of the House* (1977) and British Reform's *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship* (1977); then, some time later, in *On the Doorposts of Your House* (1994), the American Reform Movement's revision of *Gates of the House*; and in the British Liberal *Lev Chadash* (1995). In all these publications, parents are invited to bless their children at the Shabbat table.

As we see here, the normal introductory formula asks that sons be blessed in the

WELCOMING SHABBAT

name of Ephraim and Manasseh, and girls in the name of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah. There seems to have been some hesitation to imagine our own children blessed exactly like the biblical worthies, however, since *Lev Chadash* omits this introductory formulae altogether, jumping directly to the blessing ("May God bless you...") and mentioning neither matriarchs nor patriarchs. Similarly, American Reform volumes, which include the preamble, alter the English to ask only that "God inspire you to live in the tradition [!] of [the matriarchs and patriarchs]." The notion of "tradition" plays a role in other books too, as in *Lev Chadash*, which urges, "A noble heritage has been entrusted to us; let us guard it well."

Marcia Falk (*The Book of Blessings*) expressly objects to the "specificity" of a formula that seems "restrictive rather than expansive." Preferring that parents wish only that their own child become "her or his best self," she recasts the blessing "to provide affirmation for the child and to foster awareness in the giver of the blessing." In place of the standard blessing, she proposes, "Be who you are—and may you be blessed in all that you are."

The American Conservative Movement (*Siddur Sim Shalom*, 1998) adds further specificity, but gendered differently for boys and for girls:

May you be blessed by God as were Ephraim and Menasheh,
who understood that wherever they lived
their Jewishness was the essence of their lives,
who loved and honored their elders and teachers,
and who cherished one another
without pettiness or envy,
accepting in humility the blessings that were theirs.

May God bless you
with the strength and vision of Sarah,
with the wisdom and foresight of Rebecca,
with the courage and compassion of Rachel
with the gentleness and graciousness of Leah,
and their faith in the promise of our people's heritage.

For its public synagogue ritual, this Conservative Movement liturgy provides no transliteration, because the editors assume competence in Hebrew. But virtually all of the home service for Shabbat eve, including such staples as the blessing for candle lighting and *Shalom Aleikhem*, comes with transliteration. The blessing of children is an exception. There, parents are expected to know by heart or to be able to read in Hebrew the Priestly Blessing.

FRANKEL (A WOMAN
or emotional loss o
In some families, cl
are not permitted t
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And so we bless our
of heartache from th

GRAY (TALMUD)

A suggestion of s
Huna says, "Anyone
Torah scholars." Mec
children. Abraham b
instance, thought th
merit giving birth to
century later in the
(thirteenth century,)
should pray for child
then, because God h
performing another n
Concerning Repentanc
children who are succ

3-5 "May Adonai...
commanded Aaron a
God's own example of
God too observed th
Blessing closes with th
to *sh'lom bayit* (Shab. 2

KUSHNER & POLEN (

Each blessing begins v
because it is so subtle a
my soul may bless you.
from the soul. As Twers
for words.

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

emotional loss of children, the sting of barrenness, the lack or loss of a partner. In some families, children are not blessed but tolerated or abused. In others, parents are not permitted to bless but are blamed or rebuffed. Despite the risks of having children, the tradition teaches us that the blessings beckon more urgently than the risks. And so we bless our children with the words of our ancient forebears, who knew plenty of heartache from their own offspring.

GRAY (TALMUD)

A suggestion of such a blessing may be seen in the Talmud (Shab. 23b), where Rav Huna says, "Anyone who customarily kindles Shabbat light will have children who are Torah scholars." Medieval authorities expressly connect Shabbat light to the blessing of children. Abraham b. Azriel of Bohemia (*Sefer Arugat Habosem*, twelfth century), for instance, thought the two Shabbat candles symbolize husband and wife, who hope to merit giving birth to a son and daughter. This same link was elaborated nearly half a century later in the commentary to the Torah portion Yitro, by Bachya ben Asher (thirteenth century, Spain). When a woman lights Shabbat candles, Bachya says, she should pray for children enlightened in Torah. Such a prayer is particularly efficacious when, because God hears prayer more readily when it is offered in the context of performing another *mitzvah* (in this case, candle lighting). Jonah Gerondi too (*Epistle Concerning Repentance*, "Day 7": thirteenth century, Spain) directed women to pray for children who are successful in Torah as they kindle Shabbat lights.

³⁻⁵ "May Adonai...grant you peace" This threefold Priestly Blessing with which God commanded Aaron and his sons to bless the Israelites (Num. 6:22-27) constitutes God's own example of an efficacious blessing, so it is particularly apt for Shabbat, when God too observed the primal day of rest (Gen. 2:2-3). In particular, the Priestly Blessing closes with the prayer that God's face be lifted and provide peace, an allusion to *sh'lom bayit* (Shab. 23b).

KUSHNER & POLEN (HASIDISM)

Each blessing begins with something inchoate that can only be inferred or intuited because it is so subtle and sublime. Isaac says earlier in the Genesis story (27:4), "...that my soul may bless you...." This reminds us that the main idea of blessing must come from the soul. As Twersky said, the blessings from parent to child are simply too delicate for words.

WELCOMING SHABBRAT

Johannes Pedersen, in his monumental, four-volume work, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Oxford University Press, Branner Ogkorat, Copenhagen, 1926, vols. I-II, 198-200), offers a similar and extraordinary insight into the nature of blessing: "The act of blessing another," he says, "means to communicate to [someone] strength of soul, but one can communicate to [another] only of the strength one has in oneself. [One] who blesses another gives [that person] something of his [or her] own soul.... The strength of the word of blessing depends upon the power that the word possesses to hold the real contents of a soul. By means of the word something is laid into the soul of the other...."

Thus, in the case of parents blessing children at the Sabbath table, the core of every blessing is the soul-pride, the sweetness, the *naches* (pronounced NAH-kh's) the parent has received from his or her child over the past week. And, in addition to the formulaic "...like Ephraim and Manasseh" etc., parents effectively return the *naches* in words of blessing. The litmus test of the blessing is that it should make the child smile.

Several commentators have attempted to explain why, of all the possible ego models, Ephraim and Manasseh are mentioned by name in the blessing of children. Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Lieb of Ger (d. 1905), author of *Sfat Emet* (I, p. 282; 5661), suggests that the reason is that these two sons of Joseph were effectively moved up one generation and treated as children. And this, in turn, reminds us of the direct relationship grandchildren enjoy with their grandparents. Through this grandchild-grandparent bond, we (all) possess an unmediated relationship with our ancestors. Thus, the blessing evokes a direct line to all previous generations. Others have noted that Ephraim and Manasseh, as the first ones born in exile, are symbols of Jewish survival in alien lands. And still others have suggested that Ephraim and Manasseh are mentioned by name because they are the very first set of brothers in the Hebrew Bible who get along with one another.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

conclusion of the blessings, imbued with the idea of *k'vod av v'em*, "honor due to father and mother," and love for the spirit of God that has hovered on their parents' fingers.

At the time of blessing, parents should consider the fact that during the week it is natural to become upset with children's misbehavior. This blessing should awaken parental commitment to avoid any further "curse" to their children from this point onward.

C. SHALOM

¹Peace to you, an
high, from the
kings, the Holy One

²Come in peace, an
high, from the king
the Holy One blesse

³Bless me with peace
on high, from the king
the Holy One blessed

⁴Go in peace, angel
high, from the king o
the Holy One blessed

Parents' Prayer

Based on Genesis 48:20

By Mah Tovv

It has become a treasured custom around the Shabbat dinner table for parents to bless their children. Our inspiration for this is our patriarch Joseph, who blessed his grandsons Ephraim and Menasheh. Today, we pray that our sons and daughters will gain strength from the loving words we bestow upon them.

Here with you beside me, I feel so greatly blessed
This moment means much more than I can say
A time to be together, a time for us to rest
Shabbat is here, the time has come to celebrate the day
So I hold you close, my hands upon your head
And from me to you, my child, these words are said

Chorus: Y'sim-cha E-lo-him k'Eph-ra-im v'chi-M'na-sheh
May God give you life and strength like Joseph's sons
Y'si-mech E-lo-him k'Sa-ra Riv-kah Ra-chel v'Le-ah
May God make you like our mothers, like our blessed ones

As I watch you growing, I smile through my tears
Sometimes I wish you'd stay forever small
But then I see you blossom, and I befriend the passing years
I love you now, I'll love you then - I love to see it all
So I lift my voice to offer you this prayer
For every step along the way, I will be there

Chorus

From the website: <http://www.mahtovu.com/TurnItLyrics.html#Parents>

Birkat Hamishpacha Family Blessing

Place your hands on your child's head or shoulders
or hold your child's hands and recite the following blessings.

(You can also supplement the prayers written here
with your own words or a silent prayer.)

For a boy:

Ye-sim-cha E-lo-him ke-ef-ra-yim
ve-chi-me-na-sheh.

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם
וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and
Manasseh, who carried forward the life of our people.

For a girl:

Ye-si-meich E-lo-him
ke-sa-ra, riv-ka, ra-cheil, ve-lei-a.

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים
בְּשָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה.

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Sarah and
Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, who carried forward the life of our
people.

After the separate prayers for boys or girls, continue for both:

Ye-va-re-che-cha A-do-nai
ve-yish-me-re-cha.

Ya-eir A-do-nai pa-nav
ei-le-cha vi-chu-ne-ka.

Yi-sa A-do-nai pa-nav ei-le-cha
ve-ya-seim le-cha sha-lom.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי
וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו
אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ.
יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

May God bless you and guard you. May the light of God shine
upon you, and may God be gracious to you. May the presence of
God be with you and give you peace.

(The service continues on page 22.)

Where does
The Torah p
blesses his sc
Jacob also bl
Genesis 48:21
Shabbat table
The bles
the Book of C

What are the
1. The blessir
2. The threef
(6:24-26).

How do I do
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not your usu
formal natur
moment.

Because
only part 1 or
gathered arou
the blessing.

Howeve
beautiful to y

Are there way
adults?

There most ce
verses from cl
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A family pray
Finally, r
sharing some

Where does the custom of blessing children originate?

The Torah presents several instances of children being blessed. For example, Isaac blesses his sons, Jacob and Esau, and Jacob blesses his twelve sons (Genesis 27, 49). Jacob also blesses his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, and the words he uses in Genesis 48:20 provide the customary wording of the blessing used for sons at the Shabbat table.

The blessing for girls incorporates the names of the matriarchs whose actions in the Book of Genesis helped shape the earliest experiences of our people.

What are the component parts of the Shabbat evening blessing?

1. The blessing begins with separate prayers for boys and girls.
2. The threefold "priestly blessing" follows. It is taken from the Book of Numbers (6:24-26).

How do I do the blessing? How will my children feel about it?

Since the blessing does involve communicating with your child in what is probably not your usual style, you and your child may feel strange when you first do it. The formal nature of the recitation may almost obscure the wonderful intimacy of the moment.

Because of that you may at first choose to abbreviate the experience by doing only part 1 or part 2 of the blessing. You might also have all the adults and children gathered around the table hold hands so as not to focus solely on the children during the blessing.

However you proceed, remember that the family blessing adds something beautiful to your family's experience of Shabbat.

Are there ways to extend the idea of blessing beyond the children to include adults?

There most certainly are ways to share blessings among adults. A husband can recite verses from chapter 31 of the Book of Proverbs referring to his wife as "a woman of valor" (see page 74). A wife can recite from Psalm 112 for her husband (see page 74). A family prayer can also be read for all those at the table (see page 82).

Finally, rather than using a prewritten text, people at the table can consider sharing some of their own reflections on the week gone and the week yet to come.

Unit Four: Tension between Separation and Connection
Family and Friends

Enduring Understandings:

- Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the tension between the themes of separation and connection.
- Families with teenagers wrestle with the normal and important tensions between separation and connection in their own lives.

Essential Questions

- Where do we see the tension between separation and connection in Shabbat Liturgy?
- How do we see the tension between separation and connection play out in our own lives?
- How do we resolve the tension between wanting to be separate and wanting to connect in our own lives?
- What can we do to become more aware of the tensions in our own lives?
- What conversations can we have to resolve this conflict?
- How can we better understand this tension in the lives of our family members?

Goals

- To expose the student to the tension between separation and connection in prayer.
- To provide students the opportunity to understand how the conflict between separation and connection plays out in their own lives.
- To offer students the opportunity to discuss with their families real life issues.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar to or different from their own.
- To offer students the opportunity, through conversations with their families, to begin to address the conflict between separation and connection in their own lives.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Identify at least one prayer where the tension between separation and connection is found.
- Identify at least one situation in their own life where the tension between separation and connection is found.
- Express how they feel, in light of what Judaism says, about life issues (i.e. peer pressure, going to college...etc.)

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents think about each of the real life issues studied in this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child thinks about each of the real life issues studied in this unit.

Activities:

Although it is not essential to teach this unit in the following order, I would suggest beginning with the first activity listed. This activity examines prayer(s) which were studied earlier in the year. This activity will serve as a smooth transition from studying prayers to studying real life issues.

Your class might have certain issues which are more important for your students at this moment in time. Although I have provided a list of topics and activities which fit in this unit, it may arise that other topics are more pressing for your class. You should feel free to use their concerns to help make this class more personalized for them.

In Prayer

(Talmud page 1)

This lesson is a good way to both synthesize all that was learned in the past two units and also to transition between the units which teach prayer and this unit which focuses on teen issues.

Begin by explaining that at this point the students have learned to identify the themes of separation and connection in a variety of prayers and blessings. Give the students about 10 minutes to look through their family *Siddurim* in order to remind themselves of the different prayers which have been studied.

Ask each family to pick one prayer in which they see both the theme of separation and the theme of connection. The three prayers which were studied under both themes earlier in the class are: *L'cha Dodi*, Morning Blessings and the *Havdalah* service. Students do not need to pick one of these three, but these can help those who are having trouble identifying a prayer or blessing.

Each family is to write a short teaching in which they identify the prayer, identify how both themes are seen in this prayer, how the themes complement each other, where the tension is seen, and finally, add in their own personal understanding of the prayer and these ideas. (You might want to write all the requirements on the board for the students.) Give each family about 30 minutes to work on this. At the end of the class, give the students the opportunity to share.

End class with a brainstorming activity. As a whole class they should make a list of places or times when they have seen this tension play out in their own lives. If possible relate these back to the ideas that were given earlier by the class.

Although I have provided a list of topics and activities below, there may be some topics which arise through this brainstorming process. Do not be afraid to use one or more of these topics in addition to or in exchange for any of the topics below.

Conclude this lesson with the Talmud Page for this lesson.

In Family: Honoring parents: See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity

(Talmud page 2)

During this activity students should begin to understand the tension between separation and connection while honoring their parents. How do teens honor their

parents and yet have their own independence? What does a child do when their parents are telling them to do something which they see as wrong?

Set Induction: Ask the students to brainstorm their answers to the following questions on a piece of paper. What does the word “honor” mean? After a few minutes, ask them to answer the question: What does the word “parent” mean? Again, give them a few minutes to write their answers. Allow students to share their answers if they wish. This might also spark a discussion about the answers to both. (If you would like more questions regarding the ideas of honor and parents, please refer to the background information I have provided from the JGirl Guide pages 26-27.)

The commandment to honor your mother and father is found within the ten commandments. The first five commandments refer the relationship between God and humans. The second five refer to the relationship of human to human. Before continuing on with this activity the teacher should read the material included from the JGirl Guide (page 19-20)

Continue with a text study. Using the worksheet provided ask students to break into *chavruta*. Read through the text from Niddah 31a. They should then discuss the questions: how does God play into the commandment of honoring your mother and father? What does the text say? What do you believe? After about 10 minutes, ask the whole group to come back together and give them an opportunity to share their thoughts. (You can read more about this in the background reading I have provided from the JGirl’s Guide pages 19-20.)

Continue by separating the teens from their parents. In the teen group, discuss a time when each of them felt they knew they should honor their parents but yet, did not or could not. Did they feel the tension within them of wanting to feel separate from their parents and yet be connected? Was the connection they were desiring to their parents or to their peers? (This might be a good time to ask a social worker or other professional to come in.) Finish the discussion by asking the teens to replay the incident but in a way that they both honor their parents and honor their need to separate from their parents. They can write it out on a piece of paper or discuss it with their friends.

In the parent group, discuss a time when they felt their child knew they should honor their parents but did not. Did they feel the tension within themselves of wanting to let their child feel separated and yet still wanting to connect? Do they feel as their child grows up that they are becoming more and more separate from the family? Are there ways they feel their child is becoming more and more connected? (Here also, you may want to have a social worker or professional come in to have this conversation with the parents.) Finish the discussion by brainstorming ways in which the parents can help their children make the right decisions for themselves in this time of their life. They can write these down or discuss it with someone else.

Ask the families to come back together and complete the Talmud page. This is the first Talmud page in which the situation is in English. Although there are a variety of answers, the book where this story came from offers the following real life answer:

“The young man owed his father respect and honor, but only to a point. Once the guilty father had crossed the line of decent and moral behavior, the son was not obligated to follow him; indeed, he was duty-bound to disobey. The son’s loyalty was misplaced; so, too, was his sense of duty. Judge Shapero took this into account when he pronounced sentence upon the young man, imposing a large fine and probation instead of a prison

term. More than to punish the young man, he wanted to teach him and his father a lesson neither would forget” (Drugs, Sex and Integrity page 46)

You as the teacher may do whatever you want with the “real” answer.

My own personal note: As the teacher for this class, you may want to be aware that not everyone in your class has the ideal parent/child relationship. The following comes from the JGirl Guide page 31:

“When Honoring Parents Is a Problem: There are times when you cannot honor your parents. If you are being emotionally, physically or sexually abused by a parent, how could you possibly honor him or her? Protecting your parents from being found out by your teachers, relatives and friends because you feel you must honor them is not going to help anyone. No child deserves to be abused and it is imperative to reach out for help.”

This book is written for a teenage girl to read, but it is important that you as the teacher understand that this is a very real possibility for any of the families you work with.

In Friendships: Peer pressure: Friends:

(Talmud page 3)

Peer pressure essentially comes from friends. So before a class can discuss peer pressure, they must discuss who their friends are and what characteristics make them their friends. Following this conversation we can begin to discuss peer pressure.

Set Induction: Ask the students (teens and parents separately) to think about their closest friend(s). Make a list of 20 characteristics you find in that friend or friends. After about 5 minutes, ask the students to share a few of these characteristics.

Continue by conducting a text study of Ruth 1:1-19. This can be done in whichever way you feel is best for your class, but you should highlight the friendship and love between Ruth and Naomi. You might find some background information helpful for this. Provided in the resources is a translation of Ruth 1:1-19, two chapters from the book Reading Ruth, and a few pages from the JGirl’s Guide.

Continue by matching up teens with different parents. Every group should have at least one parent and one teen (who is not related to any of the parents.) Before beginning the next activity stress the trust that has formed in the past few months during this class. Tell the students that for the next part of this activity there needs to be complete confidentiality. Ask the teens to interview the parents about times when they have felt peer pressure in their lives. The teens can create their own list of questions, but some questions they should or could be asked are:

1. Was there a time in your life when you gave into peer pressure?
2. What happened?
3. Who/what did you feel connected to during this event?
4. Who/what were you trying to separate from?
5. How did you feel about it after?
6. How would you redo that event?
7. If you had one piece of advice for a teen today regarding how to deal with peer pressure, what would it be?

These questions can be expanded upon, but the point is to have a discussion about peer pressure and how to deal with it. The point is also to ask an adult for any advice they would give.

There is no big group discussion at the end of this lesson. I think it is best to allow the answers (especially to the last question) have time to really sink in. Ask the families to come back together and complete the Talmud page together.

In the future: Leaving for College:

(Talmud page 4)

Leaving for college is a big event in a teen's life. It can also be the most significant example of a time when the tension between separation and connection plays out. Teens want to remain connected to their families and friends. However, they want to separate and become their own person.

Set Induction: Ask the group: What is your biggest fear as you leave for college? Or what is your biggest fear as your child leaves for college? For this conversation it does not make a difference if the group is all together or if they are split into two smaller groups. Ask the students to try to relate the themes of separation and connection into their discussion.

For this activity you will need to ask the students to bring in a shoe box. They might also want to bring a few pictures from home that they don't mind cutting up, some Jewish artifacts, and quotes that they like. You will need to provide modpodge (special paste that can be placed on top of pictures), scissors, pens, paper, a *Tanakh*, and various other books.

Ask the families to put together a box that the teen will take to college. They should try to find quotes from the various books, a *siddur*, or from *Tanakh* that they would like to copy, cut out and put on their box. They can also do this with the pictures they found. Design the outside of the box as a keepsake to bring to college. Inside the box they should place Jewish items which they think are important to take with the teen to college. Some of these items may be a prayer book, ritual items for various holidays, email and phone numbers of youth group friends...etc. (For a more extensive list of items that could be placed in this box, refer to the attached information from Jewish U pages 6-7.) Since most families will not have brought everything that they would like to place in this box, suggest they make a list of items to put in later. If the teen is not a senior, they might want to keep the list in the box for now and continue adding to it until the teen is leaves for school.

Finish this lesson by completing the Talmud page

In media: Media pressures

(Talmud page 5)

Before beginning this activity, you should read the JGirl's Guide pages 91-95 (which is provided in the resources.) Although this book is talking about girls specifically, these ideas apply to boys and girls of this age.

This activity contains three stations. You should split your class into three groups (teen boys, teen girls, parents.) Each group should rotate to all the stations by the time

the activity is over. For all the activities and for the closing activity you will need a variety of magazines.

The stations are as follows:

Station 1: The pressure to look beautiful

For this activity you will need a blank piece of paper divided into four boxes. Ask the students to write down five words or phrases to define the word “beauty” in one of the boxes. Once they are done continue on with no discussion.

For the next part of this activity you will need to have pre-taped commercials for clothing. Don’t be afraid to use commercials for lingerie like Victoria Secret and others. Also, try to include commercials for men’s clothing. After watching a few of these commercials, ask students to make a list of five words that describe these women or men in the commercial in one of the boxes on the same piece of paper. Give the students a few minutes to do this and then ask them to put their lists aside for later

Now ask the students to turn back to the page in their Family Siddur in which their family studied the blessing from *Nisim B’chol Yom* which states we are all created in the image of God. Ask the students to take a few minutes to reread what they and their family wrote. Ask students to share any thoughts about what they wrote. Afterwards, using the same piece of paper, they should write down five words or phrases about beauty based on their discussion (in one of the four boxes.)

Ask them to write down five words or phrases to describe what they find beautiful about themselves. You may want to ask the parents to describe what they find beautiful about their children. The activity could work either way, it is your choice.

Ask the students to connect lines to various definitions on the sheet which relate to each other. Then turn the piece of paper over and write their own new definition of what the word beauty means.

Station 2: The pressure to smoke/drink

Later in the year the students will study what Judaism says about consuming too much alcohol and what Judaism says about smoking. They will also study how to make the choice to limit themselves. However, here they are studying how the media makes them feel pressured into drinking and smoking in order to feel connected to society.

Before beginning this section read the website: <http://www.aap.org/family/mediainpact.htm>. This will give you more information on the subject and some other possible ideas. You might want to also give this website to the families to engage in some home activities.

Begin by asking students to find a partner. Each pair should read the article by Bill Walsh which can be found in the resource section. While reading they should discuss the following question: Where do you see the tension between separation and connection in this article? What was this man going through? How did the media play a part in this tension?

After a few minutes ask the pairs to come back together and discuss how they saw the themes within this article.

Ask each person to write an article for a paper about the pressure in the media to smoke and drink. Ask them to relate it to the tension between separation and connection. As part of the article, ask the teens to make a plan on how they will resist this pressure

and ask the parents to write a plan for how they will help their children resist the pressure.

Station 3: The pressure to wear the right clothing

Give each student the handout with four men on it. This comes from the CCAR Passover Haggadah, however, don't tell the students this. You might also want to ask the students not to reveal where this is from if they already know. The original, which is also included in the resources, labels these four characters as the four sons and states which one is which. Make sure to give the students the one that does not have the answers. Ask the students to spend about five minutes brainstorming words to describe these people. Next to each picture they should list the words they thought of. They should put about 5-10 words for each person on the page.

After everyone is finished, ask each student to say one word about each of the men. You may want to write the list on the board so that everyone can see the entire list. When everyone has had a chance to speak, reveal where this comes from. Discuss: How did the person's clothes shape how you described the person? How many of your descriptive words were about physical appearance and how many were about character? How do we associate what people wear with who they are as a person?

For the next part you will need a copy of the movie The Breakfast Club. While you as the teacher might have seen this movie, many teens today have not. (Sad...right?) Therefore, you may want to give them a short background on the film. Find the scene where all of the students are sitting in the library talking. Ask the students to discuss how the people making the movie portrayed each character's personality through their clothing. Discuss this with the whole group.

Conclusion:

Ask all the families to come together. They should look through magazines and find a piece of media which portrays the tension between separation and connection for this family. It may be a picture, an article, a advertisement...etc. They should cut this out and glue it to their Talmud page. Then complete the page.

Performance Task:

Most of this unit has been focused on the teen's life. The following activity should be done as individuals. The parents should focus their project on their own life. For this activity you will need paper, markers, magazines, scissors and glue. Ask each student to create a collage or piece of art which answers the question: at what time do I see the tension between separation and connection play out in my own life? Give each student about 15 minutes to do this.

Then ask the students to get together with their families. Each person in the group should share their creations.

Finally, the whole group should come together. Each person in the group should share the collage of someone else in their group with the whole group. At the end all students should hand in their collage to the teacher. Over the course of the week, the teacher should look over all the collages to ensure that the students were able to understand how the tension between separation and connection unfold in their own lives.

This activity has several components. First, the individual has a chance to put the ideas in his/her head on paper and create something about themselves. Then they get to share it with their family. By allowing different members of the family explain each other's collages, it shows the instructor that the family is able to understand how each person thinks and feels about the subjects. Lastly, by handing it in, the teacher can evaluate how the student is doing.

Resources

For activity 1: In Prayer

None

For activity 2: In Family

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005. Pages 19-20, 26-27, 28-32.
2. Polish, Daniel F, Daniel B. Syme, and Bernard M. Zlotowitz. *Drugs, Sex and Integrity*. New York: UAHC Press, 1991. Pages 43, 46, 47-51.

For Activity 3: In Friendship

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005. Pages 5-6.
2. Kates, Judith A, Gail Twersky Reimer. *Reading Ruth*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994. Pages 5-6, 33-54.

For Activity 4: Leaving for College

1. Aaron, Scott. *Jewish U: A Contemporary Guide for the Jewish College Student*. New York: UAHC Press, 2002. Pages 3-8.

For Activity 5: In Media

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005. Pages 91-95.
2. [The Breakfast Club](#). 1985
3. Website: <http://www.aap.org/family/mediainpact.htm>.
4. Walsh, Bill. "Great American Smokeout: Me, the Media and Addiction" *Media Literacy Review*. As found on the website: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/articles/smokeout.html>
5. Zion, Noam and David Dishon. *The Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*. Israel: The Shalom Hartman Institute, 1997.

Lesson Plan for Unit 4 (Tension between Separation and Connection): In Family: Honoring Your Parents

Goal:

- To provide students the opportunity to understand the tension between separation and connection which is inherent in the commandment to honor your mother and father.
- To expose students to texts which speak about God as part of the relationship between parents and child.
- To offer students the opportunity to rethink a past situation where the student did not honor their mother/father or when their child did not honor them.
- To understand the struggle a teen goes through to have his/her own independence and yet to honor their parents.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a one sentence definition of the word “honor.”
- Give a one sentence definition of the word “parent.”
- Explain what role God plays in the relationship between child and parent according to Jewish tradition.
- Identify how they personally see the role of God in the relationship between them and their family members.
- Identify the struggle between separation and connection in the issue of how to honor your parents.
- Identify at least one time when this struggle played out in the student’s life, how it was dealt with then and how the student would deal with it now.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up/settling in

0:05-0:15: Set induction

0:15-0:40: Part I: How does God fit into this relationship?

0:40-1:00: Part II: It is not easy to honor your parents.

1:00-1:10: Part III: Talmud page

Materials:

Paper

Pens

Text study sheets

Activity:

SET INDUCTION: (10 minutes)

Give each person a pen and paper. Ask them to write down their own definition for the word “honor.” Give them a few minutes to do this. Then, without discussing, ask

them to define the word “parent.” Again, give them a few minutes. The point of this exercise is for students to explore their preconceived ideas about these two concepts.

Ask students to share their answers if they would like. Ask follow up questions about their definitions. Allow other students to also discuss people’s answers. (If you would like more questions to help with this conversation please refer to the information in the resources section which comes from JGirl’s Guide pages 26-27.)

PART I: How does God fit into this relationship? (25 minutes)

The commandment to honor your mother and father is found within the ten commandments. The first five commandments refer to the relationship between God and humans. The second five refer to the relationship of human to human. Before continuing on with this activity the teacher should read the material included from the JGirl Guide (page 19-20)

Continue with a text study. Using the worksheet provided ask students to break into groups of three or four. Read through the texts (Babylonian Talmud: *Niddah* 31a.) They should then break into *chavrutah* and discuss these questions:

1. How does God play into the commandment of honoring your mother and father?
2. What does the text say?
3. What do you believe?

After about 15 minutes, ask the whole group to come back together. Give them an opportunity to share their thoughts. (You can read more about this in the background reading I have provided from the JGirl’s Guide pages 19-20.)

PART II: It is not easy to honor your parents. (20 minutes)

For the following activity the parents and teens should be in two separate groups. Although it is not necessary, it might be helpful to invite a social worker or other professional to help facilitate these discussions.

Teens:

Discuss a time when each of them felt they knew they should honor their parents but did not or could not. Some questions to consider:

1. Did they feel the tension within themselves of wanting to feel separate from their parents and yet connected to them?
2. Did they want to connect more to their parents or their peers?

Allow each student the opportunity to think of a time in his/her life when s/he had this experience. Finish the discussion by asking the teens to replay the incident in their head but in a way that they both honor their parents and honor their need to separate from their parents? Allow them time to write out their answers for themselves. (not to be collected)

Parents:

Discuss a time when they felt their child knew they should honor their parents but did not. Some questions to consider:

1. Did they feel the tension within themselves of wanting to let their child feel separate and yet still wanting to connect?
2. Do they feel as their child grows up that the child is becoming more separate from the family?
3. Are there ways they feel their child is also becoming more connected to the family as he/she grows.

Finish the discussion by brainstorming ways in which the parents can help their children make the right decisions for themselves in this time of their life. This should be a parent group discussion.

PART III: Talmud page (10 minutes)

Ask the families to come back together and complete the Talmud page. This is the first Talmud page in which the situation is in English.

Although there are a variety of answers to the question posed on the Talmud page, the book where this story came from offers the following real life answer:

“The young man owed his father respect and honor, but only to a point. Once the guilty father had crossed the line of decent and moral behavior, the son was not obligated to follow him; indeed, he was duty-bound to disobey. The son’s loyalty was misplaced; so, too, was his sense of duty. Judge Shapero took this into account when he pronounced sentence upon the young man, imposing a large fine and probation instead of a prison term. More than to punish the young man, he wanted to teach him and his father a lesson neither would forget” (Drugs, Sex and Integrity page 46)

You as the teacher may do whatever you want with the “real” answer.

My own personal note: As the teacher for this class, you may want to be aware that not everyone in your class has the ideal parent/child relationship. The following comes from the JGirl Guide page 31:

“When Honoring Parents Is a Problem: There are times when you cannot honor your parents. If you are being emotionally, physically or sexually abused by a parent, how could you possibly honor him or her? Protecting your parents from being found out by your teachers, relatives and friends because you feel you must honor them is not going to help anyone. No child deserves to be abused and it is imperative to reach out for help.”

This book is written for a teenage girl to read, and so the author is speaking directly to the child. However, it is important that you as the teacher understand that this is a very real possibility for any of the families you work with.

Prayer Which Has Both The Theme of Separation and Connection

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | | | |
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| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | | | | |
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In Family: Honoring Your Parents

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"><p>In all his years on the bench, Judge Shapero had never had a case like this. A high school computer whiz admitted stealing hundreds of dollars worth of long distance phone calls. It seemed like an open-and-shut case, but the computer genius pleaded not guilty, telling Judge Shapero: "I am fulfilling a more important obligation-honoring my parents." It turned out that the whole scheme was the idea of his father, who, lacking computer skills, enlisted his son as an accomplice.</p><p>Judge Shapero was outraged at the defendant's response. Before handing down a stiff legal penalty, however, the judge decided to determine if Jewish tradition actually sanctioned blind allegiance to a parent's illegal demands.</p><p>How would you deal with this situation?</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

In Friendship: Peer Pressure

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"><p style="text-align: center;">Ruth 1:16-17</p><p style="text-align: center;">טו ותאמר רות אל־תפגע־בי לעזבך לשוב מאחריך כִּי אל־אֶשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֶלְךָ וּבְאֶשֶׁר תֵּלִינִי אֵלָיו עִמָּךְ עַמִּי וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֲמַנֶּה וְשָׁם אֶקְבֹּר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יִסֵּיף בִּי הַמָּוֶת וְכִי אֶבְרָא בְּיָדֶיךָ וּבְיָדֶיךָ:</p><p>And Ruth said, Do not entreat me to leave you, or to keep from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if even death parts me from you.</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

In the Future: Leaving for College

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| | |
| <p>יהוה יִשְׁמֶר-צִיָּאתְךָ וּבֹאֲךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם.</p> <p>“The Eternal One shall guard your coming and your going from this time forth and for ever.” (Psalm 121:7)</p> <p>God within and beyond me, Your presence pervades the world. Wherever I go, You are near to me. “If I take up the wings of the morning and dwell on the ocean’s farthest shore, even there Your hand will lead me, Your strong hand will hold me.” (Psalm 139:9-10)</p> <p>Now that I begin a new journey, I turn to You in confidence and trust, for You have always been a light to my path.</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

In Media: Pressure in the Media

| <i>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</i> | <i>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</i> | | | |
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| <i>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</i> | | | | |
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Text Study for Unit Four: Family

Niddah 31a

Our Rabbis taught: There are three partners in man, the Holy One, blessed be He, his father and his mother. His father supplies the semen of the white substance out of which are formed the child's bones, sinews, nails, the brain in his head and the white in his eye; his mother supplies the semen of the red substance out of which is formed his skin, flesh, hair, blood and the black of his eye; and the Holy One, blessed be He, gives him the spirit and the breath, beauty of features, eyesight, the power of hearing and the ability to speak and to walk, understanding and discernment.

Taken from the website:

http://www.come-and-hear.com/niddah/niddah_31.html#chapter_iv

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

LEARN

The commandment to honor your parents is taken very seriously in Judaism. The fifth of the Ten Commandments is *Kabed et avikha ve'et imekha* (Honor your father and your mother) (Exodus 20:12). The first five commandments all have to do with relations between God and humans; the second five have to do with relations between humans and humans. One might think that the command to honor one's parents would be part of the latter, but it isn't. Honoring your parents is included in the first category because God is considered to be the third partner, with the parents, in making children. When you honor your parents, therefore, you also honor God (Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 30b and *Niddah* 31a). This is hard for young people to do. The Jerusalem Talmud (*Peah* 1:1) says, "Honoring a father and mother is the most difficult mitzvah."

Every form of Judaism considers the family unit to be essential in supporting the Jewish People. In traditional Judaism, parents are considered to be the earthly embodiment of what God is to humans: As God is the Power that creates us, the Power to which we owe gratitude for our lives, so too are our parents on the earthly plane. If we dishonor our parents, we dishonor God, the Source of our existence.

Because you and your parents have different needs, it is crucial to search for ways to enable both of you to deal with change. As you progress from being a child to becoming an adult, you change the way you see your parents. As a child you probably saw your parents mostly as providers. As an adult you will be able to see them as people who gave you life. You will begin to recognize the respect and honor that they deserve.

As you are changing your view of your parents, they are changing their view of you. They will start to see you as an individual, someone who is still dependent on them yet learning how to be

self-sufficient. In this chapter you will find ways to show your gratitude and appreciation.

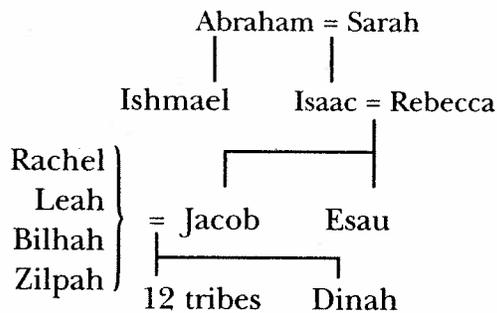
JEWISH MOTHERS

MEET

Ima (Mother) and *Imahot* (Matriarchs)

Each of us has a personal mother, a woman who gave birth to us and raised us. Some of us may have more than one mother—one who gave birth to us *and* one who raised us. Eve, the first mother on earth, was called *em kol chai* (mother of all that is alive). As Jews, we also have four ancestral mothers, the women who gave birth to the Jewish people. They are Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. The Midrash sometimes includes two other women—Bilhah and Zilpah, who were the wives of Jacob and the mothers of Jewish tribes as well (see, e.g., *Numbers Rabbah* 12:17).

Here is a family tree of the matriarchs and patriarchs.



Following are descriptions of the four matriarchs. In Hebrew the word for “matriarch” is the same as the word for biological mother, *ima*.

Sarah Imeynu (*Sarah*, O

Sarah’s name means “prin the founder of monotheis ter. (Such marriages were Abraham on his mission land to start a new peopl One God.

Sarah is known for sp ered her. When she could have a child with their ma voice of Sarah” (Genesis 1

Meanwhile, God final When she heard this, Sara am grown old shall I ha (Genesis 18:12). She gavel brother’s rival. Sarah thou so she convinced Abraham wilderness.

Later, Sarah woke up c Isaac had left the house ea command, was preparing the end, however, an a According to a midrash, home, Sarah had died—fr being sacrificed.

Rivka Imeynu (*Rebecca*, C

Abraham sent his servant Isaac in Mesopotamia, th camels, jewelry, and othe find. He devised the follo finest wife for his master’s the village well. When a gi

PARENTS TODAY

THINK ABOUT IT

Before looking at Jewish sources on honoring parents, let's consider what *honor* means.

- Who in society is honored?
- Consider the following people and whether or how they are honored: the queen of England, when she makes a state visit to another country; the president of the United States; your favorite pop star; a firefighter who saves all the people in a house that is on fire.
- What does a person have to do to be honored?
- Should a person be honored for just being him- or herself?
- Is there anyone at school whom you honor?
- Whom else, besides your parents, do you honor in your life?
- How can you honor someone?
- When the Torah commands people to honor their parents, does it refer to loving them, or only to obligations, such as helping them with chores and being polite, or feeding and clothing them when they can't do this for themselves? Is it equivalent to *respect*?
- What do your parents mean to you? How can you show them how you feel?
- What word would you use to describe the ideal relationship between a child and a parent?

Let's also consider what *parents* means. Today, there are traditional families that include a mother, a father, and children, and

DAY

honoring parents, let's con-

whether or how they are
when she makes a state visit
in the United States; your
and all the people in a

be honored?
isn't being him- or herself?
do you honor?
do you honor in your life?

do you honor their parents,
do you honor your obligations, such as
being polite, or feeding and
this for themselves? Is it

? How can you show

describe the ideal relationship

relationships. Today, there are tradi-
tional relationships, and children, and

there are nontraditional families such as grandparents and children; single parents and children; adoptive parents and adoptive children; foster parents and foster children; stepfather, mother, and children; father, stepmother, and children; and same-sex parents and children. Whenever you see *parents* in this chapter, it means adults in the parental role; they are not necessarily the biological parents of the child. According to *halakhah*, the legal code of traditional Judaism, people who assume a parental role with a child whose biological parents are not able to take care of him or her are to be honored just like biological parents.

M'KOROT

Look at these selections from Jewish sources and consider how they do or do not affect you today.

"Honor your father and your mother." —Exodus 20:12

"Honoring your parents is the most difficult mitzvah."
—Jerusalem Talmud, *Peah* 1:1

"God accounts honor shown to parents as though it were shown to God, and, conversely, the neglect of honoring parents is regarded as an insult to God." —*Mechilta* on Exodus 20:12

To these positive commandments, Maimonides adds three negative ones: not to curse your father or mother, not to strike your father or mother, and not to rebel against the authority of your father or mother (*Sefer Hamitzvot*, Book 2, Nos. 318, 319, and 195). A separate but related mitzvah is to show deference to the elderly (Leviticus 19:32).

WRITE

Keep a journal for a week in which you record all your interactions with your parents, writing down what took place. How does the mitzvah of *kibud av va'em* enter into it? Discuss what happened with your parents. Come up with ways in which you could improve in honoring and respecting your parents.

Now make a list of things that you know upset your parents, then list ways you can rectify the situation. Following are three examples:

1. When I don't do my homework. *Make a conscious effort to do homework without being nagged.*
2. When I spend too much time on the phone or instant messaging. *Set time limits and plan activities.*
3. When I fight with my sibling(s). *Try to work out disagreements without raising my voice.*

Finally, list ten things your parents do for you:

1. They brought me into this world (or adopted me).
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Ways I Can Honor

1. Clean my room
2. Take out the garbage
3. Help with preparations
4. Make them breakfast
5. Write a letter or card
6. Help my sister or brother
7. Take care and protect my parents
8. Speak to them in a respectful manner
9. Wish them a good day
10. Invite them to play

Getting to Know

The better you know your parents, the more you can honor and respect them. Here are some ideas for conducting an interview with your parents about their life events, people, and travels. If you know nothing or very little about your parents, you came into it.

Set aside time to find out about your parents. Set aside one to two hours, and make a list of questions. Take notes or have a tape recorder. You can videotape your parents if you wish. Write down which they honored them. However you decide to do it, make sure you keep it in a safe place. This is a story that you might want to tell your children. You might want to show it to your friends. It's a family tradition!

Interview Questions:

Here are some questions they are just ideas to get you started.

Ways I Can Honor My Parents

1. Clean my room
2. Take out the garbage without being asked
3. Help with preparation of dinner and cleanup afterwards
4. Make them breakfast in bed
5. Write a letter or poem of appreciation
6. Help my sister or brother with homework
7. Take clear and polite phone messages for them
8. Speak to them in an appreciative and respectful manner
9. Wish them a good day before I leave for school
10. Invite them to play a board game or cards

Getting to Know Your Parents

The better you know your parents, the easier it can be to honor and respect them. Here are questions to get you going on a fascinating interview with your parents. There are probably many events, people, and travels they have experienced about which you know nothing or very little. Your parents had a whole life before you came into it.

Set aside time to find out about this, if they are willing. Plan on one to two hours, and make sure you won't have any interruptions. Take notes or have a tape recorder going. You may even want to videotape your parents as you interview them. Include ways in which they honored *their* parents. How have times changed? However you decide to document the interview, make sure you keep it in a safe place. This interview will be a piece of family history that you might want to take out again and again. Eventually, you might want to show it to your children. You might even be starting a family tradition!

Interview Questions: You don't have to stick to these questions; they are just ideas to get you started. You might also want to use

family photos and special keepsakes that are important to your parents to get them talking.

- Where were they born? If outside the North America, what was their immigration experience like?
- Did they go to high school, college, graduate school?
- What are their occupations? What do their jobs entail?
- What are their hobbies and interests?
- Who are their best friends? Who were their friends while they were growing up?
- What is unique about them?
- What do they like best about being a Jewish woman or man?
- What part of Judaism most appeals to them?
- Did they have a bat or bar mitzvah, and what was it like?
- What do they think is the reason to have a bat mitzvah?
- What do they want you to get out of your experience as a bat mitzvah?
- What historical events have they lived through, and what are their thoughts about them?

DO IT

One good way to improve your relationship with your parents is to engage in fulfilling a mitzvah with them, such as the mitzvah of *tzedakah* (charity). *Tzedakah* can be a way to work together for a cause that goes far beyond you and your parents. Here are some suggestions for family *tzedakah* projects:

- Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
- Sort through old clothes and give them to needy families.

- Prepare a Shabbat meal anonymously.
- Set aside a *tzedakah* box once a week (it starts on Shabbat begins).
- Organize a cleanup of the street and dispose of the trash.

DISCUSS

Think about the meaning of *tzedakah* in the dictionary if that would help you understand what is commanded to honor our parents.

WHEN HONORING

There are times when you are being emotionally, physically, or sexually abused. How could you possibly honor your parents if you are being found out by your parents? You feel you must honor your parents, but your child deserves to be abused. How can you help?

If you are being abused, here are some things for you to consider. Find a safe place for yourself. Find a teacher, the parent of a friend, or a rabbi. Find a safe place for shelter. Find a safe place for help. Jewish Family and Child Welfare.

- Prepare a Shabbat meal for a needy family and deliver it anonymously.
- Set aside a *zedakah* box for one cause and put coins in the box once a week (it is traditional to do this just before Shabbat begins).
- Organize a cleanup of your neighborhood. Pick up trash in the street and dispose of it properly.

DISCUSS

Think about the meaning of love and honor. Look them up in the dictionary if that would help. Discuss with your parents why we are commanded to honor our parents but are not commanded to love them.

WHEN HONORING PARENTS IS A PROBLEM

There are times when you cannot honor your parents. If you are being emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by a parent, how could you possibly honor him or her? Protecting your parents from being found out by your teachers, relatives, and friends because you feel you must honor them is not going to help anyone. No child deserves to be abused, and it is imperative to reach out for help.

If you are being abused and need help, here are some options for you to consider. Find an adult you can trust to talk about it with: a teacher, the parent of a friend, a rabbi, a counselor, or a doctor. Find a safe place for shelter if you need to leave your home. Call Jewish Family and Children's Services in your community.

FINAL WORDS

Someday you might be a parent. If that happens, how do you think you'll look back on this time in your life?

The struggles you are experiencing are important—and even valuable. Together with your parents, you are working on the task of growing up. This work takes into account their experiences as teens along with yours. Your parents brought you into the world and are raising you. If you were adopted or do not live with your birth parents, the adults who care for you brought you into their lives and are raising you. Up until now you have been their responsibility completely; that is changing. You are gaining responsibility and authority over your own life, but it doesn't happen in one day. You will work for many years to become a fulfilled, productive adult, a person who can make a living by honest work and give something back to the world. You and your parents are preparing for the time when you leave their care and go out into the world on your own.

Dear JGirl,
Will it be a burger and
tuna on whole-grain bread
front of the TV with a bowl
snack a candy bar or granola?
A new surge of hunger
body is changing rapidly,
grumpier than you used to be,
found feelings are strong
are growing, you need more
changing, you need more
you are becoming a woman
and vitamins than you

CHAPTER

8

OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS:
When Is It Permissible to Disobey?

In all his years on the bench, Judge Shapero had never had a case like this. A high school computer whiz admitted stealing hundreds of dollars worth of long distance phone calls. It seemed like an open-and-shut case, but the computer genius pleaded not guilty, telling Judge Shapero: "I am fulfilling a more important obligation—honoring my parents." It turned out that the whole scheme was the idea of his father, who, lacking computer skills, enlisted his son as an accomplice.

Judge Shapero was outraged at the defendant's response. Before handing down a stiff legal penalty, however, the judge decided to determine if Jewish tradition actually sanctioned blind allegiance to a parent's illegal demands. The judge phoned Rabbi Cook for an opinion.

JEWISH SOURCES

The rabbis taught that three partners create a human being: God, the father, and the mother.
(Talmud)

That is the principle upon which the Jewish understanding of the parent-child relationship rests. Children must respect their parents, who

are considered partners with God in the rearing of children: "The Holy One, blessed be He, says, 'I ascribe [merit] to . . . [the parents] as though I myself had come to dwell among them, and they had honored me.'" The idea of honoring parents, as we all know, is one of the Ten Commandments:

Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land which the Lord your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may long endure, and that you may fare well, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 5:16)

When the verse in Deuteronomy is discussed in the Talmud, the rabbis explain the words "that you may long endure, and that you may fare well" in economic terms: ". . . a person enjoys the interest in this world and the principal in the world to come."

Elsewhere in the Torah, we are commanded, "You shall revere everyone his mother and his father." (Lev. 19:3) "Honoring" parents is equated with revering God ("Revere only the

JUDGE SHAPERO'S DECISION

The young man owed his father respect and honor, but only to a point. Once the guilty father had crossed the line of decent and moral behavior, the son was not obligated to follow him; indeed, he was duty-bound to disobey. The son's loyalty was misplaced; so, too, was his sense of duty.

Judge Shapero took this into account when he pronounced sentence upon the young man, imposing a large fine and probation instead of a prison term. More than to punish the young man, he wanted to teach him and his father a lesson neither would forget.

CHAPTER

9

INDEPENDENCE V. DEPENDENCE: Are Parents Always Right?

Rebecca was angry that Thursday afternoon at Hebrew school, and she didn't bother to hide it. She screamed at her parents from the temple's public telephone, accusing them of being unfair, uncaring, and cruel.

Rabbi Cohen overheard Rebecca's side of the phone conversation and was disturbed by the scene. When Rebecca slammed down the phone, he asked if she would like to speak with him. Reluctantly she agreed to step into his office. The rabbi asked Rebecca what was troubling her. Words came rushing out in no logical order. What Rabbi Cohen could piece together went something like this: Rebecca was captain of her soccer team, which in three days, next Sunday morning, was to compete in a championship match. Her parents insisted that she attend religious school, so, rather than being on the field, she would be at the temple, learning things she didn't care about and that made little sense to her. Finally, she asked, "Rabbi, do my parents have any right to force me to be here against my will?"

What gives our parents the right to make us do whatever they want? Rabbi Cohen spoke to Rebecca for a long time, explaining Jewish teachings about what it means to be a parent

and how parents should treat their children. Then he answered her question. Can you guess what he said? You will find his explanation at the end of the chapter. First, consider some Jewish thoughts about the nature of parenthood and the responsibilities of parents.

Judaism regards parenthood as a mitzvah. In the very first commandment of the Torah God says to Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. . . ." (Gen. 1:28) In other words, the Torah teaches that it is a Jewish obligation to have children.

Jewish tradition looks upon children as the greatest joy in a parent's life. The Psalmist says, "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward." (127:3) When the Psalmist describes a person living in complete happiness, he promises, "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine . . . your [children] like olive saplings around your table." (128:3) In the Book of Proverbs we are reminded, "Children's children are the crown of old men. . ." (17:6) At numerous points and in various ways, rabbinic literature tells us that the Jewish people received the Torah only for the purpose of giving it to their children. One midrash tells that,

when God offered the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, God demanded that they produce guarantors—witnesses who would guarantee that they would take it seriously. The people offered Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God said, not good enough. They offered King David, but God did not accept him either. Finally, the Jewish people offered as guarantors their children and the generations of children who came after them. God accepted, saying, “Your children are good guarantors. For their sake will I give you the Torah.”

The Talmud teaches that “the world is held in place by the breath of little children studying Torah.” And in the Book of Isaiah we read: “All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.” (54:13)

Parents who have strong relationships with their children are considered blessed. The *Gemara* conveys this idea in a beautiful story told by Rabbi Isaac to Rabbi Nachman: “To what may your request for a blessing be compared? To a man who was traveling through the desert. He was hungry, tired, and thirsty when he came upon a tree, the fruits of which were sweet, its shade pleasant, and a stream of water flowing beneath it. He ate of its fruits, drank of the water, and rested under its shade. When he was about to continue his journey, he said: ‘Tree, O tree, with what shall I bless you? Shall I say to you, may your fruits be sweet? They are already sweet. That your shade be pleasant? It is already pleasant. That a stream of water flow beneath you? A stream of water already flows beneath you. Therefore I say, May it be God’s will that all the shoots taken from you be like you.’ So it is with you. With what shall I bless you? With the knowledge of Torah? With riches? You already have knowledge of the Torah and riches. So I say, ‘May it be God’s will that your offspring be like you.’”

Having children is a mitzvah, but it is only the beginning. Child rearing entails responsibilities. The rabbis taught, for example, that a father has specific obligations to his son: to arrange to circumcise him; if he is the firstborn

to his mother—to provide for the ceremony of *pidyon haben*; to teach him Torah; to find a wife for him; and to teach him a craft. Rabbi Judah said, “He who does not teach his son a craft teaches him to be a robber.” (Talmud) All of these obligations of a father to a son have an underlying purpose—to save life. Torah assures spiritual life; trade assures one’s physical life and allows one to earn self-esteem; marriage saves one from a life of promiscuity and unhappiness. Some say a father must also teach his son to swim. At least one scholar suggests that Jews were active in commerce and often traveled in merchant ships around the Mediterranean. At times, they were attacked by pirates and hurled into the sea. Thus, knowing how to swim could certainly have helped save their lives.

Both parents have responsibility for shaping the character of their children. In the *Ve’ahavta*, we say, “You shall teach them diligently to your children.” (Deut. 6:7) The same ideas are repeated throughout the Torah. For instance, we read, “Make them known to your children and your children’s children: the day you stood before the Lord your God . . . when the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.’” (Deut. 4:9–10)

The rabbinic authors of the Talmud described religious rituals in terms of parents teaching children, so as to involve the young ones. The custom of having a seder on Pesach derives from the commandment, “You shall tell your [child] in that day, saying: ‘It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.’” (Exod. 13:8) The seder is described almost entirely in terms of parents helping their children understand and encouraging them to rejoice.

Children are encouraged to blow the shofar and may even be taught to blow the shofar on Shabbat and weekday holidays. Children should be taught to observe the fast of Yom Kippur. Of course, if their health demands it, they may eat on Yom Kippur, for one should not afflict

children on the Day of Atonement by making them fast or denying them food. But one should prepare them for their adult responsibilities. "One trains them a year or two before in order that they may become used to religious observance." (Talmud)

Parents have responsibility for the intellectual and moral growth of their children, to make sure that their children learn Torah. Reform Judaism teaches that parents also are required to see that their children receive a quality secular education. There is evidence that in ancient days fathers took it upon themselves to teach their sons, while private teachers educated their daughters. The Talmud, and later Jewish commentaries, devoted attention to what a proper curriculum should include, specifying Scripture, *Mishnah*, and *Gemara*.

Jewish tradition sets standards for respectable behavior. We read in the Book of Proverbs: "A foolish son is vexation to his father, and bitterness to her that bore him" (17:25); "A wise son makes a glad father; but a foolish son is the grief of his mother." (10:1) The Haggadah identifies four different sons according to their character traits, a recognition that people have the capacity to be simple or foolish, wise or wicked—and that parents have differing responsibilities to different types of children.

Jewish sources also recognize the difficulties parents often encounter in disciplining their children. Here are some examples: "A bad son in a man's house is worse than . . . [a] war." The Torah and the Talmud teach that a stubborn and rebellious son, one who curses his parents, strikes them (Exod. 21:15), or one who is a glutton or a drunkard is subject to severe punishment. The Torah describes how the parents of such a son had a communal obligation to bring him to the city elders for discipline. On the other hand, parents are advised to forgive a stubborn and rebellious child. Parents, therefore, have the responsibility both to teach and to discipline their children.

Does Judaism sanction physical punishment of children? Proverbs 23:13 says: "Do not withhold discipline from your child; if you beat him

with a rod he will not die." And elsewhere it states, "He that spares the rod hates his son; but he that loves him chastens him at times." (Prov. 13:24) A midrash teaches: "If one refrains from punishing a child, he will end up by becoming utterly depraved." Once children have grown up, says the Talmud, parents can no longer discipline them or exert the same kind of influence.

The rabbis were also aware that it is possible for parents to be too severe in disciplining their children: "Do not terrorize your household." The ideal form of discipline involves being both firm and loving. Thus, teaches the Talmud, the right course is to "push away with the left hand and draw them near with the right hand."

Today we take a dim view of corporal punishment of children, knowing how easily it can lead to life-threatening child abuse. The rabbis did not encourage violence in the home; they wanted only to emphasize that love alone, without discipline, could not shape children into responsible adults.

WHAT DID RABBI COHEN DECIDE?

The issue in Rebecca's case was not that her parents acted without reason or care. While it seemed to Rebecca that they were dismissing her interests, they were in fact demonstrating their love for her by ensuring that she receive a good Jewish education, as required by our tradition. Their concern for her character development grows from an attitude that stresses a parent's obligation to meet the totality of a child's needs—physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

Could Rebecca's parents have acted more gently? Rabbi Cohen said, "Yes, they could have." Could they have tried to reason with her instead of just forcing her to go along with their wishes? Again, Rabbi Cohen said yes. Was it possible that Rebecca could miss a day of religious school to participate in the championship game? Rebecca was really surprised when he said yes a third time. "But . . ."—and he said

this *but* with a lot of emphasis—he wanted Rebecca to understand that her parents behaved as they did not because they didn't love her but precisely because they loved her so much and were concerned about her long-term happiness and well-being. Still, it seemed all right to him if she missed a day to pursue an interest that was of utmost importance to her. Why not just do a little makeup work? In fact, Rabbi Cohen said he would be willing to call her parents and tell them that himself.

Rebecca felt better after her session with Rabbi Cohen. Her parents did care about her after all.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE REBECCA?

Share a time in your life when you were furious with your parents, when you felt that a decision they made was unfair. Are you still angry? Does their decision now make more sense? Why?

MEET

David and Jonathan

A sincere friendship is based on intimacy, privacy, honor, respect, continual cultivation, giving and taking, and all-around care for one another. In the Bible, the story of David and Jonathan exemplifies the Jewish ideal of friendship. Jonathan was the son of King Saul. When Saul realized that David, a humble shepherd, was a far better warrior than he and was destined to be the next king of Israel, he became jealous and decided to kill David. Jonathan had to make a choice between his father and David, who was his friend. He sacrificed his relationship with his father and chose loyalty to his friend (1 Samuel 18:1-4). Jonathan helped David to flee and thus saved his life.

What does it mean that they were such good friends? Did Jonathan call on David every 10 minutes? Did they spend all of their free time together? Did Jonathan constantly shower David with compliments? No. They were called good friends because they loved each other and would have done anything for one another. When he learned of Jonathan's death, David said, "Jonathan, my brother, you were most dear to me" (2 Samuel 1:26).

Naomi and Ruth

In the biblical period of the Judges there was a famine in Israel. One wealthy and prominent family in Bethlehem, from the tribe of Judah, was able to escape. Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Chilion and Machlon, packed up and took off to the land of Moab.

When they arrived in Moab, life improved. Elimelech continued with his business, Naomi was delighted in their new home, and the boys assimilated to their environments. Chilion married a Moabite woman named Ruth, and Machlon married a Moabite

woman named Orpah. Life was good for Elimelech and his family: they had a large house, plenty of food, and good health.

Then things took a turn for the worse. Elimelech, Machlon, and Chilion all died. Naomi's daughters-in-law remained with her throughout the period of mourning. Soon Naomi decided that it was time for her to return to her old home in Bethlehem. At first both her daughters-in-law insisted that they would return with her, but when Naomi explained that she had nothing to offer them, Orpah went back to her own family.

Ruth, however, insisted on staying with her mother-in-law. When Naomi told Ruth she was free to go home, Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you, to go back from following you—for wherever you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people are my people, and your God is my God. Where you will die, I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:16–17).

It must have been very difficult for Ruth to leave her homeland and journey to another land with an entirely different religion. For Ruth was not only being loyal to Naomi. By saying, "Your people are my people and your God is my God," she became Jewish.

When they arrived in Israel, a wealthy and kind landowner named Boaz, a cousin of Naomi's, allowed Ruth to gather barley in his fields during the harvest. (This is a right guaranteed by the Torah to the poor, to widows, and to orphans.) Ruth worked in the sweltering sun every day, and one day Boaz invited her to eat with him. When Naomi noticed his growing interest in her daughter-in-law, she encouraged Ruth to let him know she was available for marriage.

Ruth did so, and Boaz and Ruth married and had a son named Oved, who was the grandfather of King David, the greatest king of Israel. According to Jewish tradition, Ruth and Boaz merited such a remarkable descendant because of their caring behavior, toward each other and toward others. A simple but beautiful explanation of the purpose of the Book of Ruth was given by Rabbi Zeira, who said: "This scroll tells us nothing either of ritual purity or impurity,

either of things prohibited. To teach how great is the kindness" (Ruth Rabbah 2:14).

DISCUSS

- Can you recall a time when you were surprised by one unexpected?
- Do you think girls have different values than other girls than the ones you know?
- How would you define loyalty and how do you refrain from doing something if you hear someone say it's wrong? Will you still be a loyal friend?
- What acts of kindness do you think of a time when you were with Ruth or Jonathan?

LEARN

Ruth and Naomi and David are examples of Jewish belief, a concept of doing acts of kindness. *Pikuach Nefesh* means three things: Torah, serenity, and kindness. Examples of *g'milut chasadim* are helping someone in need, not being harshly. Jewish tradition says, "Kindness, so should we: 'Do an act of lovingkindness,' we say."

A separate but related concept is *lovingkindness*.

What is lovingkindness? How can we show us how to do it?

רות
 Ruth

In the days when the chieftains ruled, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab. ²The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.

³Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. ⁴They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years. ⁵Then those two—Mahlon and Chilion—also died; so the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.

⁶She started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab; for in the country of Moab she had heard that the LORD had taken note of His people and given them food. ⁷Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she had been living; and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah.

⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Turn back, each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me! ⁹May the LORD grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping ¹⁰and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

¹¹But Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters! Why should you go with me?"

This translation of the Book of Ruth is reprinted from *The Five Megillot and Jonah* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1969). Many of the contributors to this volume quote other published translations or have consulted other translations in preparing their own; the sources each author has used are identified in a footnote at the beginning of her selection.

1 והיו בימי שופט השופטים הרד
 רעב בארץ וכלך אלש מדינת
 ליהודה והחיה לנול בשאר מואב
 2 הוא ואשתו ושני בניהו ושם
 האיש אלימלך ושם אשתו
 נאמי ושם שני בניהו אורפה
 וכליין אפרתים מדינת ליהודה
 והחיה מואב שרי-מואב
 3 והחיה-לשם: ותמת אלימלך
 אצל נעמי ותשארה היא ושני
 4 בניהו: ושאוה ליה ושם
 מאביות שם האחת ערפה
 ושם השנית רות ושבו לשם
 5 בעשור שנים: ותמתו גם-
 אשניהם מחיין וכליין ותשארה
 6 האשה נעמי ילדיה ותוארה:
 ותקם היא וכלייה ותשוב
 7 משרי מואב כי שקעה בשורה
 מואב כיי-פקד יהיה אפי-
 8 עמל לרה ליהם ליהם: ותאצ
 9 מוד-מקום אשר יהיה-
 10 שקה ושתי כליותה עמה
 ותלכנה בדרך לשוב אל-
 11 ארץ יהודה: ותאמר נעמי
 לשתי כליותה לכה שבה
 אשתי לכה אמה נעשה יהיה
 עמכם חסר פאשר עשיתם
 9 עם-המקום עמרי: יהו
 יהיה ליהם ונמאן ונחיה אשתי
 10 כיה אשתי ותשק ליה ותשארה
 11 לה כיי-אמר נשוב לעמך:
 11 ותאמר נעמי שבה בנולך לקח

ship between Ruth and Naomi is their persistent commitment to each other through shifting circumstances. Interpreting the story with what they have learned as psychotherapists, they in turn reflect on what Ruth teaches them about crucial patterns in therapeutic relationships between women.

This section closes with an edited transcript of a *shmur*, an oral reflection on classical Jewish texts, which Avivah Zornberg presented in one of the many classes for Jewish women she teaches in Jerusalem. Works from the Western philosophical and literary tradition as well as traditional Jewish commentaries figure prominently as Zornberg explores the meaning of Ruth's improbable choice of Naomi as the central figure in her life. Following clues suggested by close readings in rabbinic midrash and medieval commentaries, she opens up the Bible's language to startling possibilities. She rejects the clichéd literary view of Ruth as a charming idyll and instead unveils a stark existential drama of suffering countered by the determined, even willful lovingkindness of Ruth. By taking seriously Naomi's praise of her daughters-in-law for their kindness "to the living *and the dead*," Zornberg reveals a "concealed alternative," a level of passion and life-affirming courage in defiance of death, in Ruth's gesture of "clinging."

Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah

A Parable of Friendship

GLORIA GOLDBREICH



They walk across the desert, a trio so light of step that their sandaled feet leave no impression on the shifting ochre sands. Their gait is measured and graceful. They are used to walking together, to accommodating their steps, each to the others. The two younger women keep a few paces ahead; their long gray desert cloaks cast a gossamer veil of shadow onto which the older woman glides.

They speak softly, in the lilting tones of intimacy. Often, they speak in half sentences. They understand each other so well that a cryptic code of dangling phrases suffices. Now and again, they drift into a dreamy, companionable silence. This has long been their habit—an exchange of words and then a retreat into separate fortresses of thoughts and memories. They are careful, at such times, not to invade each other's privacy with unbidden question or intrusive statement.

A rare, salt-scented breeze stirs the heavy air and they turn their eyes skyward. A snow-white egret scissors its wide-winged way toward the salt marshes of the Dead Sea.

"How beautiful. Do you see it, Ruth?" The older woman's eyes follow the bird in its flight.

"Yes, I see it, Naomi. Orpah?"

"I see it, Ruth."

The author used *Ruth* in *The Five Megilloth* (London, Jerusalem, New York: Soncino Press, 1st printing, 1946).

The names are small jewels upon their tongues, glittering, audible fragments of affection, each syllable finely polished by their love. *Ruth, Orpah, Naomi.* They know the meanings of those names and it benames them that they were so well chosen, as though their parents, holding the infant females, could predict the women they would become. Naomi means pleasant. Ruth signifies friendship. And Orpah, Naomi has told them, is derived from the Arabic and means "rich with hair."

It is true that calm and pleasantness are Naomi's mantle. That calm, that pleasantness, settles in a patina of beauty across the life-worn skin of her aging face. It translates into the wisdom, the persuasive reasonableness of her words. It has made her—the mother of their husbands, gentle youths who died so young—their teacher and their friend. Their friendly teacher, their teaching friend. Saddened by her own widowhood, Naomi did not surrender to bitterness. She mourned Elimelech, her husband, yet her ways remained as her name, the ways of pleasantness.

And yes, Orpah's curling chestnut-colored hair falls in heavy thickness to her waist. Her brows are soft furry slashes above her deepset violet eyes, the color of the hills of her native Moab at the twilight hour. Long silken hairs shimmer upon the tawny skin of her arms and legs, tuft the secret places of her body. Ruth and Naomi love Orpah's hair. They have brushed it and plaited it into intricate coronets. They have fashioned it into curls piled high upon her head so that she straggled playfully beneath the weight of her coiffure. Their laughter spilled out then, as though they were small girls caught in paroxysms of merriment. That is how grown women laugh, in the fastness of their relationship—without embarrassment, unencumbered by fear of judgment, secure with each other and within themselves.

Ruth, too, is true to her name. Friendship is the essence of her being, loyalty burns in her dark eyes, caring tenderness ignites her touch. She is passionate in her friendships, fiercely protective of those she loves. She takes her friends into her heart. She would share with them her soul's yearnings, her imagination's flight. And Naomi and Orpah, sister-in-law and mother-in-law, have been the dearest of her friends, her companions in laughter and melancholy. They have comforted her and she, in turn, has held them in her arms, felt the hot tears of their sorrow upon her skin.

She recognizes that her feelings for each of them are different. She

and Orpah are young. They are widowed and childless, yet each month the flow of their blood reminds them that the potential for creating new life dwells within their bodies. Their menstrual surge reassures them. Their husbands, Mahlon and Chilion, are dead, but their own lives stretch before them. They speak softly of this to each other, fearful that their words might wound Naomi, discomfited by their own desires. But when they speak, that discomfort is abated. Shared confidences relieve their anxiety, anneal their sadness.

They are both daughters of Moab and they sing the songs of their girlhood, dance toward each other in graceful partnership, exchange reminiscences. There is a friendship of mutuality, of easy rapport and spontaneous affection.

But of Naomi, Ruth asks questions, probes for answers and insights. She will learn from Naomi, her mother-in-law turned friend. In all things Naomi has gone before her, and she offers the lessons of her life with gentle generosity. Orpah too, listens to Naomi, but it is Ruth who is the diligent student, the earnest observer. Naomi is her mentor; she guides her into womanhood. Naomi taught her that even in mourning, according to the beliefs of her people Israel, there is dignity and purpose—a set plan in death as there is in life. It is from Naomi that she learns the small secrets of survival, the intricacies of relationships. These are things that an older woman teaches her young friends—the wisdom that one generation wills to another.

Friendship was Ruth's talent. Naomi honed it into genius. The egret alights upon the low-hanging branch of a terebinth tree and the three women watch it from the distance. Soon it will soar again, shearing its way through the cobalt sky, shadowing the pale sand on its journey home.

"We draw near to the Sea of Salt," Naomi says, and her daughters-in-law nod but do not speak. They know Naomi is reminding them that they stand between Moab and Judah, equidistant between their homeland and her own. They avert their eyes because they do not want to see the sadness in Naomi's face as she remembers that ten years earlier she had passed this way. She was wife and mother then, accompanied by her strong, proud husband and two young sons. They were on a journey of hope, fleeing the famine in Judah to find sustenance in the fields of Moab.

That famine has ended. Travelers to Moab brought them that news

only days ago, and Naomi decided at once to retrace her steps. But now she is widowed and bereft of her sons, with only the friendship of Orpah and Ruth to sustain her.

Ruth reaches out to Orpah, touches her hand, but Orpah's gaze is fixed on the egret, now in swift flight, fast becoming a slash of white in the distance. Orpah has never seen the Sea of Salt, where the white bird will nest. She is a daughter of the flat fields of Moab. She loves the low hills of her homeland. Caves and mountains frighten her. And Judah is a land of caves and mountains, of rock-bound fields and thistled paths. Chilion spoke of them as he played with her hair, as he ringed his fingers with the red-gold tendrils, his voice like his mother's, dreamy and pleasant.

Naomi smiles at them.

"My brides," she begins. Always she has called them that, recalling their beauty on their wedding days, their courage in taking the young men from Judah as husbands. "I want you to return to the homes of your mothers." She speaks with quiet authority yet they all recognize that her only power over them is her affection.

Ruth, ever the querying student, wonders why Naomi speaks of her mother's dwelling place rather than the tent of her father. The answer comes to her when Naomi takes Orpah's hand in her own and places her arm about Ruth's shoulders. Of course, Naomi would have them make their home among women, because they have grown used to soft voices and gentle hands. They have lived, the three widows, as a family of women, sharing friends who understand the pang of loss, the fear of loneliness, the solace of silence. They need the comfort of their mothers' soft breasts, their sisters' sweet voices. Later, when the wounds of grief are healed, they will find rest in the homes of the men who, one day, will become their husbands.

Of this Naomi assures them, in her pleasant musical voice, and then, drawing them close, she kisses them. Her lips taste the saline streaks of their sorrow. They are both weeping, and she knows that they will not be comforted.

Ruth and Orpah speak in unison, their words grief-strangled but their meaning clear.

"No. We will return with you to your people."

She laughs, a wounding, mocking sound that startles them, and when she speaks there is a hint of anger in her tone. They are aware,

for the first time, of a strain of envy, a muted wrath. But because they know her so well, they realize that she does not begrudge them their youth but mourns the loss of her own. They recognize that her anger is directed not at them but at an arbitrary God who has left her widowed and childless, an aging woman who will never again love a husband or bear children.

She confirms this as she speaks to them with love and concern. They must return to their own land and build new lives. There is generosity in her plea, the generosity of her long affection for them. It does not matter that if they leave her, she will have to continue the long and arduous journey alone. Such is her devotion to them that their future takes precedence over her present. Such is her friendship for them.

They are silent. Always they have been obedient to her, relying on her wisdom, according her the deference of their love. Slowly, reluctantly, Orpah moves forward. She who watched the soaring egret with awe, submits to that wisdom.

She kisses Naomi; her lips flutter like a butterfly across her mother-in-law's sun-parched skin. But she does not kiss Ruth. She does not look at her. She fears that Ruth sees her departure as betrayal. She fears that if she meets Ruth's eyes (the dark eyes that burn with friendship), that if Ruth touches her hand with that caring tenderness she knows so well, she will not have the courage to turn and make her way alone, back to Moab and her mother's tent. And she knows too, that Ruth will not leave Naomi. Ruth is wedded to Naomi's friendship and her wisdom. Orpah has often had the sense that a single soul inhabits the bodies of both Ruth and Naomi.

Naomi's hand touches Orpah's face, her fingers trace her features. A blessing, a gesture of farewell. Ruth stands very still. She will not intrude upon Orpah's decision. She will not burden her with her grief. Slowly, slowly, Orpah retraces her steps, never once looking back.

Naomi watches until Orpah's slight form can no longer be seen and turns again to Ruth. She has obligations to Mahlon's widow. She wants to advise her well, even if that advice tears at her heart. The long years of her life have taught her that true love, true friendship, means setting the other before one's self. And so, again, she urges Ruth to follow after Orpah, to return to the familiar landscape of her life, the religion of her birth.

Ruth listens patiently. In all things Naomi has been right, but in this

entreaty Ruth knows her to be wrong. She cannot and will not obey. She has crossed a new threshold of friendship and speaks to Naomi with a new confidence, an absolute certainty. The words fall from her tongue with silver fluency, each phrase heart-forged.

"Do not ask me to leave you. Always I will follow you. Where you go, I will go. Your home will be my home. Your people will be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Only death will part you from me."

Certainty burnishes Ruth's strong voice. Her words defy further argument. And now it is Naomi who submits, who accepts the younger woman's decision. Hand in hand they continue on their journey, two continuing where three had begun. They feel Orpah's absence but they do not speak of her.

They arrive at last in the town of Bethlehem, where Naomi is remembered, but the misfortunes of her life have so altered her that the friends of her young womanhood are briefly bewildered.

"Naomi? Is it really you, Naomi?" they call to her. It is the time of the barley harvest and their arms are laden with sheaves of grain.

The ways of pleasantness desert her. She is surrounded by reminders of her vanished happiness, when Elimelech walked by her side and Mahlon and Chilion played in the garden of her large house. Her very name offends her.

"Do not call me Naomi," she says harshly and her fingers cut into Ruth's palm. "Call me Mara—'bitterness'—because my life has been bitter. When I left here I was full of love but I return empty-hearted and alone."

Her words wound Ruth. Naomi is not alone; Ruth is with her. And how can Naomi's heart be empty when Ruth's own heart brims with love for her? But with the wounding comes the balm of forgiveness. Ruth knows (because Naomi has taught her) that in friendship, one must look away, accept small hurts and probe the source of pain. The source of Naomi's pain is her terrible bereavement, her fear of a solitary and poverty-haunted old age. She has, for the moment, forgotten Ruth, but then she is not infallible. Ruth accepts her as she is, as, indeed, Naomi has always accepted Ruth. Naomi relaxes her grip; she holds Ruth's hand gently, as though in apology.

It strikes Ruth that their positions have been reversed. Naomi was a stranger in Moab; now Ruth is a stranger in Judah. There is a new bal-

ance to their friendship. Ruth feels a sense of excitement, of anticipation. Sadness leaves her. Naomi will teach her the customs of this land. Naomi will advise her.

And Naomi does advise her. It is Naomi who assents to Ruth's decision to go into the fields and glean after the reapers. Perhaps Naomi speaks vaguely of a particular field owned by Boaz, a close relation of Elimelech. In any case, it is to that field that Ruth goes, her skin honey-colored by the sun-drenched days of her travels, her slender body enfolded in the loose blue shift favored by the women of Moab.

The day is hot but Naomi has pulled Ruth's dark hair back and twisted it into a knot that settles moistly at the nape of her neck. They thought of Orpah then, with her richness of hair, but they had not spoken of her, so careful are they of each other's feelings.

At midday Boaz comes to the field and, as he greets his workers, he sees Ruth. He asks about the beautiful stranger and is told she is the Moabite maiden, the widow of his near kinsman Mahlon, who returned to Judah with Naomi.

Her story is familiar to him. All of Bethlehem has heard of the wondrous companionship of Ruth and Naomi. The townspeople have pondered its mystery, bemused by a friendship that spans the generations, that unites the woman of one land with the woman of another. Its rarity intrigues.

When Ruth approaches him, Boaz is moved by her dignity and beauty.

"Please stay and glean in my field," he pleads, as though it is she who grants him the favor. "My men will protect and serve you."

His kindness overwhelms Ruth, even bewilders her. But Boaz is swift to explain that he has heard of Ruth's fidelity to Naomi, her tenderness toward the older woman. He would emulate her kindness. The friendship between the two women, the pedagogy of their simple actions, has served as an example to him, has taught him to behave with similar generosity, similar caring. As Ruth and Naomi care for each other, so he will care for Ruth. He offers her the freedom of the field, the bounty of his reaper's table.

Ruth carries her gleanings to Naomi. She tells her of Boaz's words and Naomi nods. She is not surprised.

"This man is close kin to us," she says.

Ruth thrills at the words. *To us.* Not to Naomi alone. With this

simple phrase, Naomi acknowledges that she and Ruth are truly one—melded—mutually caring, mutually responsible.

Naomi advises Ruth to continue gleaning in the fields of Boaz. Possessed of the foresight of her age, she perceives possibilities which do not occur to the young Ruth.

The corn is harvested and the days of the barley harvest pass. The gentle winds of spring welcome the wheat harvest. The community is energized by the joy of the season, aglow with the fecundity of the land. Young girls in white garments dance, cradling the first fruits of the harvest, and slender youths watch them with shining eyes. And each day, Ruth goes to glean in the fields of Boaz while Naomi watches and waits. At last she learns that on a particular evening, Boaz will winnow his barley on the threshing floor. She smiles. Her patience has been rewarded. She calls Ruth to her side.

"My daughter." She no longer calls Ruth her "bride." Ruth is truly daughter to her even as she feels herself mother to Ruth—unblooded but linked by heart and mind. "I want your life to be more restful." She speaks in the cryptic language of women who ease harsh reality with euphemism. It will not do to say that she wants Ruth to be free of worries about food and clothing and shelter, that she does not want her to stoop to glean in the corner of the field reserved for the poor.

And Ruth understands that Naomi is sharing ancient secrets with her, inviting her into a womanly intrigue, a delicious and delicate complexity. She listens as Naomi tells her to bathe, to anoint herself with fragrant oils, to dress in her most beautiful robe, and then to make her way to the threshing floor. Naomi is specific in her instructions. She is, after all, an older woman, with knowledge of the desires of men, experienced in subtlety and nuance. She is a wise and loving conspirator.

She tells Ruth that she must conceal herself until Boaz's work is done and he is sated with food and drink and lies down to rest. And Ruth agrees, accepting the authority of her teaching friend, the soft-voiced woman who calls her "daughter."

Beautifully dressed and sweetly perfumed, she waits in a shadowed corner of the threshing floor and watches as Boaz eats and drinks, as laughter lights his eyes and merriment ripples at his lips, as at last he falls into the sleep of exhaustion amid the fragrant husks.

And then, as Naomi has directed her, she moves quietly toward him, uncovers his feet, and lies down against them. He wakes at midnight, conscious of her scent, her touch.

"Who are you?" Hope triggers his question.

"Ruth. Your kinswoman." She whispers into the velvet darkness. "Spread your cloak over me." As birds shelter their mates beneath their wings, so would she have him shelter her.

He smiles, and his voice in reply quivers with pleasure. He blesses her and praises her.

"You have shown as much kindness in the end as in the beginning." He speaks of the kindness she has shown to Naomi, the loyalty and affection that caused her to accompany Naomi to Bethlehem and to sustain her with her gleanings. It is that kindness, that compassion, that fire him with love for Ruth, who sits at his feet, her lovely face silvered by the drifting harvest moon. He recognizes that she is not a woman of shallow perception. Even as she made the aging Naomi the friend of her heart, so she has chosen the mature Boaz over the younger men of the community. Her choices are intermingled—friendship taught her the ways of love.

Boaz spreads his garment over her in pledge of his protection. He promises that he will seek out the man whose relationship to the family of Elimelech gives him rights over Ruth and he will ask him to release her into Boaz's care.

They pass the night together, speaking softly as the darkness recedes. At their parting, in the milky light of dawn, he places portions of barley within her mantle, enough grain for both her and Naomi. Boaz recognizes that as he sustains the one, so must he sustain the other.

Ruth dashes across the fields, jeweled with the dew of daybreak, to Naomi, who asks the same question that Boaz asked at the midnight hour: "Who are you?" They would both pierce Ruth's innermost self, have her reveal herself to them, gift them with her honesty and love.

Ruth tells Naomi of her exchange with Boaz and Naomi is satisfied. Her plan has succeeded. Her womanly wisdom has triumphed. Surely, Ruth and Boaz will marry. He is a man of action and will allow no impediment to their love. Of this she assures Ruth, as the bright sun of spring bathes Bethlehem in its golden light.

And, indeed, Boaz arranges a release from the other kinsman, in keeping with the customs of Israel. He proclaims then that he will marry Ruth, and the people of the town cheer his decision. Ruth and Naomi, hand in hand, wearing the hooded gray cloaks of their journey, listen to the acclaim that greets the words of Boaz.

"Let your bride be like Rachel and Leah, those who built the house of Israel," an elderly woman calls and Ruth and Naomi drift into reverie.

They remember a starlit evening early in their shared widowhood, when caring companionship soothed their sorrow. Languidly, Ruth wove Orpah's hair into braids and ringlets while Naomi told them the story of Rachel and Leah, the wives of her ancestor Jacob, the two sisters who bravely left the house of their father to follow their husband to his homeland.

"They were sisters," Naomi had said, her eyes resting on the upturned faces of the young women who had married her sons, "as you are, my daughters, my brides."

Do Ruth and Naomi feel Orpah's absence at this moment of sweet triumph? Perhaps. But they imagine her at peace in the fields of Moab and they wish her well. They are as generous in their hopes for her as they are generous in their hopes for each other. They do not blame her because she lacked Ruth's tenacity. The scope of their friendship is both accepting and forgiving, allowing for loss and disappointment, as all true friendships must.

Boaz and Ruth marry, and when Ruth bears Boaz a son the entire community rejoices. The women circle Naomi and exult over the birth of the child. Ruth's infant son will protect Naomi during the days of her old age. He will ensure her posterity. His name will be famous in Israel.

"He is the child of Ruth, who is better to you than seven sons," a woman calls to Naomi. Naomi nods in agreement. The woman has not exaggerated the magnitude of Ruth's friendship.

She kneels beside Ruth, who is still weak from the ordeal of childbirth, gently takes the infant from her and holds him to her own bosom. With this gesture she claims the child as her own. Ruth is his mother but she will be his nurse, her final act of friendship.

The assembled women recognize that Ruth and Naomi will share in, the raising of the child, whom they call Obed.

"A son has been born to Naomi," they sing laughingly.

Ruth and Naomi smile, recalling the words she spoke when she entrusted Ruth to return to Moab. "Do I have sons in my womb that may be your husbands?" she had asked.

Yet, Obed is indeed Naomi's son. As surely as he was conceived

within Ruth's womb, so was he conceived within the womb of Naomi's wisdom. It was the bond between the two women, as much as the love of the man for his wife, that gave him life. He is son to them both, the bereft and childless women whose long shadows curtained the desert floor, now become joyous mothers at home in the heart of a loving family. He is the reward of their friendship, the inheritor of their talent for love.

Travelers to Moab, the same travelers who brought Naomi news of the end of the famine in Judah, bring Orpah the news of Obed's birth. They recognize her because of the beauty and thickness of the chestnut hair that falls to her waist. They remark upon the wistful sadness of her eyes, although she too has remarried and is the mother of an infant son.

She hugs the news of Obed's birth to her heart and remembers the touch of Naomi's life-worn skin upon her lips. Always, she will be haunted by melancholy because she parted from Ruth without kiss or embrace; always she will feel the loss of the gentle friendship that sustained her in the days of her sorrow.

"Naomi. Ruth." The names of her friends soothe her. Their joy is her joy; their delight, her delight, their lives entwined forever with her own.

Friendship

RUTH ANNA PUTNAM



Friendship is the greatest human good; yet loyalty to a friend may conflict with loyalty to one's country or with the demands of morality. Thus the potential for tragedy appears to lie at the very core of friendship. As we examine one of the great stories of friendship in the Bible, the Book of Ruth, we need to ask whether Ruth's decision to go with Naomi to the land of Judah reveals that problematic core.

Consider, first, how amazing it is that these two women—Ruth and Naomi—were friends at all. If there had been no famine in Judah, Elimelech would not have taken his family to Moab. Even given the famine, he might not have done so. Others remained in Bethlehem, including relatives of Elimelech. But Elimelech left with his wife and sons and "sojournd" in the plains of Moab. They sojournd; that is, they did not intend to settle there permanently. Nevertheless, during their prolonged stay, Elimelech died and his sons married local girls. Had they not done so, Naomi might never have known a Moabite woman well enough to develop a deep and lasting friendship.

Or, again, Naomi might have reacted with anger to these marriages, might have refused to acknowledge these strangers as daughters-in-law. Instead, Ruth's and Orpah's behavior suggests that Naomi not only accepted these Moabite brides but befriended them. It is important to realize that Ruth would never have loved Naomi if Naomi had not acted in ways that ran counter to her tradition. It would be a mistake

to see Naomi as a woman who was forced (by fear or by the prevailing morality) to follow her husband into Moab and to accept her sons' marriages, but who regretted and resented being forced to act in ways that she, as a pious Jew, regarded as sinful. That conception fails to explain the love Ruth felt for Naomi. A young Moabite woman might be expected to be polite, obedient, considerate, even kind toward her mother-in-law, but one would not expect a deep attachment. Had Naomi been rich and Ruth destitute, we could attribute Ruth's choice to economic necessity, but the facts were otherwise. Ruth chose Naomi out of a deep love, a love kindled by Naomi's character. Ruth was an extraordinary human being, but Naomi was her model.

Naomi accompanied Elimelech to the fields of Moab as a loving wife, not merely an obedient wife or one who feared starvation were she to remain behind. She chose to leave her home as Ruth would later choose to leave hers. Again, when her sons married Moabite women, she accepted her daughters-in-law not because she was dependent on the goodwill of her sons but because her relationships with her sons mattered to her; she knew that those relationships could be maintained and would continue to grow only if they included the new daughters-in-law. So she suppressed whatever misgivings she had. She welcomed Orpah and Ruth, and together they established relationships based on respect and trust. Finally, slowly and carefully, always mindful of their feelings, Naomi began to introduce these young women to Judaism. And then tragedy struck: both sons died.

Only then did Naomi hear that the famine in Judah had ended. Did the famine really last more than ten years? Would we not read more of a disaster of such proportions? Is it not more plausible that Naomi was able to hear this news only when ties of loyalty no longer held her in Moab? To be sure, she still had two daughters-in-law, but she knew very well that these young women would be better off without her. Once their old mother-in-law had returned to Judah, the young widows could return to their parents and, being young, childless, and, presumably, of good families, would probably find new husbands among the Moabites. Naomi's decision to return to her homeland now that she could do so without betraying any trust, without abandoning husband or sons, reinforced the model she provided for Ruth, the model of someone who put love for a human being over love for her country, not be-

The author used *Ruth* in *The Five Megilloth* (London, Jerusalem, New York: Soncino Press, 1st printing, 1946).

cause she did not love her country, but because she put personal loyalty first.

So the three women left their home and the daughters-in-law accompanied Naomi. After a while she suggested gently, lovingly, that it was time for them to return to their mothers' houses. She knew that, in returning, they would return to Moabite ways, worship the Moabite deity, yet she did not believe that this would be, for them, a sin; "The Lord deal kindly with you," she said. Surely, she would not have blessed them had she thought their behavior would offend the Lord. The daughters-in-law demurred, but she urged them on. She painted for them a picture of the lonely life they would lead with her in Judah; there, as destitute strangers without family, their chances of finding husbands would be almost nil. And so, with tears and kisses, Orpah turned back; but Ruth clung to Naomi. And now Naomi made the choice very clear to Ruth; Orpah, she said, has "returned to her people and to her god"; she has, that is, returned to the circle of her family, to people with whom she will find it easy to establish lasting relationships, to a way of life that is second nature to her, to the morality in which she was raised, and to forms of worship that are, for her, rich with meaning. All this, and all the emotional attachments that go with it, from familiar surroundings ("where you lodge, there will I lodge") to burial in one's native land ("where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried"), Ruth was prepared to give up for Naomi.

While Ruth's sacrifice has been read as motivated by the desire to embrace a higher morality and the One God, this reading fails to reveal the moral ambiguities of the situation. The text does not describe the Moabites as idolaters nor does it suggest that Moabite morality was inferior to that of the Jews during the time of the Judges. The Moabites treated the family of Elimelech well; they allowed these Jews to live among them and even to marry their daughters. Neither justice nor mercy require more. Neither justice nor mercy required Ruth to accompany Naomi.

Reading the text in this way enables us to understand Ruth as a person who chooses her friend over her country. Nevertheless, while the book presents a model of the lengths to which a loyal friend will go, it does not reveal the potential for tragedy hidden within every deep friendship. No doubt Ruth grieved to leave her people, no doubt her

parents grieved to see her leave, but this kind of grief is not the stuff of tragedy. To find tragedy we must turn to the other great friendship in the Bible, that between Ruth's great-grandson David and King Saul's son Jonathan.

This too was an unlikely friendship, this friendship between the son of a king and the shepherd who would be the next king. The events leading up to the moment when Jonathan's "soul was knit with the soul of David" and he "loved him as his own soul" are strangely tangled. David had been called to the king's palace to soothe him with his lyre playing, but he had not met Jonathan on any of these occasions. Later, after David defeated the Philistine champion, Goliath, he was once again brought before the king. Oddly, Saul seemed not to recognize that the young warrior was also the sweet singer who had comforted him in his distress. This was the moment when Jonathan and David met and became friends, when Jonathan shared his clothes with the shepherd, who no doubt had nothing suitable to wear at court, and when "they made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:3). Is it not odd that they "made a covenant"? There was nothing like that in the case of Ruth and Naomi. Why did these young men need a covenant? Did they already understand that the situation was fraught with the potential for misunderstanding and mistrust? What was the content of this covenant? We are never told.

Things went badly almost immediately. David became a successful leader of Saul's army, and the people acclaimed him as more valiant than Saul. Although Saul and Jonathan did not know that the aging prophet Samuel had actually anointed David—that ceremony had been carried out in privacy, with only David's family present—Saul seems to have suspected that David was destined to be his successor. For Saul began to hate David, tried to kill him, and failing that schemed to bring about his death indirectly. Jonathan, in contrast, far from being jealous when the people praised David, rejoiced in his friend's triumphs. Whatever good happened to David delighted Jonathan, and he watched with growing concern his father's alienation from the young hero. When Saul suggested that Jonathan kill David, Jonathan not only warned David but remonstrated with his father and brought about a reconciliation. However, David excelled in yet another battle, and Saul once again could see him only as a rival; far from being soothed by his lyre playing, Saul because so enraged that he threw his spear at David. Although

Jonathan could not believe that his father really meant to kill David—surely, he thought, this episode was due to a temporary derangement—he agreed to test Saul's intentions and to warn David if the latter's fears were justified, as they turned out to be.

Now Jonathan had to choose. He had to choose not merely between his father and his friend, not merely between his king and his friend, but between his country and his friend. For Jonathan must have known that David would not simply go into exile. He must have anticipated that "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented" would join David (1 Samuel 22:2), that David would become, in effect, the leader of a guerrilla band. Jonathan must have foreseen that Saul would pursue David and that there would be a civil war. Jonathan might even have worried that David would join the enemies of Israel and fight his own people. Might it not be better if this potential troublemaker were to die quickly and quietly? Yet Jonathan knew that David had served his king and country well and had made no moves to exploit his popularity. Under the terms of their agreement, not to warn David would be to lure him back to the court, where death awaited him. Jonathan had to choose between certain death for his friend and a high probability of civil war, a war in which many would die. When one adds to this the fact that the king was Jonathan's father, that by warning David he would disobey, would fail to honor, his father, one begins to understand the agony that Jonathan must have experienced during the long and lonely night before he went to warn David.

And yet, have I not exaggerated the problem? To be sure, one is supposed to honor one's parents, but this duty is overridden by the obligation to save an innocent life. Moreover, does one not honor one's father more by preventing him from sinning? Still, these considerations do not resolve everything. There is the real possibility of civil war and the question of what Jonathan ought to do after delivering the warning. Since it does not seem to have been in Jonathan's power both to warn David and to avert civil war, he had two alternatives: If he returned to the court, he would risk Saul's anger and might be killed. If he remained with David, he would not only save a life but would declare himself an enemy of the king. As we know, Jonathan warned David, then they wept together, fearing they would never see each other again; finally David went on his lonely way, and Jonathan returned to the court. The

very fact that Jonathan returned to his father, that he did not at any time join David's little army is evidence that he was aware of the moral complexities of his situation. We know that at some time after the events just recounted it became clear to Jonathan, if it had not been clear before, that David would be the next king of Israel. Jonathan sought out David, the guerrilla leader, and told him, "You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you, and my father Saul knows this also" (1 Samuel 23:17). Did Jonathan hope that by renouncing the throne, he might make peace between David and Saul? If so, he still did not understand what motivated Saul's fierce anger. Once again David and Jonathan made a covenant, and once again Jonathan went home.

Aristotle, the classical philosopher who wrote most adequately about friendship, claimed that true friendship is possible only between equals. These biblical stories force us to examine that claim. So far the friendship between Ruth and Naomi as well as that between Jonathan and David have seemed rather one-sided. Ruth and Jonathan acted, David and Naomi appeared to be the passive recipients of their overflowing love. These appearances are misleading, as the completed stories will show. David was prepared to risk as much or more for the sake of Jonathan as Jonathan had risked for him. David was twice given the opportunity to kill Saul with impunity, yet he refused both times. He would not, he said, raise his hand against the Lord's anointed (1 Samuel 24:4-6, and 26:8-9). But David knew that he, David, was also the Lord's anointed, that Saul was relentlessly seeking to kill him. He might well have thought, as his friends did, that God had delivered Saul into his hand. What prompted David's refusal was the following reflection. If Jonathan had not warned David, David would not now be leading an outlaw band, and Saul would not be making war on him and finding himself suddenly weaponless in David's power. If David were to kill Saul, Jonathan might consider himself responsible for his father's death. David could not impose this burden on Jonathan, not even to save his own life. No doubt, David took as great a risk in refraining from killing Saul as Jonathan took in warning David and, later, meeting him in the forest. Each friend, we may say, risked his life twice for the sake of the other; in love and in courage they were equals. Indeed, David shared both Jonathan's love for Saul and his agony, lamenting their joint death in these words, "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their

lives, and in death they were not divided. . . . I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan" (2 Samuel 1:23, 25).

It is a little more complicated to show that the friendship of Ruth and Naomi also involved equal giving and receiving. Ruth had been gleaned in Boaz's fields throughout the months of the harvest; she had stayed close to Boaz's female servants, thus protecting herself from unwanted male attention. As we find out later, this behavior was understood by Boaz as a further kindness. By not attracting the attention of a young man, by not getting married to a stranger, Ruth had made certain that she would continue to be in a position to provide for Naomi. A husband without family ties to Naomi might well have said, "What is this old woman to me?"

Slowly Naomi's feelings, which seem to have been numbed by grief, returned; she became concerned for Ruth's welfare, sensing that the younger woman needed a husband for comfort, for security, and for the sake of reputation. We do not know why Naomi did not go to consult with Boaz. Perhaps the very fact that she considered Boaz the most suitable, perhaps the only suitable, husband for Ruth, made it impossible to consult him as an older male relative. We do not know whether Boaz was married or a widower; we do not know whether he had any children. We do know that Boaz was a relative and that he had shown much kindness to Ruth. Naomi may have wondered why this man did not propose marriage to the young Moabitess; did he fail to see the beautiful woman under the dust and grime of the gleaner? Perhaps, if he were to meet her in different circumstances, he might think she would make a lovely wife. And Ruth would be able to trust him to provide for Naomi, so she would have no reason to reject his proposal.

So, Naomi, the old woman, wanting to show kindness to Ruth, proposed a scheme fraught with risk. Ruth was to go to the harvest party, dressed in her best clothes, washed and perfumed, yet she was not to make herself known to Boaz until after he had laid himself down for the night; she was to come to him as if she were a seductress. The risks in such behavior were clearly enormous; if she were seen by anyone, her reputation would be stained forever. Even if she were to escape premature detection, Boaz might react with anger and contempt, or he might avail himself of the sexual favors she seemed to offer. One wonders how Naomi could have been so certain that Boaz would not harm Ruth or ruin her reputation; one wonders how she persuaded Ruth to carry out

this dangerous scheme. Perhaps what prompted Ruth to accept the plan was the realization that she would not be able, in the long run, to provide adequately for Naomi and herself. Perhaps she persuaded herself that, since Naomi would not ask her to do anything wrong, Naomi must be certain that Boaz would deal kindly and honorably with her. Still, how sure could Naomi be? What thoughts went through her mind during the long night while Ruth was away at the threshing floor? Was Ruth wily enough to remain undetected until she chose to reveal herself? Was Boaz indeed as upright as Naomi believed him to be? Might he misjudge Ruth's intentions or be offended by the sheer presumption of these women? Fortunately, both Ruth and Boaz followed the script perfectly, and soon thereafter they were married. Ruth gave birth to a son, and even Naomi learned to smile again. Who can argue with success?

But success does not prove that the relationship between Ruth and Naomi was based on equality. To be sure, both women were widows and of the same social class, but because Ruth was young and healthy while Naomi was old, broken perhaps in body as well as in spirit, Ruth made all the hard choices, did all the hard work, and took all the risks. Are we to infer that true friendship does not require equality or that this is, after all, not a case of true friendship?

The friendship of Jonathan and David enables us to avoid the conclusion that friendship does not require equality. David and Jonathan were unequal in just the ways Ruth and Naomi were equal, and vice versa. Jonathan was a king's son, heir presumptive to the throne; David was a poor shepherd, later a brilliant young general, and finally an outlaw. Yet the biblical text asserts explicitly that theirs was a deep and true friendship, in spite of the social inequality. What mattered was that each made hard choices and took risks for the other. But that seems to be exactly what Naomi and Ruth did not do. Must we conclude then that they were not friends? To lay this doubt to rest, one needs to recall that the very first friendships mentioned in the Bible are those between God and a human being. Abraham is referred to as God's friend, and God is said to speak to Moses "as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11). Of course, there is no equality between God and human beings; all the giving appears to come from Him and all the receiving to be ours. Yet human beings have always given to God, whether in sacrifice or in prayer or in good deeds, and have taken it for granted that God

receives these gifts. How can we say, then, that Naomi gave nothing to Ruth or that Ruth did not accept what was given to her? Naomi, by accepting Ruth and Orpah as daughters-in-law, by treating them with respect and love rather than disdain and resentment, taught Ruth to be the kind of friend she was to become. Again, when Naomi warned Ruth against accompanying her to the land of Judah, when she was prepared to give up her last tenuous connection to her dead son for the sake of an easier life for Ruth, was she not offering up everything she had? Finally, though the risk in going to the threshing floor appeared to be all Ruth's, must we not recognize that if the plan had failed Ruth might have had no choice but to return to Moab, that is, to leave Naomi utterly alone? What we learn, I think, is that friendship indeed involves an equal giving and receiving, but that the equality need not be apparent at first glance.

What more concerning friendship can we learn from these biblical texts? I ask this question as a Jewish woman but also as a philosopher. As a Jewish woman I am pleased that the Bible teaches us that true friendship is possible between women, thereby denying Aristotle's claim that it is possible only between men. Yet I am also struck by the fact that we are forced to infer the feelings of Ruth and Naomi from what they do and say; we are never told that their souls "are knit together" as were the souls of David and Jonathan. It is almost as if the modesty required of women forbids the narrator from revealing a woman's deepest self.

Finally, as a philosopher, I want to return to the theme with which I began this essay. Does friendship put one at risk of moral conflict or of tragedy? What one notices in reading these two accounts is the centrality of leaving and returning home. Naomi must leave home to make her friendship with Ruth possible, and she must return home for that friendship to develop fully. Jonathan must leave home to perform his most spectacular acts of friendship but must return home to resolve the moral ambiguity implicit in his actions. Ruth must leave home and not return—must find a new home—to be the friend she is. Even David must leave home to meet Jonathan, though his leaving home, unlike that of the others, is not morally ambiguous.

I am using "home" to represent the moral ways in which one has been taught to walk. Of course, the biblical narrator did not use "leav-

ing home" as a metaphor; I am using it as a metaphor for stepping outside one's moral tradition, in particular for being forced to do that by loyalty to a specific human being. Such a step is always fraught with moral danger. We learn to be moral by learning the standards and ideals of the community in which we are raised; leaving it, we are liable to flounder. Yet we recognize the existence of moral requirements that transcend and sometimes transgress particular communal standards. The Bible recognizes the communal nature of morality as well as the moral inadequacy of most communities, and it recognizes that a human being can step outside her or his tradition and make a radical choice. The communal nature of morality is acknowledged when Ruth, in the very act of choosing Naomi, also chooses Naomi's people and Naomi's God. She does not become a person without a country, without a way in which to walk; on the contrary, she chooses: "Where [how] you go, there [so] will I go." Because Ruth is never a woman without a country her story fails to reveal the difficulties of making a radical moral choice; once again we must turn to the story of David and Jonathan.

David's original leaving home, to join Saul's court, is not morally problematic; he does not leave the moral ways of his people. He does just what a valiant young warrior would do and what a future king ought to do. How else could he learn how to be a king? Nor did Jonathan transgress his people's law when he warned David of Saul's murderous intentions or, later, when he renounced his claims to the throne. Yet after he had delivered his warning, Jonathan, unlike Ruth, stood for a moment alone, outside any tradition, for he had to decide whether to remain with David or to return home. Unlike Ruth, Jonathan did not have the opportunity to choose a new home. Had he chosen David, he would have become an outlaw, a person without a country, without a people, and without a law. Jonathan never betrayed David, but neither did he leave his people.

Jonathan returned to Saul, and in the end they died together fighting the enemies of Israel. What are we to make of this? I take my clue from David's lament: "And in death they were not divided." Returning and remaining at Saul's side was Jonathan's way of choosing his people and his God. He could not give them up for David's people and God, as Ruth had given up her people and god for Naomi's, for David had no people and God other than Saul's, other than those to which Jonathan returned. Though we are never told by the narrator that Jonathan loved

Saul, surely this too is acknowledged in David's lament. So we come to understand that Jonathan's death was a tragedy for David but that, for Jonathan, it might have been a greater tragedy to outlive Saul.

I have used the friendship of Jonathan and David to throw light upon the story of Ruth and Naomi. I have used both stories to reflect upon friendship, upon giving and receiving and taking risks, and in particular upon the danger of conflicting loyalties and the potential for tragedy. I was inspired to do this by the chapter on betrayal in Judith Shklar's book *Ordinary Vices*. There she responded to E. M. Forster's saying that if he had to choose between his friend and his country, he hoped he would have the courage to choose his friend. Forster realizes the anguish he would experience; the courage he thinks would be required is the moral courage to brave the condemnation of his countrymen. Shklar rejects Forster's thoughtless assumption that one should always choose the friend, but she agrees that the potential tragedy at the heart of friendship is the moral anguish suffered by one who must choose between loyalty to a friend and another equally stringent moral obligation. Jonathan suffered such anguish in choosing between David and Saul, and found, in the end, a way to choose both. His choice was wiser, more complicated, and, therefore, more morally adequate than simply choosing his friend or simply choosing his country. Though he chose between good and evil, he did not choose between David and Saul.

In contrast, Ruth does not choose between good and evil; she does not suffer moral anguish. The courage required for her choice is not the moral courage envisaged by Forster; it is the simple courage to share the hardships of her friend's life. One is tempted to say that Ruth's story reveals the potential for joy at the heart of friendship, as Jonathan's story reveals the potential for tragedy. Yet, in the end, I do not think that joy and tragedy wait at the core; rather they come into friendship from the outside. Just as tragedy is introduced into the friendship of Jonathan and David by Saul, so joy is introduced into the lives of Ruth and Naomi not by them but by Boaz. Friendships, we learn, do not exist in a social vacuum. Ruth chose Naomi but chose also a people, a moral way. Because Boaz, too, walked in that way, "joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30).

Feminine Plurals

ROBERTA APPEL AND LISE GRONDAHL

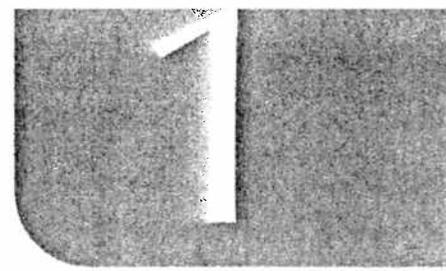


The Book of Ruth is unique as a place in which to study a special category of relationship. It provides us with an example of two women who, though they might have reasons to fear one another, instead choose to share each other's plight. The improbable relationship of Ruth and Naomi permits each of them to forge a new life and to transcend famine, death, and loss. Our joint interest in these two women and their unusual relationship has led us along three paths. We begin this essay where our conversations about the book began—in our supervisory relationship—and outline the ways in which the story of Ruth and Naomi informed our discussions of psychotherapy, supervision, and psychiatry. Next we look at the story as psychiatrists, using our professional experience to better understand the two women at its center and the dynamics of their relationship. Finally, we return to our own interactions, with patients in particular, and suggest how the story of Ruth and Naomi has inspired and contributed to our rethinking of certain long-term therapeutic relationships.

I.

We are two women psychiatrists who met as supervisor (RJA) and supervisee (LMG) and realized early on our many differences—in age and experience, religious background, spiritual practice, and nationality. As

The authors used the Anchor Bible translation of the Book of Ruth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975) and the Serendipity Bible for Groups (Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1988). They also used Ruth in *The Pentateuch*, Samson Raphael Hirsch edition (New York: Judaica Press, 1990).



Awwwwwww, Mom!

Mazal Tov! You are getting ready for college! What an exciting time! New places, new faces, new ideas, new adventures! It is probably a bit stressful too though. After all, you have been in school for twelve years preparing for this event. Ever since you were little, you knew this time was coming, and now here it is. It's natural to have some apprehensions and questions amidst the excitement. Not just you, by the way, but your parents and family too. It's natural for them to be a bit stressed as well. You are about to leave home, which means that you are growing up and becoming an adult. Even if you have older siblings who have already left the nest, your folks and family are still going to have to adjust to you leaving.

It is not unusual for parents to do some different and abnormal things until you actually move to campus, like take long melancholy walks down memory lane with you and remind you of every "adorable" thing you ever did as a child. Or they may become a bit more critical of you and end each disagreement with something like "Do you think you'll get away with that in college?" You may find them suddenly not so sure if they should be telling you what to do as they normally would or wondering about whether you need a curfew anymore. And they may offer you lots of unsolicited advice about what to expect from college and about being on your own. If you received this book as a gift, then someone in your life probably decided you could also use some advice on figuring out what kind of Jew you want to be at college. These behaviors may seem bizarre or even embarrassing now, but it will just take some time for all of you to adjust. After all, these are the people who have cared for you since infancy and who have prepared you for this day when you will leave home. So while all of this strange intimacy is going on, it's also a good time to think about what Jewishly you might want to take with you from your childhood home into your new adulthood.

**NO, REALLY GRANDMA, THIS BOOK IS MUCH BETTER
THAN MONEY!—OR, SO WHAT?**

Chances are that if you received this book as a gift, your eyebrows went up a bit. It probably wasn't at the top of your wish list. After all, you are heading off to college. You are probably thinking about what to major in, where you

***Lech L'cha:* Preparing to Leave Your Parents' Home**

What to pack, who to call, who to see, what to finish, and what to leave unfinished before you leave for college

are going to live, who you'll become friends with, who you will date, what kind of fun there is to have on campus. You might have gone to religious school, become bar or bat mitzvah, done the High Holy Day thing, gone to family seders, and of course celebrated Chanukah. Maybe you belonged to a Jewish youth group, went to a Jewish summer camp, or traveled to Israel. Or maybe you haven't done any of these things. Either way, at this moment, being Jewish on campus is probably not the highest thing on your list of concerns right now. This book is about helping you find ways to move it up the priority list—maybe not to the top, but onto the desktop menu at least. You've been Jewish all of your life so far, and you will be Jewish all of your adult life. Just as college is the time when you prepare your mind for the adult world, it's also the right time to prepare your heart and soul for adulthood as well.

Why ME? WHO is this book for?

The vast majority of incoming Jewish college students in North America are Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or unaffiliated with any denomination. This means that they were not raised to be what could be called strictly or traditionally observant, but attended a Reform, Conservative, or Reconstructionist synagogue for their religious education and observance or grew up not attending any synagogue at all. Of course not everyone fits neatly into denominational categories. Some of these students may have gone to a Jewish community center summer camp or belonged to a community youth group like B'nai Brith Youth Organization, while others may have been actively involved in movement-sponsored youth activities like NFTY, USY, and summer camps. A small percentage of these students attended a Jewish day school as well. Unaffiliated students may also have gone to a Jewish community youth group or camp, but they have had little or no formal synagogue affiliation or education nor have they experienced much Jewishly at home. These Jewish students do not define themselves as traditional, meaning that they do not believe that they are traditionally observant of Jewish law as determined in its strictest forms through only Orthodox rabbis, but rather embrace a Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist theology and practice or perhaps a combination of those three. With the exception of a few schools, these Jewish students are currently the dominant Jewish group on American college campuses.

Traditionally observant students tend to seek schools where there are other traditional folks like themselves. This is because they tend to embrace a

more ritually observant daily lifestyle, and they need a like-minded community that can support those needs. For instance, they might eat only kosher food, so they need a campus that can provide it for them. They might want to attend daily prayer services, so they need a community that can provide a minyan. They might not be comfortable driving on Shabbat, so they need a campus with a Shabbat community within walking distance for services and meals.

Other Jewish students may observe a more flexible but equally meaningful style of Jewish observance, so their options in choosing campuses are more open. These students may choose a campus with a significant Jewish community, but not necessarily a traditionally religious one, because they wish to be able to express their Judaism more socially and culturally. Some may even choose to attend campuses with little to no Jewish campus life. This does not mean that they do not feel Jewishly connected, just that they do not feel the need to seek out a Jewish community in their educational environment.

Does any of this sound familiar to you? If so, this book is for you. While this book touches on issues related to traditional observance, this is not a book about being a traditionally observant Jew on campus.

Take a moment and ask yourself what your thoughts are on being a Jewish college student. How important is it for you to be a part of a Jewish community in college? How are you making that decision? What do you know about the Jewish community on your chosen campus? Have you asked anyone at the school about it? Did you visit the Hillel or Jewish student union when you went on your campus tour? Do you know if any of the various movement-affiliated college groups are represented on campus? If you have not explored this aspect of campus life, it may be worth doing so before you go. Even if you have no interest right now in being Jewishly involved or identified, just find out some basic details in case you ever need to know. As time goes by, you may surprise yourself by feeling the need to get in touch with other Jews on your campus.

HAVE TORAH, will TRAVEL!

One of the most fascinating things about Judaism is the portability of our religion and culture. We can literally carry almost everything we need to be Jewishly connected in the trunk of our car! This is because Jews have historically been a transient people. We have wandered the world for centuries, often having to leave what had been a safe and secure home on

A minyan is a prayer group with a minimum of ten people. The minyan represents the local Jewish community as a whole, and certain prayers are traditionally only recited aloud when there is at least a minyan present. Traditional Jews require ten men for a minyan, while other Jews count both men and women for a minyan.

Hillels are Jewish student organizations for college students located on campuses all over North America. Many have their own student center buildings that serve as a resource and programming place for Jewish students. Those without buildings of their own have events and programs in various locations around campus. As their own website says, "Hillel's mission is to maximize the number of Jews doing Jewish with other Jews." Hillel tries to enable Jewish students to find ways to engage in their own way with Judaism and with other Jews. The range of Hillel activities includes community service projects, the arts, social events, holiday observances, learning opportunities, and prayer services. Hillel is open to any student and embraces Jews of all kinds. For more information on Hillel or to find a Hillel on a specific campus, go to <http://www.hillel.org>.

The following are some of the Jewish student organizations:

- Keshet is part of the Reform Movement. It is the college education department of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. For more information, go to <http://www.keshetnet.com> or e-mail at Keshet@uahc.org.
- Koach is the college-outreach branch of the Conservative/Masorti Movement, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. For more information, go to <http://www.koach.org>.
- Kedma is an international student organization for the Orthodox Movement. For more information, go to <http://www.kedma.org> or e-mail at Kedma@netscape.net.
- For resources or information related to the Reconstructionist Movement, go to www.jrf.org.

An easy way to get the 411 on your campus's Jewish community is to surf onto the campus profile section of www.hillel.org. If your school is not listed there with information or a link to a campus Jewish website, then just call your campus's office of student affairs and ask for information on religious life on campus. If no one in student affairs knows about Jewish life on campus, then there may not be much to know about. Go back to the Hillel website and contact the Hillel at the closest listed campus to yours. They should be able to tell you what, if anything, is available at your campus.

little notice. We therefore became adept at developing rituals and cultures that could travel with us. College students are also a transient lot, often moving to a different living space each year and usually owning little beyond the clothes and personal possessions that they bring to school with them. As you pack for school, you probably are referring to a list of items the school suggests for incoming students. You may also be getting packing advice from siblings, friends, and other folks who have already been to college. However, you probably have not gotten much advice on what Jewish things you should pack for the big move, so here is a short list of items that you might be glad to have one day in the future.

This list is flexible and should be personalized according to your individual needs. All of the items you bring should reflect your own personal family practice and history. The appropriate use of all of these items will be covered in later chapters in this book.

- Personal prayer items. Chances are that you will be at school for at least one important holiday each year where you will be glad you have these things, not to mention perhaps on a Shabbat or two. They can be items that you use personally or have used in the past, or they can be items given or left to you by family that you cherish even if you don't use them regularly. These might include a *kippah* (*yarmulke*), a *tallit*, or *t'fillin*.
- Keepsakes and mementos. Think about taking a Star of David or other piece of Jewish jewelry that gives you a good feeling when you are wearing it. Items like these can go far in helping you feel at home in a new environment.
- Your own prayerbook. Perhaps you were given a prayerbook at your bat or bar mitzvah or confirmation. Perhaps your home congregation has its own prayerbook. Either way, while you're away at school you might appreciate having a prayerbook you're comfortable and familiar with. If you don't already own one, the rabbi, cantor, or educator of your home congregation can help you obtain a prayerbook.
- A Jewish calendar. You can get these from your synagogue or campus Hillel usually for free or even on-line with a quick search for "Jewish calendar."
- Ritual items for special celebrations. These include a *Kiddush* cup, candlesticks, a challah cover, seder plate, and *chanukiyah* (Chanukah menorah). You may be surprised at how meaningful and useful these items can be even if you live in a dorm.

- A mezuzah from home or a new one especially for your room door. (See chapter 2 for how to hang it.)
- A copy of the Torah or *Tanach*. The *Tanach*, the Jewish Bible, contains only the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) and two other sections—*N'vi-im*, Prophets, and *K'tuvim*, Writings. Bibles that include the New Testament are not Jewish bibles.
- A *bencher*, a small book of traditional home rituals and songs that are sung on Shabbat and holidays.
- If you play an instrument like the guitar, or just like to sing, there are many collections of Jewish music that you can play when the mood strikes you.
- A *tzedakah* box for keeping your charity money.
- A list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses for friends from youth group and camp who are also going off to college. A handy form is included at the end of this book!

Hi, Rabbi, REMEMBER ME?

THE KID WHO BELCHED WHENEVER HE SAID "BARUCH"?

Before you close your boxes and load them into the car, make a few personal Jewish stops and calls. Go see your rabbi, youth group advisor, a favorite religious school teacher, or anyone who has been a part of your Jewish growth. Even if you didn't have a particularly close connection to anyone like that, find those you liked as a kid and seek them out for some Jewish advice. Tell them that you are off to college, and ask if they have any advice at all for you. You may be surprised at what they offer you. Remember, they knew you as a Jewish child and have watched you grow into a Jewish adult. They may have some insights that you haven't considered. Ask the same of your parents, grandparents, or other family members who have been influential in your personal Jewish growth. They may have some family advice, history, or wisdom that has served them well and could do the same for you. Don't be surprised if a dialogue is opened about dating Jews; we'll cover that issue in chapter 5. Remember that we are a people that has survived for over three thousand years, that we have wandered the world and adapted to it pretty successfully. You are not the first to move on with your life, and you won't be the last. Others may offer insights you will appreciate, so take advantage of them.

When Abraham was told by God to go and start the Jewish people, God told him, in chapter 12 of the Book of Genesis, *Lech I'cha*, "Go out. Leave

Three excellent and accessible Torah collections are *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, edited by W. Gunther Plaut (New York: UAHC Press, 1981); *The Five Books of Moses*, by Everett Fox (New York: Schocken Books, 1997); and *Etz Hayim* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2001). A complete version of the *Tanach*, with both Hebrew and English text, is also published by the Jewish Publication Society.

Some wonderful books containing information on Shabbat rituals and songs are:

- Frishman, Elyse C. *Birkon L'Shabbat: Blessings for the Table*. New York: CCAR Press, 1999.
- Perelson, Ruth. *An Invitation to Shabbat*. New York: UAHC Press, 1997.
- Shapiro, Mark Dov. *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*. New York: CCAR Press, 1996.
- Stern, Chaim. *On the Doorposts of Your House*. New York: CCAR Press, 1994.
- Teutsch, David, ed. *Shirim Uvrahot: Songs and Blessing*. Reconstructionist Press, 2000.

For an extensive anthology of Jewish music, look for *The Complete Shireinu: 350 Fully Notated Jewish Songs* (New York: Transcontinental Music, 2001), available from Transcontinental Music at www.transcontinentalmusic.com.

Still haven't made a decision on which college to attend? Keshet, the Reform Movement's college program, and Koach, the Conservative Movement's college program, both have good articles on-line that discuss Jewish criteria for choosing the campus that's right for you. You can find them at <http://www.keshetnet.com> and <http://www.koach.org>, respectively. Both organizations run excellent e-zines as well. Koach's is available directly on its website and Keshet's is at <http://www.myetone.org>. Both are worth a look!

your home, your birthplace, and your parent's house so that I will bless you and make you great." Imagine that your parents, your family, your rabbi, your teachers, and your friends are all standing at the door of the home you grew up in, blessing you with the same words, *Lech I'cha*, "Go and grow and create your own home and life, and make your name great." In leaving for college, you are about to embark on your adult life. Do well, study hard, be a mensch, and you too shall be a blessing to yourself, to all who have helped you come this far, and to the Jewish people.

Adelman, Penina
The 30 Girl's Guide pg 91-95
Unit 4
Activity 5

little, "the Prince has seen
out you from me and your
he offer is a good one. You

the world, and she could
r. "All right, Father, I will do
shall leave him."

ng out. Prince Ahashverosh
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ie was as beautiful as a young
he was as lovely as the clear
e was as heartfelt as the song
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erwise she was on her own.
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ned of doing.

d and she and Ahashverosh
n the new king was feasting
surrounding lands, and he
men suggested that he intro-
ie could entertain them with

ed, rather irritated.

this feast and let us feast our
ring his words.

shed from my kingdom for-
—just like Vashti's father.

in out of the palace, never to

ars later to her oldest daugh-
ide, to know my heart's
at me, but they did not
t is why I had to flee."

MEET

Gabriela Brimmer (1947–2000)

Gabriela was a Mexican-Jewish woman born to two Holocaust survivors. Born with cerebral palsy, she was unable to speak or move her arms and legs. The only parts she could use to communicate with were her expressive face and her left big toe. She used to type out everything she wanted to say on a typewriter on the floor.

She had a lifelong companion named Florencia Morales, who was her primary caregiver, interpreter, and mentor. With her help Gaby was able to attend a mainstream high school and the University of Mexico and to write her memoir, *Gaby: A True Story*, which was a sensation in Mexico and abroad. With Florencia she adopted a baby girl, whom they named Alma Florencia Brimmer. Gabriela Brimmer died in Mexico at the age of 53. Florencia and Alma still live in Mexico City together.

Gaby's memoir was adapted for Hollywood and made into a 1987 film (also called *Gaby: A True Story*) starring Liv Ullman and directed by Luis Mandoki. It is currently being translated into English by Trudy Balch and Avital Bloch.

The struggles Brimmer faced in being accepted by society as much more than "someone with cerebral palsy" demonstrate how difficult it is for people to see beyond the way a person looks.

DISCUSS

Television shows, advertisements, magazines, movies, music videos, radio shows, and websites bombard you every day with the same message: "Buy this, and you'll be happy! Look like this, and you'll be popular! Act like this, and you'll be successful!"

Of course they don't say this outright; they do research to figure out what is the best way to persuade you to buy their product. When is the last time you bought something or wanted to buy it

because you saw your favorite singer on TV wearing it, using it, eating it, or driving it?

You need to be media savvy and know when you are being manipulated to buy something or to behave in a certain way. Is the typical *Cosmo Girl*, *Seventeen*, or *Elle Girl* model a normal female body type? Most women do not reach 5'10" and weigh less than 120 lbs. All those pictures in the magazines beckoning you to "buy these clothes and you'll look just like them" are false advertising. Most of us will never look that way no matter what clothes we wear, what makeup we put on, what music we listen to, what movies we see (and why should we want to? Beauty, remember, is in the eye of the beholder!).

One author holds that many girls divide themselves into "false" and "true" selves:

With puberty, girls face enormous cultural pressure to split into false selves. The pressure comes from schools, magazines, music, television, advertisements and movies. It comes from peers. It comes from parents, from mothers who also suffered from the emphasis on being thin. Girls can be true to themselves and risk abandonment by their peers or they can reject their true selves and be socially acceptable. Most girls choose to be socially accepted and split into two selves, one that is authentic and one that is culturally scripted. In public they become who they are supposed to be. —Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*

What if you could see right through a person's clothes to their soul? How do you think it would change your impression of them? Remember Joseph and his coat of many colors? Look at the story in Genesis 37. How much did the way Joseph look affect his life? Was he the person everyone could see on the outside, or was he different inside?

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know when you are being have in a certain way. Is the model a normal female body and weigh less than 120 lbs. reckoning you to "buy these are false advertising. Most of what clothes we wear, what to, what movies we see (and remember, is in the eye of the

themselves into "false"

us cultural pressure to re comes from schools, advertisements and movies. parents, from mothers basis on being thin. Girls abandonment by their e selves and be socially be socially accepted and authentic and one that is y become who they are *reviving Ophelia*

gh a person's clothes to their ge your impression of them? any colors? Look at the story y Joseph look affect his life? on the outside, or was he dif-

WRITE

Write about your own struggle with "inner" and "outer" selves. Is there a quality that people do not see in you that you would like them to see?

Describe this quality of which only you are aware. Do you know other people with this quality? Is there a way in which you could make it easier for the people you care about to see this quality in you?

If you like, write a poem or a story about this quality.

PIRKEI BANOT

"Got new hat and shoes yesterday and I can see it would take but very little to make me give up my life to style, but I hope that such shall never be the case. I do not intend to give my life for 'a cap and bells' but I wish it were so easy for me to decide what I shall give my life up to." —Bella Weretnikow, 17, April 19, 1896

"Tues., 1 Aug. 1944. I'm awfully scared that everyone who knows me as I always am will discover that I have another side, a finer and better side. I'm afraid they'll laugh at me." —Anne Frank, in her last journal entry; she was 15 years old

"Flowers are very pretty, bodies of water are very pretty too. I think Ashanti is beautiful ... I don't know her because she's famous and stuff, but she is really pretty. I think to be beautiful you have to show it in your actions, being honest, trustworthy, faithful, loving, understanding—all that I find beautiful." —Laura, 13

"Different people have different ways of being beautiful. Some people may have external beauty and others may have beauty in

the way they think or act. It's up to each individual to create their own beauty." —Jesse, 15

BODY IMAGE

Judaism recognizes the pitfalls of low self-esteem. In the Bible, when the scouts were sent to the land of Israel, they came back and said, "We looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them" (Numbers 13:33). If you think you are worthless and weak, others will also perceive you as such. It is very easy to fall into this "grasshopper mentality" during your teens because of the emotional, physical, and intellectual changes that are taking place within you.

You may not realize that you are falling prey to low self-esteem. Your outer appearance may feel awkward and uncomfortable. You forget what it means to be valued for your uniqueness. Excellence comes to mean "most attractive."

Body image has a great deal to do with self-esteem. People with negative body image have a greater likelihood of developing eating disorders and are more likely to suffer from feelings of depression, isolation, low self-esteem, and obsession with weight loss. Let's look at the two sides of the body image coin.

With a negative body image, you are convinced that only other people are attractive and your body size or shape is a sign of personal failure; you feel ashamed, self-conscious, and anxious about your body; and you feel uncomfortable and awkward in your body.

With a positive body image, you have a clear, true perception of your shape—you see the various parts of your body as they really are; you celebrate and appreciate your natural body shape and you understand that a person's physical appearance says very little about their character and value as a person; and you feel comfortable and confident in your body.

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self-esteem. In the Bible, Israel, they came back and ourselves, and so we must If you think you are worth- ou as such. It is very easy to your teens because of an ges that are taking

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e convinced that only other e or shape is a sign of pers- nscious, and anxious about and awkward in your body. e a clear, true perception of of your body as they really natural body shape and you appearance says very little r and you feel comfort-

WRITE

Use the following questions to get you started as you write in your journal.

- How do you see yourself when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind?
- What do you believe about your own appearance? Include your memories, assumptions, and things others have told you about your appearance.
- How do you feel about your body, including your height, shape, and weight?
- How do you sense and control your body as you move?

Do It

Try to remember 10 things you love about yourself, especially when you don't!

Girl power—What I love about myself:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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Media Literacy Review

Media Literacy Online Project - College of Education - University of
Oregon - Eugene

Great American Smokeout: Me, the Media, and Addiction

Bill Walsh, Contributing Writer

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Thursday is The Great American Smokeout, and like millions of other addicts, I'm going to try to stop smoking for at least 24 hours. It's tough.

As I wish I'd never begun, I'm thinking about what got me to START in the first place. It would be easy to blame the tobacco companies and their advertising, but it's much more subtle than that. The media in general - ALL media - is a real co-conspirator in getting me hooked. I was just dumb enough to fall for it.

I remember when I started smoking exactly. Sure, there had been isolated cigarettes as a pre-high schooler, but those were just fooling around, few and far between. We were just experimenting with smoking, trying to see what the big deal was, what the whole thing was about. It wasn't REALLY smoking - at least not as a habit. In fact, I doubt if I even inhaled back then.

No, smoking as a habit began for me in college. (This is so embarrassing, I wonder if I should even tell you about it. It's downright stupid. But it's the truth.) I was the first kid in my family to go away to college, and I was feeling pretty mature. Actually, the first reading assignment in the Introductory Psychology course was to read something by Freud, so as I sat there in my dormitory room - a college student - reading Sigmund Freud, no less - I was feeling VERY grown-up. The only thing missing, I thought, was a cigarette.

I kid you not. It was the IMAGE of being an adult - the FEELING of being mature - that suckered me into going out and buying my first real pack of cigarettes. I was "hooked" on the propaganda long before I was hooked on the nicotine. The cigarette companies had sold me an image, a belief that smoking made you grown-up. And I bought it.

Today cigarette companies spend six billion dollars a year advertising their cigarettes. Or perhaps I should say that they spend the money spreading their propaganda. Although advertisements for smoking have been severely restricted, the ads still show young, sexy people having fun. The smokers and their lives look so attractive - whether it's the rugged Marlboro Man on horseback or the swimsuit-clad young people cavorting on the beach with Newports. Always active. Always enjoyable. Always so desirable.

Looking back, I can't point to any one ad or even brand which made smoking look so attractive to me. It was more like a whole culture - Doctors on TV smoked and secret agents did, too. Winston tasted good like a cigarette should. There were literally millions of suggestions, hints, images which were planted in my fertile adolescent mind like little time bombs. Smoking was adult. Smoking was good. It was fun. It tasted good.

And so I got hooked.

It's not ENTIRELY the media's fault, mind you. I can't blame them entirely. Millions of people my age never started smoking. Millions more have given it up since then. I've tried myself, dozens of times.

The problem is that - despite the media advertising of cigarettes being a convenient scapegoat - the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior is neither clear nor direct. After all, marijuana and heroin are not advertised at all, but they still are enjoying booming sales these days. It would be easy to blame Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man for my addiction. Too easy. The fault is more widespread than that.

Although I cannot blame cigarette advertising per se for putting me here in Marlboro Country, I certainly think that cigarette advertising should be banned. OK, maybe (with a nod to the First Amendment) we should just let them say, "If you're an addict and need to buy some nicotine, we certainly hope that you'll buy OUR brand of poison." But that's it. No pretty girls, no rugged cowboys, no images of maturity to suck in adolescents.

Cigarettes kill 400,000 people per year - 10 times more than illegal drugs. I want to do what I can to stop it.

Some of us grew up in a society which was drenched with media images that smoking was cool, mature, and sophisticated. It's a testament to the power of media that so many of us accepted that. In reality, smoking is just stupid.

Blaming the media for leading me down the road to addiction doesn't help ME with MY problem, certainly (that's something I've got to struggle with myself). But one idea of the Great American Smokeout is that maybe we (all of us - smokers included) can at least warn others about the very powerful media forces which continue to urge us to smoke.

Zion, Noam
29 63
Init 4
Activity 5

STUDENT'S COPY



Arthur Syzk,
Poland, 1939

TEACHER'S COPY



Eastern European Types

*Arthur Syzk,
Poland, 1939*

Unit Five: Limitations

Enduring Understandings:

- The theme of limitation in Shabbat liturgy can engage us in discussing real life issues which occur in a family as a child grows.

Essential Questions

- What are some of the different ideas of limitations?
- Where can the theme of limitation be found in our own lives?

Goals

- To expose the student to a variety of notions of limitation in both their own lives and in prayer.
- To provide students with an opportunity to access the plain meaning of each of the prayers in this unit. (For example: *Ma'ariv* is about evening creation)
- To offer students the opportunity to personalize the themes of the prayers.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar to or different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Give a one sentence summary of each of the prayers studied in this unit.
- Define the concept of "limitation"
- Connect prayers to their own lives through journals, discussions and projects.

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Activities:

Although this unit is centered around the idea that we must learn to use our conscience as a limitation for our own actions, the idea of limitation stems from feeling limited as human beings. Although God created us with the understanding to know right from wrong, God also made limitations in the world for things we cannot fix. The following prayers and blessings are limitations which highlight this notion.

Modim

(Talmud page 1)

Memorable Moment

During the *Amida* we read the *Modim* prayer which states "Let us thank You and praise You-for our lives which are in Your hand, for our souls which are in Your care, for Your miracles that we experience every day and for Your wondrous deeds and favors at

every time of day...” Do we really believe that we are so limited in our control of our own life? Do we believe that God has our lives in God’s hands and our soul’s in God’s care?

If possible this lesson should be done at a ropes course. If this is not possible, I will give other ways to do the same activity

Set Induction: Can you think of a time when your lives were completely in someone else’s hands? What was the situation? How did you feel? Discuss these thoughts with the whole group.

Continue with a text study of *Modim*. Use the attached materials from My People’s Prayer Book Volume 2: pages 164-175. This can either be done as an entire group or in *chavrutah*.

Continue this lesson by following the instructions of the rope course facilitator. You, as the teacher, will be able to discuss with this person what the goal of the activity is before you begin so that he/she can choose the right activities for you. By the end of this activity the students should understand how it physically feels to put their life in someone’s hands.

If it is not possible to do this activity on a rope course, continue outdoors and do a variety of trust activities such as trust falls.

At the end of the activity convene the group back together. Discuss with the following questions:

1. How did it feel to have your life in someone else’s hands?
2. Do you believe that our life is in God’s hands?
3. If so, how are we limited as humans in our own lives?
4. What other times in your life do you feel that you are limited in what you can do?

Conclude by filling out the Talmud page as a family.

Morning Blessings:

(Talmud Page 2)

Although sections of Nisim B’chol Yom (daily miracles) have been studied earlier in this course, this is the first time these blessings will be studied as an entire group. These blessings are statements to thank God for various things. They are blessings of praise. However, they are labeled “miracles.” Are these things we just do not have control over as human beings? Are these things actually miracles? What is the difference?

Set Induction: Ask each person to think about a miracle in his/her life which is either a part of his/her life continuously or happened once in his/her life. (i.e. waking up every morning, surviving a car accident...etc.) After a few minutes ask the students to share their answers. After each person shares his/her answer ask the question: why do you consider this a miracle?

Continue with a text study. Hand out the text sheets with the morning blessings provided in the resources for this unit. Ask someone in the group to read the first blessing. Ask the question: Is this a way we are limited as human beings or is this a miracle? After discussing this answer, continue on to the next blessing and ask the same

questions. Continue doing this for all of *Nisim B'chol Yom* until you have finished reading all of the blessings.

Families should group together and discuss within their family the following question: Do you believe that humans are limited by God in what they can do or do you believe that God performs miracles? (Some people might believe something in between.)

The Talmud for this activity is blank. Each family should cut and paste in the blessing from *Nisim B'chol Yom* they find relates the most to the theme of limitation and then comment on it.

Asher Yatzar: See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity

(we do not have total control over our the way our body works)

(Talmud Page 3)

This blessing states that if even one of our vessels or arteries were to break we would not work completely. This blessing is said in traditional settings after a person uses the bathroom. The question here is in our limitation as human beings to control what happens in and to our bodies.

Begin with a text study of the prayer *Asher Yatzar*. Use The People's Prayer Book pages 108-117, the translation from Gates of Prayer page 284, and the readings from Mishkan T'filah (pages 194-195) provided in the resource section to help. During the text study, answer the questions:

1. The prayer speaks of "pathways and openings." What do you think that phrase is referring to?
2. How do the different interpretations understand God's power over our body?
3. How would it feel to read a prayer every morning that states God has control over our bodies?

After the text study, hand out a sheet with the information from the Teri Schiavo case. (I have chosen this because it is the most current well known case right now. If, while you are teaching this class, there is another more current case of euthanasia, please use that case instead.) As a group read the information on this case. Then split the class into two groups. They will prepare for a debate. One group will use the prayer *Asher Yatzar* and the text provided from Samuel I and II. They will argue that Teri Schiavo's husband should be able to shut the machines off. The second group will argue for her parents. They will use text provided for them from Deuteronomy and Job.

Give each group enough time to prepare for the debate. Then ask the groups to each come before the judge and present their case. They can argue back and forth but first allow each of them to state their case.

After the debate ask the students to discuss the case and how they personally feel about it and about what Judaism says about it. Allow the class to discuss either the specific Teri Schiavo case or just the idea in general.

Before asking the families to fill in their Talmud Page, read pages 3-4 from the book The Book of Jewish Values. This story is entitled "On Hearing a Siren." Simply read this to the class as a closing thought and then ask the families to fill in their Talmud Page.

Elohi N'tzor (*guard my speech from evil*)
(Talmud Page 4)

When we recite this prayer, at the end of the Amida, we are asking God to help guard us from saying something bad about another. Although some would disagree with the idea that God has control of what we say, this prayer implies that we can ask God to help us with this. How much control do we really have about what we say?

Each family is now an “investigation team.” Each team is to investigate and try to answer the following question: How much control do people have over what they say.” They will have 20 minutes as a family to look through all the evidence and make a reasonable argument for their findings. The evidence is as follows:

1. The prayer Elohi N'tzor as found in Mishkan T'filah
2. The People's Prayer Book pages 185-189.
3. Page 126 from The JGirl's Guide which lists four Biblical texts
4. The Chassidic story about the feathers

All of these resources can be found at the end of this unit.

After the 20 minutes are over, ask the group to come back together and have each family present on what they found. Continue with an all class discussion.

Finish the activity by allowing each family to fill out their Talmud Page.

Mi Sheberach
(Talmud page 2)

People become sick and as humans there is a limit to what we can do about it. We might develop new medicines and techniques to treat the ill, but we wonder how much God really controls what is going on. However, people believe (and some studies have shown) that prayer can help those who are sick.

Set Induction: Discuss the question: Have you ever been so sick that you felt you had no control over your health? OR Did you ever know anyone who was so sick that you felt even the doctors had no control of the situation? How did you feel emotionally? Whom do you think was in control?

Invite a rabbi, a nurse and a physician in to the class. If one of the students in your class has one of these professions, you, as the teacher, should make the decision whether or not to use their expertise for this lesson or to invite other people who are not in the class.

Ask each of the panelists to talk for a few minutes about the role of prayer in the healing process of a sick patient. After they are done, allow the students to ask the panelists questions based on their presentation. Remind the students (either before or after the speakers) that the theme of this unit is limitation; both the limitations placed on us and the limitations we place on our selves.

For the next part of the activity each person should find a partner. Label one partner A and the other B. Role play the following situation: Person A and person B are friends. Person A does not believe in God. Person A asks person B: if we as human beings are limited in what we can do about a person who is sick, why do we pray? Person B should answer however he/she feels appropriate. After they have discussed it for a little longer, ask the students to switch roles.

Conclude by allowing the families to complete the Talmud page for this activity.

(Adapted from a Lesson in Teaching T'filah page 57.)

Mourner's Kaddish

(Talmud Page 6)

The fact that each person is going to die is something that no one has any control over. Although many would say we, as humans, can control when and how we die, the fact that we will all die is something we cannot prevent.

This activity is shorter than previous activities. The goal here is to understand the text and the concept, not necessarily how it plays out in our own lives. Although everyone who is participating in this class will die, they have not personally experienced dying yet. And although most people know someone close to them who has died, the actual dying is not something they know personally.

Split the group into groups of four people. For this, it is not necessary to group families together. It might actually be beneficial to split them apart. Begin by asking each group to read and study together the pages from The People's Prayer Book Volume 6 page 149-161. They should read each commentators words carefully and discuss its meaning.

Once they are done, hand them a packed of readings from Mishkan T'filah pages 291-295. Ask the group to read all of them and answer the question: How do these readings help the person praying deal with our limitations as human beings in regards to dying?

When everyone is done, ask the group to come together and discuss what they talked about in their smaller groups and what they are feeling about the subject.

Performance Task:

Provide each person with a piece of paper and a pen. Before beginning this activity ask each family to look over what they wrote in their Family Siddur during this past unit. Once they are done, ask each person to write down five things in their life which they have limited control over. They can be things that were already discussed or new things. Leave a lot of space between items. Under each item they should write down at least one prayer or blessing where this can be seen. Finally, ask the students to write a reflection on how their own personal life is affected by this limitation.

At the end ask the families to discuss what they each wrote and then hand it in to the teacher. Over the course of the week, the teacher should read over all the papers to ensure that the students were able to connect the ideas of prayer and limitation to their own lives.

Resources

Activity 1: Modim

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 2*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998. Pages 164-175.

Activity 2: Nisim B'chol Yom

1. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Pages 198-203.

Activity 3: Asher Yatzar

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 5*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001. Pages 108-117.
2. Kahn, Robert I. *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975. Page 284.
3. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Pages 194-195.
4. Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-By-Day Guide To Ethical Living*. New York: Bell Tower, 2000. Pages 3-4.

Activity 4: Elohi N'tzor

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005. Page 126.
2. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 2*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998. Pages 185-189.
3. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Pages 196-197.

Activity 6: Mourner's Kaddish

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 6*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2002. Pages 149-161.
2. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Pages 291-295.

Lesson Plan for Unit 5 (Limitation): Asher Yatzar

Goals:

- To offer students the opportunity to question how much control a person has over his/her own body.
- To provide students with a real case in which a person was not able to control his/her own body any longer.
- To connect the idea of limitation with the *Asher Yatzar* prayer
- To engage students in the dilemmas surrounding euthanasia.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a one sentence summary the *Asher Yatzar* prayer.
- To explain the Teri Schiavo case.
- To explain what Judaism and Jewish text state about both the positive and negative sides to euthanasia.
- To state how they personally feel about euthanasia and control over our own bodies as well as what their family feels about this issue.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:25: The text study

0:25-0:35: The Teri Schiavo situation

0:35-0:55: Preparing for the debate

0:55-1:10: The debate

1:10-1:20: What I really think

1:20-1:25: One last story

1:25-1:40: Talmud page

Materials:

The People's Prayer Book Volume 5 pages 108-117

Gates of Prayer page 284

Mishkan T'filah pages 194-195

Information about the Teri Schiavo case which are provided in the resource section

Texts for debate which have been provided in the resource section

The Book of Jewish Values pages 3-4

Activity:

This blessing states that if even one of our vessels or arteries were to break we would not work completely. This blessing is said in traditional settings after a person uses the bathroom. The question here is in our limitation as human beings to control what happens in and to our bodies.

PART I: The text study

Begin with a text study, either as an entire group or in chavruta, of the prayer *Asher Yatzar*. Use The People's Prayer Book Volume 5 pages 108-117, the translation from Gates of Prayer page 284, and the readings from Mishkan T'filah (pages 194-195) provided in the resource section to help. During the text study, answer the questions:

1. The prayer speaks of "pathways and openings." What do you think that phrase is referring to?
2. How do the different interpretations understand God's power over our body?
3. How does it feel to read a prayer every morning that states God has control over our bodies?

PART II: Teri Schiavo

After the text study, hand out a sheet with the information from the Teri Schiavo case. (I have chosen this because it is the most current well known case right now. If, while you are teaching this class, there is another more current case of euthanasia, please use that case instead.) As a group read the information on this case.

PART III: Preparing for the debate

Then split the class into two groups. They will prepare for a debate.

Group one:

One group will use the prayer *Asher Yatzar* and the text provided from Samuel I and II. They will argue that Teri Schiavo's husband should be able to shut the machines off. They should be prepared to use the texts in order to prove their case.

Group two:

The second group will argue for Teri Schiavo's parents. They will be provided texts from Deuteronomy as well as the Book of Job in order to help them argue their point. They will also be given an explanation of the idea of *pikuach nefesh*, saving a life. They should also be prepared to use their texts to prove their case.

Give each group about 15 minutes to prepare for the debate.

PART IV: The debate

Either the teacher or a guest from outside the class should serve as the judge here. Each side will be given about 5 minutes to stand before the "judge" and present their case. After each group has gone, the other group will have time to reply to what the other group has said. Continue this for about 10 minutes or until everyone has said what they would like to say, whichever comes first.

PART V: What do I really think

Ask the students to discuss the case and how they personally feel about it. Discussion questions:

1. If they remember when it was taking place, ask them to discuss how they felt when the country was talking about this case?

2. If they don't remember when it was taking place, how did they feel when they read her case?
3. How did looking at Jewish text change or reaffirm what you believed should happen in this case?
4. Where do you see the theme of limitation in this case and in the concept in general?

PART VI: One last story

After the discussion is over, read pages 3-4 from The Book of Jewish Values. This story is entitled "On Hearing a Siren." Simply read this to the class as a closing thought and then ask the families to fill in their Talmud Page.

PART VII: Talmud page

Conclude the lesson by providing time for the families to put together their Talmud page.

Modim

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|---|---------------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"><p>מודים אנחנו לך, שאתה הוא, יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, לעולם ועד, צור חיינו, מגן ישענו, אתה הוא לדור ודור נוֹדָה לְךָ ונספר תהלתך. על חיינו המסורים בְּיָדְךָ, ועל נשמותינו הפקודות לך, ועל נסידך שבכל יום עמנו, ועל נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל עת, ערב ובקר וצהרים, הטוב כי לא כלו רחמיך, והמרחם כי לא תמו חסדיך מעולם קוינו לך.</p></div> | |
| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
| <p><u>Nisim B'chol Yom</u></p> | |

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p> ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה, וברא בו נקבים נקבים, חלולים חלולים, גלוי וידוע לפני כסא כבודך שאם יפתח אחד מהם, או יסתם אחד מהם, אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך: ברוך אתה יי, רופא כל בשר, ומפליא לעשות: </p> </div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><u>Elohi N'tzor</u></p> </div> | |

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 20px auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="text-align: center;"> אֱלֹהֵי, נְצוּר לְשׁוֹנֵי מְרַע. וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מְרָמָה: וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשֵׁי תַדִּים, וְנַפְשֵׁי כְּעַפָּר לְכֹל תַּהְיֶה. פֶּתַח לְבַי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדְּדוּן נַפְשֵׁי. וְכֹל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה, מְהֵרָה הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקִלְקַל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׂמֵךְ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יִמְיָנֶךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשֶׁתְּךָ. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרַתְךָ. לְמַעַן יַחְלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעַנְנֵי. </p> </div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 100px;"> <p><u>Mi Shebeirach</u></p> </div> | |

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מי שברך אבותינו ואמותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב,
 שרה, רבקה, רחל ולאה, הוא יברך את החולה:
 הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא רחמים עליהם, להחלימם
 ולרפאתם ולהחזיקם, וישלח להם מהרה רפואה,
 רפואה שלמה מן השמים, רפואת הנפש, ורפואת
 הגוף, השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב. ונאמר אמן

FAMILY'S COMMENTARY

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Mourner's Kaddish

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
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| <p> וְתִגְדֹּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזֶמַן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא: יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלְמָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחֶתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא, דְּאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן: </p> | |
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KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

"We gratefully acknowledge" Yakov Yitzchak, the *Chozeh* ("Seer") of Lublin (d. 1815), reminds us of how easy it is to forget that everything issues from God — whether apparently ordinary or miraculous; whether through other human beings or directly from God, everything issues from Heaven. And once we acknowledge this, once we understand how everything is therefore good, then it's ours forever. As we read in Psalm 136, "Give thanks to God, for it is good, for God's love is eternal." If you acknowledge how good it is, then you can have it all the time.

C o m -
menting on
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"For the
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(p. 174)

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
צוּר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אֵתָהּ הוּא
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר.³ נוֹדָה לָךְ וּנְסַפֵּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ
עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בִּידְךָ וְעַל
נְשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ וְעַל נַסִּיךָ
שֶׁבְכָל-יוֹם עִמָּנוּ וְעַל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"We gratefully acknowledge" As servants are obliged to thank their master, we too (who have made requests) are required to thank God (Ber. 34a). This is an essential element of prayer (Maimonides, "Laws of Prayer" 1:2).

At *Modim* (the first word), bow the back and head (but not the knees), in a motion described as bending "like a reed"; at the sixth word, *Ado-nai*, rise back up again.

In the prayer leader's repetition, the congregation *sotto voce* recites (p. 174)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

FOLLOWING THE DAILY OFFERINGS IN THE TEMPLE, THOSE ON HAND WOULD PROSTRATE THEMSELVES AS A TOKEN OF THEIR GRATITUDE MIXED WITH ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOD'S REALITY. THAT ACT HAS BECOME A BLESSING IN ITS OWN RIGHT, BLESSING 18, WHICH VIRTUALLY CONCLUDES THE AMIDAH ON A NOTE OF GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

"We gratefully acknowledge" The Hebrew *modim* implies both gratitude and acknowledgment. We have no such word in English and so are forced to use two words.

"Rock of our lives" Or "rock of our life." The Hebrew is ambiguous.

The difference is subtle: God is either the rock of our lives individually or the rock of our collective life.

"Shield of our salvation" Or "saving shield," but we prefer to preserve the parallel structure found in the Hebrew.

"By rendering" Literally, "and render."

"Our lives, which are in your hands" The Hebrew idiom puts our lives in God's "hands" as well.

"The universe" Hebrew, *b'reishit*, literally, "in the beginning." The (p. 174)

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

"We gratefully acknowledge" This paragraph breaks the stylistic continuity of the *Amidah*, which has been typified since Blessing 4 with opening petitions framed in the imperative—a pattern that will continue in the next and last blessing, "Grant peace." It is a reasonable conjecture that the *Amidah* may once have ended with this blessing.

Alternatively, it may have been a separate prayer altogether. Its introduction, *modim anachnu lakh*, "We gratefully acknowledge" (from 1 Chron. 29:13), is an appropriate beginning for a prayer that then might have been followed by a request. The

Hebrew
(p. 169)

18. HODA'AH

("GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT")

הוֹדָאָה

DORFF
(THEOLOGY)

"Whose name is good and to whom grateful acknowledgment is befitting"

We owe God thanks for many things in our lives. On weekdays, "grateful acknowledgment" refers back to the intermediary petitions, as we thank God for the portion of those blessings that we already have. On holidays, we thank God for the gift of sacred time. On all days, we recognize and appreciate the daily miracles in our lives, which we should not take for granted, noticing them only when we feel their absence. We are dutybound to recognize the many boons we enjoy each day, even when we might wish for more. (p. 170)

¹We gratefully acknowledge that You are Adonai our God and our ancestors' God for ever and ever. ²You are the rock of our lives and the shield of our salvation from generation to generation. ³We gratefully acknowledge You by rendering your praises, for our lives, which are in your hands, and for our souls, which are entrusted to You, and for your miracles that are

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

"For the miracles . . ." This insertion has proved problematic in many ways.

1. As a nineteenth-century rationalist and universalist, Isaac Mayer Wise expurgated the introductory lines as being both supernaturalistic and chauvinistic.
2. Though there seemed nothing wrong with saying, "in those days" (p. 170)

FALK (FEMINISM)

"We gratefully acknowledge . . ." For me, the traditional blessing of "Grateful Acknowledgment" has always been the

most satisfying portion of the *Amidah*. As a child praying in synagogue, I would say the opening three words, (p. 171)

HAUPTMAN (TALMUD)

"We gratefully acknowledge" Incredibly enough, this blessing expresses gratitude in advance for God's beneficence. A Jew is so sure that God will grant his or her requests that immediately upon articulating them the petitioner already acknowledges God for bestowing them. But what is it that we are being so grateful for?

This is the middle blessing of the last set of three, all of which are known collectively as *Hoda'ah*, the "Blessings of Thanksgiving." The previous blessing asks for a return of the (p. 173)

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF THANKSGIVING

with us on each day, and for the wonders and goodness at every time, evening, morning, and afternoon. ⁴You are good, for your mercy never ceases. ⁵You are merciful, for your kindness never ends. ⁶You have always been our hope.

The Modim D'rabbanan—

[To be recited in an undertone, while the prayer leader repeats this blessing:

⁷We gratefully acknowledge that You are Adonai our God and our ancestors' God, God of all flesh, our creator and creator of the universe. ⁸We offer blessings and grateful acknowledgments to your great and holy name, for having given us life and having sustained us. ⁹—So give us life and sustain us and gather our exiles to your holy courts to keep your laws and perform your will, to serve You whole-heartedly; and for our acknowledging You with gratitude. ¹⁰Blessed is the God of grateful acknowledgment.]

[On Chanukah, add:

¹¹For the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty acts and for the triumphs and for the wars you brought about for our ancestors in those days at this time of year—
¹²in the days of the Hasmonean, Mattathias ben Yohanan, the high

וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְכָל־עֵת. עָרַב
וּבִקֹּר וְצַהֲרַיִם. ⁴הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא־
כָּלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ. ⁵וְהַמְּרַחֵם כִּי
לֹא־תָמוּ חַסְדֶיךָ. ⁶מֵעוֹלָם
קוִינֵנו לָךְ.

The Modim D'rabbanan—

[To be recited in an undertone, while the prayer leader repeats this blessing:

⁷מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שָׂאתָ
הוּא יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי כָל בֶּשֶׁר
יוֹצְרֵנוּ יוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית. ⁸בְּרָכוֹת
וְהוֹדָאוֹת לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ עַל שֶׁחַיֵּיתָנוּ
וְקִיַּמְתָּנוּ. ⁹כִּן תַּחֲיֵנוּ וְתַקִּימָנוּ
וְתִאֶסֶף גְּלוּתֵינוּ לְחֻצְרוֹת
קְדֻשָּׁךְ לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת
רְצוֹנָךְ וְלַעֲבֹדָךְ בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם
עַל שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ. ¹⁰בְּרוּךְ
אֱלֹהֵי הַהוֹדָאוֹת.]

[On Chanukah, add:

¹¹עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן
וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת
וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנוֹ
הַזֶּה. ¹²בַּיָּמִי מִתְּתִיחוּ בְּךָ יוֹחָנָן

priest, and his sons, when the evil government of Greece rose up against your People Israel to make them forget your Torah and to make them leave the laws of your will: ¹³In your great mercy You rose up with them in their time of trouble and fought in their fight, judged their cause just, and avenged them with a vengeance. ¹⁴You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the unclean into the hands of the pure, the evil into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of those who engage in your Torah. ¹⁵For You, You made a great and holy name in your world; and for your People Israel, You brought about a great triumph and redemption on that very day. ¹⁶And then your children came to the Holy of Holies, and emptied your temple, and purified your holy place, and lit candles in your holy courts, and established these eight days of Chanukah gratefully to acknowledge, and to praise, your great name.]

כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל חֲשָׁמוֹנִי וּבְנָיו.
כְּשֶׁעָמְדָה מַלְכוּת יוֹן הַרְשָׁעָה
עַל עַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁפִּיחַם
תּוֹרַתְךָ וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻקֵּי
רְצוֹנְךָ. ¹³וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
הַרְבִּים עָמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בְּעַת
צָרָתָם. רַבַּת אֶת־רִיבָם. דִּנְתָּ
אֶת־דֵּינָם. נִקְמַתָּ אֶת־
נִקְמַתָם. ¹⁴מִסָּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד
חַלְשִׁים. וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מְעֻטִּים.
וּטְמֵאִים בְּיַד טְהוּרִים.
וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים. וְזָדִים
בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תּוֹרַתְךָ. ¹⁵וְלָךְ
עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל וְקְדוּשָׁה
בְּעוֹלָמְךָ. וּלְעַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
עָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וּפְרָקוֹן
כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. ¹⁶וְאַחַר כֵּן בָּאוּ
בְנֵיךָ לְדַבֵּר בֵּיתְךָ. וּפְנּוּ אֶת־
הַיְכָלְךָ. וּטְהָרוּ אֶת־מִקְדָּשְׁךָ
וְהִדְלִיקוּ נֵרוֹת בְּחֻצְרוֹת
קְדֻשָּׁךְ. וְקִבְּעוּ שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמֵי
חֲנֻכָּה אֵלֶיךָ לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל
לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל.]

וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ
וּבִקְרָה וְצַהֲרֵה
כָּלֹו רַחֲמֵי
לְאַתְּמוֹ
קוֹיֵנוּ לָךְ.

stone, while the
this blessing:

מִזְדִּים אֲנִי
הוּא יי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
יוֹצְרֵנוּ יוֹ
וְהוֹדָאוֹת
וְהַקְדוּשָׁה
וְקִיַּמְתָּנוּ. ⁹כֵּן
וְתִאֶסְףָּ גִי
קְדֻשָּׁךְ לְשֵׁם
רְצוֹנְךָ וּלְעַבְדְּ
עַל שְׁאַנְחָנוּ
אֵל הַהוֹדָאוֹ

i, add:

עַל הַנְּסִי
וְעַל הַגְּבוּרָה
וְעַל הַמַּלְכָּה
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּ
הַזֶּה. ¹²בְּ

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[On Purim, add:

¹⁷For the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty acts and for the triumphs and for the wars You brought about for our ancestors in those days at this time of year—
¹⁸in the days of Mordecai and Esther in the capital city of Shushan, when the evil Haman rose up against them and sought to destroy, to kill, and to wipe out all the Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (which is Adar), and to plunder their wealth: ¹⁹In your great mercy You brought his advice to naught and frustrated his plan. ²⁰You turned his scheme around on him, so that he and his sons were hanged from a tree.]

²¹For all of these your name will be blessed and exalted, our king, forever to the ends of time.

[On Purim, add:

¹⁷עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן
וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת
וְעַל הַמַּלְחָמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵן
הַזֶּה. ¹⁸בַּיָּמִי מְרַדְכֵי וְאַסְתֵּר
בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה. כְּשֶׁעָמַד
עֲלֵיהֶם הַמֶּן הַרְשָׁע. בְּקֶשׁ
לְהַשְׁמִיד לַהֲרֹג וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת־
כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים מִנְּעַר וְעַד־זָקֵן.
טַף וְנָשִׁים. בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד
בְּשִׁלְשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם־
עָשָׂר הוּא חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר.
וּשְׁלָלָם לְבָז: ¹⁹וְאַתָּה
בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים הִפְרַת אֶת־
עֲצָתוֹ. וְקִלְקַלְתָּ אֶת־מַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ.
²⁰וְהִשְׁבֹּתָ גְמוּלוֹ בְּרֵאשׁוֹ.
וְתָלוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו עַל־
הָעֵץ.]

²¹וְעַל־כָּל־כֵּן יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִתְרוֹמַם
שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם
וָעַד.

r, add:

17 על הנסים
 ועל הגבורות
 ועל המלח
 לאבותינו בין
 הזה. 18 בימי
 בשושן הב
 עליהם המן
 להשמיד להו
 כל-היהודים
 טף ונשים.
 בשלשה
 עשר הוא
 ושללם ל
 ברחמיך הרב
 עצתו וקלקלו
 והשבות 20
 ותלו אתו
 העץ.
 21 ועל-כפם יר
 שמך מלפנו
 ועד.

[From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

22 And write down all of the children of your covenant for good life.]

23 All that lives will gratefully acknowledge You forever and praise your name in truth, God, our salvation and our help, forever. 24 Blessed are You, Adonai, whose name is good and to whom grateful acknowledgment is befitting.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

verb *modim*, meaning acknowledging or praising God, is a central idea of Psalms, which uses the word sixty-seven times, more than half of the times it is used in the whole Bible. Praising is fundamental to prayer, which should not be seen as predominantly petitionary — as we see from Ps. 92:2: “It is good to praise Adonai, and to sing hymns to Your name, O Most High.”

Stylistically, the blessing is structured by what is called an *inclusio*, meaning that it opens and closes with a form of the same word: “We acknowledge” and “acknowledgment.” As the second to last blessing, its content symmetrically balances the second blessing, which focused on God’s power.

“*For the miracles*” The Chanukah section is based on events from 164 B.C.E., after the books of the Bible were written. The Purim story is biblical, however, and quite remarkable in the way it is retold here, since it focuses on God, who is addressed throughout as “You,” whereas God is curiously missing from the entire biblical book of Esther. Greek-speaking Jews inserted God’s presence in their Greek translations, and similar editorializing has occurred here.

“*Our God and our ancestors’ God*” The well-known Priestly Blessing of Num. 6:24–26 is structurally compact, with each verse longer than the one before it, as if to suggest the growing outpouring of divine blessings. The context in Numbers does not indicate how, when, or where the blessing was used, but we know that it was popular in antiquity. There are several significant Mesopotamian parallels, and a version of the Bible’s wording, from the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. and written on silver, was found in a burial trove in Jerusalem; it presumably functioned as an amulet. Biblical texts both before the exile (Psalms 4 and 6) and after the exile (Ps.

[From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

22 וכתוב לחיים טובים פל.
 בני בריתך.]

23 וכל החיים יודוך סלה
 ויהללו את-שמך באמת האל
 ישועתנו ועזרתנו סלה.
 24 ברוך אתה יי הטוב שמך
 ולך נאה להודות.

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119:130–135 and Mal. 1:6–2:9) know of it. No wonder it was incorporated into the *Amidah* as well.

The blessing is strikingly anthropomorphic: Adonai shines and lifts his face on the recipient of the blessing. But biblical texts are quite comfortable with anthropomorphisms, and even rabbinic culture, which is often thought to reject them, very frequently views God in distinctly anthropomorphic form.

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

Second, this blessing affirms Jewish tradition's insistence that God's primary characteristic is goodness. God is just and can punish us, sometimes even without apparent justification; but in the end we have the unshaken faith that God is good. Were that not so, it would make no sense whatsoever to ask God to respond to the needs we have. God's underlying goodness implies that however bad our circumstances, we can and should pray for manifestations of God's fundamental goodness.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

- at this time of year," *Ha'avodah Shebalev* and *Siddur Sim Shalom* adopted a variant text from the first known Jewish prayer book, *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (c. 860), which read, "in other times, and in our day," so as to make the blessing reflect God's current miracles in history as well; they then composed a parallel prayer for Israeli Independence Day, to affirm that its founding ranks as an event equal to Chanukah and Purim.
3. Thanking God expressly "for the wars" has been difficult. Some (the Reconstructionist *Daily Prayer Book*) followed the convenient precedent of Sefardi tradition, which omits the phrase. Others (*Ha'avodah Shebalev* and *Kol Haneshamah*) substitute the euphemism *n'chamot* ("consolations") for *milchamot* ("wars"). *Gates of Prayer* and Conservative liturgies (both *Weekday Prayer Book* and *Siddur Sim Shalom*) preserve the Hebrew but, because they find its sentiment offensive, leave it untranslated.
 4. Referring to Mattathias ben Yohanan as a "high priest" is historically inaccurate. Since he was just an ordinary priest, the old Reconstructionist *Daily Prayer Book* deleted the word for "high" (*gadol*). Its successor, *Kol Haneshamah*, however, joins the rest of the Jewish world in its unconcern for historical detail and restores the traditional text.
 5. Liberal liturgies have shunned what they deem "invidious comparisons" such as those entailed in thanking God for delivering "the unclean into the hands of the pure, the evil into hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of those who engage in Torah." Isaac Mayer Wise and David Einhorn removed "the unclean into the hands of the pure," and the Reconstructionist *Daily Prayer Book* removed

the rest as well. *Gates of Prayer* and Conservative liturgy (*Weekday Prayer Book* and *Siddur Sim Shalom*) either preserve the Hebrew, but translate metaphorically (e.g., “You delivered the strong into the hands of the pure of heart” — *Siddur Sim Shalom*), or omit translation altogether.

6. Most of all, perhaps, liberal Jews have not taken kindly to the blatant vindictiveness that recollects the death of Haman, “You turned his scheme around on him, so that he and his sons were hanged from a tree” (Esther 9:25). Most editors removed the line, following the lead of Isaac Mayer Wise. Some, however, have replaced it with a more congenial passage from the Scroll of Esther.

FALK (FEMINISM)

modim anachnu lakh, and then drift off, away from the text of the Siddur and into a silent reverie, in which I called to mind what I was grateful for. At the end of this period of reflection — which may have lasted several minutes or only a few seconds; it is hard to know, since time took on a different quality during it — I would feel renewed and (dare I say it?) uplifted. My heart would feel lighter, my head clearer, even if only a little bit. This experience of gratitude was the closest I came, as a child, to finding spirituality in the synagogue.

I would like to be able to say that my childhood experiences have been surpassed by other encounters with prayer in my adult life; but the truth is that, as an adult, I have hardly *ever* had what I would call a spiritual experience in synagogue, although I have certainly had spiritual moments in other settings. As a strongly self-identified Jew — someone passionately concerned with the survival of Jewish civilization, language, and Peoplehood — it saddens me that I cannot experience in the synagogue the depths of knowing and being that have come to me in a multitude of other places — at the edge of a pond or the middle of a forest, alone or in the midst of family or friends, even in the presence of strangers.

This inability to locate my true self in synagogue — or to encounter the divine presence there — would be of limited relevance to this discussion were it not for the fact that (as I have discovered repeatedly over the past two decades, while leading workshops and teaching classes on theology and prayer) I am not alone in this experience. I have heard some version of this lament so many times, in so many different voices, that I have come to believe there is a real problem with Jewish liturgical life — a problem that belongs to, and needs to be addressed by, the *community*, not by isolated individuals. The much spoken-about current crisis of “Jewish continuity” does not, finally, seem difficult to understand. If the liturgical realm is any indication, people are leaving Judaism because it doesn’t give them what they deeply want and need, it doesn’t address their spiritual yearnings, it is not meaningful to them.

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF THANKSGIVING

At the risk of being presumptuous, I'd like to offer a brief explanation and an even briefer beginning of a solution to this problem. As a people, we have done a great deal with words; we are a lot less practiced in the art of silence. Despite — or perhaps because of — our emphasis on the verbal, words often aren't working the way we want them to. We want to be inclusive, yet our words often exclude; we want to empower, yet our words often suppress; we want to heal, but our words cause pain. The synagogue, in particular, is a place where words have failed — a place where many of us feel unheard and unseen, neither spoken to nor spoken for — so that, finally, the synagogue is a place where we are alienated, angered, and — most devastating — bored.

I think it is time to take another path. It is time we learn to listen — to the self and to the other, to the world and to the greater whole of being. It is time to learn the power of silence.

As a poet — that is, as someone who cannot imagine herself without language and, in particular, without Hebrew, the language of the Jewish soul — I know that words are meaningless without silence. Just as dark exists only in relation to light, black ink is given shape and sense by the white space surrounding it. And speech — which is black ink rendered into sound by the human voice — is incomprehensible without the silences indicated by the white page. I believe that, in our prayer, it is time we tip the balance away from where it has been — away from the black ink and toward the white page, away from the voice and deeper into the depths of the human heart.

On Shabbat and holy days, the morning liturgy leading up to the *Sh'ma* contains a prayer known as *Nishmat kol chai*, "The breath of all that lives," which states, "Even were our mouths filled with song as the sea [is filled with water] and our tongues [filled with] joyous praise as the multitude of waves," it would not be enough: we would still not be able to convey all we are grateful for. Hyperbolic and wordy — seeming to delight in its own verbal inventiveness — this poetic prayer might be seen as encouraging us to lavish praise on God's creation and to thank God ever more profusely. But it is equally possible to interpret it differently — not as a model of verbal devotion but as an acknowledgment of the ultimate inadequacy of words. Perhaps this prayer comes to teach us that when words cannot convey the fullness of our emotions — in particular, of our gratitude — they ought to be set aside.

Here in the penultimate benediction of the *Amidah*, we have an opportunity to reflect upon the state of gratitude itself and to enter into it personally. What better way to do so than with silence? If the *Amidah* was, for the Rabbis, the ultimate prayer, then this moment of silent gratitude might become the prayer within the prayer, the true *avodah shebalev*, "service of the heart."

HAUPTMAN (TALMUD)

sacrificial cult to the Temple, and the following one for peace for God's People Israel. In contrast to these ultimate ideals, this blessing addresses life itself, the way the human body, in all of its complexity, needs miraculously to keep functioning smoothly from day to day.

"Gather our exiles to your holy courts" Our prayer occurs in two versions, one for recitation when praying the entire *Amidah* silently, and one for recitation by the congregation when the prayer leader repeats the *Amidah* aloud and reaches this point in the service. The text of this alternative paragraph is both similar to and different from the original one. It begins with a theological statement, acknowledging God as creator of the universe. It then thanks God for creating us in the past and requests continued existence in the future. But then it turns surprisingly to the topic of gathering in the exiles to God's holy precincts. The version that the individual says silently is all about life's daily needs; the version that is said during the public repetition begins with those needs but insists on viewing them against a backdrop of collective concerns: the ultimate fate of the Jewish People in the end of days.

The Talmud (Sotah 40a) informs us that there were several versions of this prayer extant, and the Rabbis had difficulty deciding which of them to accept and which to reject. In the end, it was decided to accept them all. What we have here, then, is a composite prayer, in which the competitive versions are all woven together.

Since this is the only time during the repetition of the *Amidah* that the passive listener is asked to recite a prayer, we might wonder why this blessing is singled out for special attention. The answer seems to be that this is the most personal and basic prayer of all: only if we are granted the ordinary gifts of daily living can we then go on to worship God, perform good deeds, and bring about peace in the world. The function of this blessing is to remind us that we are dependent for our very existence on someone outside ourselves. The world may revolve around us, and we may have an effect on it, but we do not sustain ourselves.

And we can make a somewhat similar statement about God: before gathering the People Israel from the four corners of the earth, and before restoring the worship service to Jerusalem, God needs to be certain that the individual can sustain his and her life systems.

We bow at the opening words *modim anachnu lakh*, "We gratefully acknowledge," just as we do in the *Alenu* when reciting the very same words, *va'anachnu . . . umodim*, "We . . . gratefully acknowledge." In both cases, acknowledgment entails a sense of humility for having received the largesse of a gracious benefactor.

"For the miracles" There are two prayers here, one for Purim and another for Chanukah, both very similar in style and in content. Both are about divine intervention in support of the Jewish People. The Chanukah version is recited on all eight days of Chanukah. It stands out because it portrays the miracle of Chanukah very differently from the way Chanukah is portrayed in the well-known "cruse of oil" story, even though both versions were composed at about the same period of time.

As it is presented here, the miracle is that God delivered the "many into the hands of the few" and "the mighty into the hands of the weak," unlikely occurrences but not ones that violate the laws of nature. This is precisely akin to the parallel prayer for Purim, which records the complete reversal of human plans by divine intervention. The lighting of oil lamps is mentioned in passing, but only as one of several activities that engaged

AMIDAH: BLESSINGS OF THANKSGIVING

the Hasmoneans as they went about the task of rededicating the Temple. The military victory, achieved with the help of God, takes center stage in this synopsis of the events.

The more familiar story that we all like to tell about Chanukah comes from the Talmud (Shabbat 21b). That is where we find the story of a single cruse of oil that burned miraculously for eight days, as the main event of the story of Chanukah. The military victory is completely overlooked, as if it never occurred. Like the burning bush that continued aflame but was not consumed, so too the oil that burns for eight days without being depleted ranks as a miracle in the familiar sense of the laws of nature being contravened.

Apparently, as late as the talmudic period, there was still no single and standard interpretation of the real "miracle" of Chanukah. Both stories became canonized for Jewish use, one of them as the official talmudic tale of what Chanukah is all about, and the other as the Siddur's recollection of what happened. We therefore need not choose between the two. They are both part of our collective Jewish memory.

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

fountains issuing from both valleys and mountains," the *Chozeh* goes on to explain that the water of the streams and springs and fountains is a metaphor for God's love and favor. And thus when we recognize how everything issues from God, then that divine kindness will be ours, not only in the valleys, when times are easy, but also on the mountains, even when life is difficult — all the time. The experience then of gratitude — and subsequent expression of thanksgiving — transforms everything into an enduring gift.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

the parallel passage given in the margin, known as the *Modim D'rabbanan*, while the prayer leader in full voice recites the regular prayer that the congregation has said silently.

At the concluding line (the *chatimah*), *Barukh atah Ado-nai* ("Blessed are You, Ado-nai"), bow again, as at the beginning of the *Amidah*, from the knees (see above, "Blessed are You, Ado-nai").

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

word *b'reishit* begins the story of creation and is probably used here to represent all of creation, that is, "the universe."

"We offer blessing and grateful acknowledgment to your . . . name" The Hebrew is simply, "Blessing and praise to your name!" similar to the English "All praise to your name!" But this won't work with "grateful acknowledgment," so we reword the sentence.

"Your holy courts" Artscroll (Orthodox) takes this as a reference to the Temple courtyard, so translates it as "Courtyards of your Sanctuary."

"*Whole-heartedly*" Birnbaum (Orthodox), "with perfect heart." The ancient notion of "heart" differs from our modern-day understanding. For the Rabbis, "heart" encompassed both emotion and intellect; unfortunately, we have no term for that combination in English. See p. 100ff of Volume 1, *The Sh'ma and Its Blessings*, for more.

"*For our acknowledging You with gratitude*" This is most odd. It appears to be a continuation of the previous thought, that is, "we offer blessings . . . to your great and holy name for having given us life . . . ; for our acknowledging . . ." — a sort of "thank you for letting us thank you."

"*Fought in their fight . . .*" The Hebrew supplies an object for each verb, taken from the same root as the verb. We offer a similar repetition to mimic the emphatic nature of the original text.

"*On that very day* [k'hayom hazeh]" Literally "as on that day," but probably emphatic.

"*Capital city*" *Birah*, modern Hebrew for "capital," originally meant "fortified city" or "walled city." The point is the city's centrality, hence its extra fortification. We choose "capital" here, recognizing that the meaning of *birah* has changed, but that the concept to which it refers has likely remained more or less constant.

"*In one day*" Or, perhaps, "on one day, [that is, on the thirteenth . . .]."

"*You brought his advice to naught*" An odd way of phrasing this. The original idiom can be found in Isa. 8:10, "take council [together] and it shall be brought to naught." There, the idea is that in spite of the plans, nothing will happen. Here, it would seem, we have God causing nothing to happen. Other translations include "frustrate his council" (Birnbaum [Orthodox]), "frustrate his intention" (Artscroll [Orthodox]), and "thwart his designs" (*Siddur Sim Shalom* [Conservative]). Of these, "thwart" seems the most idiomatic, but the Hebrew itself is bizarre, and so probably the English ought to be, too.

"*Turned his scheme around*" An idiomatic interpretation of a likely idiom in Hebrew, literally, "You turned his reward on his head."

"*Tree*" Others, "gallows."

"*Forever* [tamid] *to the ends of time* [l'olam va'ed]" The Hebrew, too, uses two phrases for "forever."

"*Write down*" "Write down," not "inscribe," which carries connotations the Hebrew lacks. (See above, "Write.")

"*Children of your covenant*" As in Artscroll (Orthodox). *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Conservative) and Birnbaum (Orthodox) both use "people," perhaps to indicate that adults are to be included as well.

"*Forever*" See above, "Forever [*Selah*]."

"*In truth*" Others, "sincerely."

"*Whose name is good*" Artscroll (Orthodox) reads "good" as a proper noun, an actual name for God: "whose name is 'Good.'"

Mishkan T'filah
Pg 198-203
Unit 5
Activity 2

נְסִיִּים בְּכָל יוֹם

NISIM B'CHOL YOM — FOR DAILY MIRACLES

For awakening

BARUCH atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
asher natan lasechvi vinah
l'havchin bein yom uvein lailah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכְוִי בִינָה
לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given the mind the ability to distinguish day from night.

For vision

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
pokei-ach ivrim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
פוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who opens the eyes of the blind.

For ability to move

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
matir asurim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who frees the captive.

For rising to the
new day

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
zokeif k'fufim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who lifts up the fallen.

יּוֹם נְסִיִּים בְּכָל יוֹם *Nisim b'chol yom* . . . These morning blessings evoke awe at the ordinary miracle of awakening to physical life: we open our eyes, clothe our bodies, and walk again with purpose; in spiritual life also, we are created in God's image, are free human beings, and as Jews, celebrate the joy and destiny of our people, Israel.

Though they are intended literally, we may perceive each blessing spiritually.

Talit

otnu

Asher Yatzar

Elohai N'shamah

Nisim B'chol Yom

Laasok

V'haarev Na

Eilu D'varim

Kaddish

D'Rabanan

IN MY HALF-SLEEP, O God,
in my yawning confusion,
I thank you with a croaking voice.

How strange and spectacular
this body you have granted me
and fill with awareness each morning.

For tongue, tendon, teeth and skin,
for all the chemicals and connections
that make this collection of cells

into a being who can stand and sing,
who can seek Your love
and offer love in turn,

for the mechanisms and mysteries
You have implanted within me
I will thank You

and set about the task of being human
as the sun rises
and my eyes begin to clear.

Religion embraces both faith and action.

The primary quality is action, for it lays the foundation for faith;
the more we do good, the more readily do we grasp the meaning of duty and life
and the more readily do we believe in the Divine from which stems the good.

Leo Baeck

BARUCH

Eloheinu Mele

asher natan las

l'havchin bein

I

w

Baruch atah A

Eloheinu Mele

pokei-ach ivrin

I

Baruch atah A

Eloheinu Mele

matir asurim.

I

Baruch atah A

Eloheinu Mele

zokeif k'fufim.

I

אֵים בְּכָל יוֹם

of awakening

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נְסִים בְּכֹל יוֹם

NISIM B'CHOL YOM — FOR DAILY MIRACLES

For firm earth to stand upon

BARUCH atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
roka haaretz al hamayim.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who stretches the earth over the waters.

For the gift of motion

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
hameichin mitzadei gaver.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמַּכִּין מִצְעָדֵי גֹבֵר.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who strengthens our steps.

For clothing

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
malbish arumim.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who clothes the naked.

For renewed enthusiasm for life

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
hanotein laya-eif ko-ach.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַנוֹתֵן לַיָּעֹף כֹּחַ.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who gives strength to the weary.

For reawakening

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
hamaavir sheinah mei-einai,
ut'numah mei-afapai.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמַּעֲבִיר שְׁנָה מֵעֵינַי,
וְתַנּוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who removes sleep from the eyes, slumber from the eyelids.

Tovu
Asher Yatzar
Elohai N'shamah
Nisim B'chol Yom
Laasok
V'haarev Na
Eilu D'varim
Kaddish
D'Rabanan

AS I AWAKEN, let this be my thought:
may my day be filled with acts of lovingkindness.
Let me be drawn to learning and discernment,
and may my actions be shaped by mitzvot.

Keep me iniquity, disgrace and sin;
May I not be overwhelmed by temptation or despair.

Distance me from evil people and false friends.
Let me cultivate a life of goodness.

May my hands reach out in kindness,
and I will serve God through acts of righteousness.

Today and every day, may I merit Your mercy,
by living my life with compassion and love.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְלִיֵּךְ חַסָּדִים טוֹבִים לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.
Baruch atah, Adonai, ham'lameid chasadim tovim l'amo Yisrael.

Holy One of Blessing, draw me to Your words;
Teach me the art of sacred living.

L'OLAM y'hei adam y'rei shamayim
b'seiter uvagalui,
umodeh al ha-emet,
v'doveir emet bil'vavo.

לְעוֹלָם יְהֵא אָדָם יְרֵא שָׁמַיִם
בְּסֵיתֵר וּבְגַלּוּי,
וּמֹדֵה עַל הָאֵמֶת,
וְדוֹבֵר אֵמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ.

ALWAYS, may each person revere God
in private and in public,
acknowledge the truth aloud,
and speak it in one's heart.

לְעוֹלָם יְהֵא אָדָם . . . *L'olam y'hei adam . . . Always, may each person . . . Tana Debei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 21*

BARUCH
Eloheinu Mel
roka haaretz a

Baruch atah A
Eloheinu Mel
hameichin mi

Baruch atah A
Eloheinu Mel
malbish arumi

Baruch atah A
Eloheinu Mele
hanotein laya-

Baruch atah Ac
Eloheinu Mele
hamaavir shein
ur'numah mei-

F

נְסִים בְּכָל יוֹם

NISIM B'CHOL YOM — FOR DAILY MIRACLES

BARUCH atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
she-asani b'tzelem Elohim.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים.

*For being in
the image of God*

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who made me in the image of God.

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
she-asani ben / bat chorin.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בֶן / בַּת חוֹרִין.

*For being
a free person*

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has made me free.

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
she-asani Yisrael.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

For being a Jew

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
for my being a Jew.

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
ozeir Yisrael big'vurah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבוּרָה.

For purpose

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who girds Israel with strength.

Baruch atah Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
oteir Yisrael b'tifarah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתִפְאָרָה.

For harmony

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who crowns Israel with splendor.

Tallit

Sh Tovu

Shema Yatzar

Elohai N'shamah

Nisim B'chol Yom

Laasok

V'haarev Na

Eilu D'varim

Kaddish

D'Rabanan

I AM A JEW because
the faith of Israel demands no abdication of my mind.

I am a Jew because
the faith of Israel requires all the devotion of my heart.

I am a Jew because
in every place where suffering weeps, the Jew weeps.

I am a Jew because
at every time when despair cries out, the Jew hopes.

I am a Jew because
the word of Israel is the oldest and the newest.

I am a Jew because
Israel's promise is the universal promise.

I am a Jew because
for Israel, the world is not completed; we are completing it.

I am a Jew because
for Israel, humanity is not created; we are creating it.

I am a Jew because
Israel places humanity and its unity
above the nations and above Israel itself.

I am a Jew because, above humanity, image of the divine Unity,
Israel places the unity which is divine.

BARUCH

Eloheinu Me
she-asani b'tz

Baruch atah ,
Eloheinu Me
she-asani ben

Baruch atah ,
Eloheinu Me
she-asani Yisr

Baruch atah ,
Eloheinu Me
ozeir Yisrael l

Baruch atah ,
Eloheinu Me
oteir Yisrael t

(ICE)

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 (p. 113)

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

*BLESSINGS FOR ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED
 ESSENTIAL IMMEDIATELY UPON ARISING:
 STUDY, PRECEDED BY WASHING AND
 USING THE BATHROOM.*

¹"About washing our hands" Originally,
 the Morning Blessings were said
 personally upon awakening, as were
 various other blessings that once
 accompanied the individual's private
 process of awakening, getting dressed,
 and so on. Only with *Seder Rav Amram*,
 our first comprehensive (p. 114)

¹ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְשָׁנוּ
 בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל גְּטִילַת יָדַיִם.

² בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת
 הָאָדָם בְּתַקְמָה, וּבְרָא בּוֹ נְקָבִים וְנְקָבִים, חֲלוּלִים
 חֲלוּלִים. ³ גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנַי כִּסֵּא כְבוֹדְךָ, שָׂאֵם יִפְתַּח
 אֶחָד מֵהֶם אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

²"Who formed" In addition to the
 obvious, and healthy, acknowledgment
 of the mystery of the physical body's
 organic processes, Jewish spiritual
 tradition also finds in this benediction
 the theme of our interaction with the
 outside world. In other words, it's more
 than merely organs that are open and
 closed; it's also a matter of what is inside
 and outside. We are encouraged to
 contemplate not only the body's
 internal rhythms, but how what is
 inside the body gets outside (p. 115)

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

¹"Blessed... about washing our hands"
 These blessings were originally
 intended for private recitation at home.
 They were composed in Hebrew, so
 raising the question of whether they
 may be said in English by people who
 do not understand Hebrew.

The general rule is that blessings
 may be said in any language we
 understand (Maimonides, Laws of
 Prayer, 16). The source for this ruling is
 the one certain Torah-authorized
 blessing over enjoyment, the *Birkat
 Hamazon* ("Grace after Meals"), which

comes from Deuteronomy
 8:10, "You will eat, and be
 satisfied, and bless A-donai
 your God for the good land
 He gave you." The Talmud
 (Sot. 33a) interprets this to
 mean "Bless God in any
 language in which you are
 able to bless Him."

Medieval and modern
 opinions vary. The Rosh
 (Asher ben Yechiel,
 Germany and Spain,

1250-1327) rules that the Hebrew
 blessings of people who do not
 understand Hebrew are not valid; they
must repeat the blessing in a language
 that they understand (Commentary to
 Ber. 7:6). According to his reasoning,
 we cannot bless God if we do not know
 what we are saying. By contrast, Meiri
 (R. Menachem ben David Hameiri,
 Italy, 1249-1315) believes that one's
 obligation is fulfilled by saying a
 blessing in Hebrew even if it is not
 understood, although this would not
 hold true for any other language
 (Commentary to Ber. 40b). (p. 117)

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹"*Washing our hands*" Washing hands and feet was a priestly obligation entailed by the need to be ritually pure before ministering at the Temple (Exod. 30:19, 21).

⁵"*Engage in words of Torah*" With the exception of Deuteronomy, the Torah is not self-conscious of itself as a book, so does not command its own study. Deuteronomy, however, emphasizes obedience to God's words (e.g., 7:12) and presumes familiarity with the law; it mandates a reading of at least part of the law once every seven years (31:9-13). Before the exile, that familiarity was the prerogative of the priestly (p. 110)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

²"*Who formed humans with wisdom*" Though a prayer intended for recitation whenever we emerge from the bathroom after using the toilet, it appears here because the liturgy assumes we have done so shortly after waking up. The prayer (Ber. 11a and 60b, where it is attributed to (p. 111)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

¹"*Commanded us about washing our hands*" *Siddur Va'ani T'fillati* and *Siddur Sim Shalom* include this benediction, but move it to the very beginning of the Morning Blessings rubric, so that it can be said upon washing one's hands after (p. 112)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

¹"*About washing our hands*" This blessing inaugurates a series of benedictions taken from Berakhot 11a and 60b. And what a strange juxtaposition it is—thanking God simultaneously for teaching us Torah and for giving us internal plumbing that works! Could any two spheres be further apart? And yet in this odd pairing we find the genius of Jewish prayer: on the one hand, if our tubes and valves fail to function, how difficult it is to focus our minds on (p. 113)

¹Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us about washing our hands.

²Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, who formed humans with wisdom and created a system of ducts and conduits in them. ³It is well-known before Your throne of glory that if one of these should burst or one of these get blocked, it would be

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

¹"*About*" To command us "about" is a common translation of an equally common rabbinic idiom, "who has commanded us *al*." Halakhically, a distinction is made between this *al* form of a blessing over a commandment and an equally common alternative, "who has commanded us to" (*l'*). We honor the rabbinic use of *al*, therefore, with the unique translation (strange as it may sound) of "about [the commandment...]." (p. 113)

L. HOFFMAN (HIS BLESSINGS FOR AN ESSENTIAL IMMEDIATE STUDY, PRECEDE USING THE BATHROO

¹"*About washing o the Morning B personally upon various other b accompanied the process of awaken and so on. Only w our first com*

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לִמְ, אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵר אֶת
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KUSHNER & POLE

²"*Who formed*" I obvious, and health of the mystery of organic processes tradition also finds the theme of our i outside world. In o than merely organ: closed; it's also a ma and outside. We contemplate not internal rhythms, inside the body get

PRELIMINARY BLESSINGS

impossible to survive and stand before You. ⁴Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all creatures, doing wonders.

⁵Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to engage in words of Torah. ⁶So, Adonai our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet to us and to the house of Israel, Your people, that we and our descendants, and the descendants of Your people, the house of Israel, that we all should know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake. ⁷Blessed are You, Adonai, who teaches Torah to His people Israel. ⁸Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world, who chose us from all peoples, and gave us His Torah. ⁹Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

class (Jer. 18:18; Ezek. 7:26); only after the exile does public study arise (Neh. 8). Joshua 1:8, a late biblical text, explicitly demands, "This Torah book should never leave your mouth; you should recite it day and night so that you will heed everything that is written in it; then your path will succeed, and then you will flourish."

⁶"Study Your Torah for its own sake" With the exception of Psalm 119, a late composition, study for its own sake is foreign to biblical culture. The purpose of hearing the law is so that it will be observed (e.g., Deut. 5:1).

⁷"Who teaches Torah" A jarring phrase from a biblical perspective, since only a small part of the Bible, the Decalogue, was publicly taught to all Israel (Exod. 20:18–21; Deut. 5:22–33). Also, in the Bible, Moses, not God, does the teaching.

⁸"Who chose us...and gave us His Torah" The chosenness of Israel—a central biblical idea (e.g., Deut. 7:6–7; Isa. 41:8–9; Ps. 33:12)—confers not blessing but responsibility:

וְלַעֲמוֹד לְפָנֶיךָ. ⁴בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

⁵בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מְלֶכֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַיִךְ וּצְוֵנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה. ⁶וְהַעֲרַב־נָא, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ, וּבְפִי עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצָאֵינוּ, וְצִאֲצָאֵי עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמָּה. ⁷בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמְּלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. ⁸בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. ⁹בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

"Only you have requite you all gave us His To explicit in the with him [Abr: observe the wa

DORFF (THEOLO fourth-century functioning of we are to see it beyond our pra ability to flouri

⁵"Comman for giving us Johanan, and B Talmud requir service as one s Torah and fro recognize our linking of our l

Each blessi burden on us: with it in all ar make Torah sw God's gift toHi divine relation. and passive acc

Moreover, t important abou from the Talmu Torah alone. T literal meaning Oral Tradition: expanded sourc

“Only you have I been intimate with from all the nations of the earth; therefore I will quite you all of your sins” (Amos 3:2). “Who chose us” is therefore followed by “and gave us His Torah”—that is, Israel is chosen to receive the Torah, an idea never made explicit in the Bible, but suggested by Genesis 18:19, “For I [God] have been intimate with him [Abraham], so that he will command his children and his house after him to observe the way of the Lord.”

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

fourth-century Sages, Abaye and Rav Papa) articulates our dependence on the intricate functioning of our body, warning us not to take bodily operations for granted: rather, we are to see in our very bodies a wondrous sign of God’s providence, which extends beyond our prayers; before we ever learned to pray, we were created with the miraculous ability to flourish.

⁵“*Commanded us to engage in words of Torah*” These three blessings thanking God for giving us the Torah are ascribed to third-century scholars, Rav Judah, Rabbi Johanan, and Rav Hamnuna, the last of whom suggests we say them all (Ber. 11b). The Talmud requires them each time we study, but the liturgy defines the early morning service as one such occasion, so inserts the blessings here, prior to selections from the Torah and from rabbinic literature. Thus at the very beginning of the morning we recognize our joint dependence on the smooth functioning of our bodies and the linking of our lives to Torah.

Each blessing describes our connections to Torah differently. The first puts the burden on us: *we* are commanded not just to study it, but to engage in it, to wrestle with it in all areas of our lives. The second depicts God as a master teacher, who can make Torah sweet in our mouths. The third depicts us passively receiving Torah as God’s gift to His chosen people. All three blessings combined portray the spectrum of divine relationships through Torah: active engagement, student-teacher interaction, and passive acceptance of a divine gift.

Moreover, the source of the three study selections that follow teaches us something important about Torah. One comes from the Torah, one from the Mishnah, and one from the Talmud. Jewish tradition is not fundamentalist, then, contained in the written Torah alone. Torah is a matter of ongoing revelation, where God’s instruction (the literal meaning of “Torah”) begins with the written Torah but continues through the Oral Tradition: the Mishnah first (c. 200 C.E.), then the Talmud (c. 500 C.E.), and then expanded sources throughout the generations.

PRELIMINARY BLESSINGS

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

awakening from sleep. *SVT* also offers halakhic instructions as to how, ritually, to wash one's hands, along with a detailed explanation as to why the Sages deemed handwashing to be a necessary "preparation for prayer."

²"*Blessed are You, Adonai our God*" Here, as elsewhere, regularly, the Reconstructionist *Kol Haneshamah* offers a variety of English metaphors when translating the ineffable Hebrew name of God, Adonai. In an attempt to capture a sense of the infinite reality that marks the divine, the Reconstructionist rite translates the name of God here as "Blessed are You, THE ARCHITECT, our God..." The benediction ends by addressing God as "Blessed are You, the wondrous Healer of all flesh." Diverse representations of God's name are found throughout the prayer book, depending on context, to reflect the Reconstructionist conviction that the divine fullness can never be captured by a single word, but can only be approached by a variety of images.

²"*Who formed humans with wisdom*" A significant number of contemporary liberal liturgies now include this talmudic benediction for the body in their prayer books. Among them are *Gates of Prayer*, *Kol Haneshamah*, *Siddur Va'ani T'fillati*, and *Siddur Sim Shalom*. All of them deem this blessing an appropriate vehicle for expressing gratitude for the gift of body and health.

Nineteenth-century non-Orthodox prayer books stand in sharp contrast to their twentieth-century successors on this matter. The Victorian sensibilities that informed the authors of these works did not allow them to feel comfortable with a detailed liturgical allusion to bodily functions. Hence, they generally omitted this passage. This was true even of the 1885 *Avodat Yisrael* by Marcus Jastrow, a founder of American Conservative Judaism. Isaac Mayer Wise alone did not want to abandon this benediction, which he resolved by recasting it without any reference to the body at all: "Praised be Thou, O God, our Lord, universal King, who hast made man with wisdom, and created in him a pure soul in Thy image, that he do Thy will, in love, and behold Thy goodness, O God, in the Land of life. Praised be Thou, O God, who workest wonders."

⁵"*Blessed are You...who...commanded us [v'tsivanu] to engage in words of Torah*" Unlike earlier Reform prayer books, *Gates of Prayer* includes this blessing. Furthermore, here (in relationship to Torah study), it translates *v'tsivanu* as "commanded us." This stands in sharp contrast to how *GOP* rendered the Hebrew in regard to the ritual acts of *tallit* and *t'fillin* (see above, "commanded us to wrap ourselves"). *Kol Haneshamah* names God here "THE ONE OF SINAI," thereby reflecting once again its commitment to multiple images for envisioning and representing the divine.

⁶"*Adonai our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet to us*" *Kol Haneshamah* here translates the name of God as "WISE ONE." It is also significant that the 1998 edition of *Siddur Sim Shalom*, here as elsewhere, refuses to render "Adonai" as "Lord," in

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⁸"*Who chose* liturgies (*Siddur* blessing here, *F* does so. The bl study passages i century, I. M. W hast chosen us fi Thee a kingdo universalistic eth

FRANKEL (A WO study! But on th sweet to us and

For women, is especially mea the Hebrew wo hollow" (as doe by the spaces an the vagina that month when th we can understa not only heals u performs wonde

J. HOFFMAN (T

¹"*Washing*" "to take." (It is *lulav*.) It is not c has letters in cor that connection

Alternatively, metaphorically.

deference to feminist objections to translating the name of God with a masculine term. Instead, the most recent American Conservative rite simply transliterates the name of God, "Adonai," with no translation at all. In this way, the 1998 SSS testifies to the powerful hold that feminist concerns have on modern-day liberal Judaism generally.

⁸"Who chose us from all peoples, and gave us His Torah" While both Conservative liturgies (*Siddur Va'ani T'fillati* and *Siddur Sim Shalom*) include the traditional Torah blessing here, *Ha'avodah Shebalev* is the only twentieth-century Reform Siddur that does so. The blessing seemed out of order for a rite that did not include significant study passages in its condensed early morning service. However, in the nineteenth century, I. M. Wise included an altered version that addresses "the universal King, who hast chosen us from among all peoples and intrusted us with Thy Law, that we be unto Thee a kingdom of priests, and a holy people." Wise's reformulation voiced the universalistic ethics that marked classical Reform Judaism.

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

study! But on the other, how healing it can be for us to "make the words of Your Torah sweet to us and to the house of Israel, Your people," despite our physical distress.

For women, whose anatomical system is far more complex than men's, this blessing is especially meaningful. The very word for "duct," *n'kavim*, shares its root with *n'kevah*, the Hebrew word for "female." Specifically, this word means to "perforate" or "make hollow" (as does its synonym in this passage, *challul*). Women are thus characterized by the spaces and hollows within them, the womb that will cradle the next generation, the vagina that admits the seed of life and that fills with and disgorges blood each month when the womb remains empty of new life. Aware of this natural ebb and flow, we can understand the double nature of the concluding blessing of this paragraph: God not only heals us, *rofei kol basar*, when our internal passageways malfunction, but also performs wonders, *mafli la'asot*, precisely when they operate as they are supposed to.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

¹"Washing" The Hebrew comes from the verbal root *n.t.l.*, which means "to lift" or "to take." (It is the same verb usually translated as "to shake" in the blessing for the *lulav*.) It is not clear how it came to mean "to wash." A Greek word *antlion* ("bucket") has letters in common with the Hebrew *natla*, "the bowl for washing one's hands," but that connection seems coincidental.

Alternatively, the "washing" here may mean "taking away of" = "cleansing" metaphorically.

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PRELIMINARY BLESSINGS

²“*Formed*” Following Birnbaum and others. “Created” would be better, but we will need that verb below for a different Hebrew original. On principle, assuming that doubling a word has a different effect than using two similar words, we try not to use the same English word for different Hebrew originals.

²“*With wisdom*” The Hebrew is likewise ambiguous as to whether God or humans have the wisdom, but context makes it clear that God, using God’s wisdom, created us so well.

²“*A system of ducts and conduits*” The Hebrew relies poetically on two words, each appearing twice in a row, once as a noun and once as an adjective: *n’kavim n’kavim*, “pierced holes,” and *chatulim chatulim*, “hollow conduits.” Because we cannot duplicate this effect in English (although “hollow hollows” is a step in the right direction), we rewrite the phrase in our own idiom.

³“*Well-known*” Literally, “evident and known.” Hebrew often uses parallel linguistic forms (here, two adjectives) where English uses a modifier (adjective or adverb) and a term that is modified (here, an adjective [“known”] and an adverb [“evident and” = “well...”]).

³“*Stand before You*” Continuing the theme of standing before a throne, begun above with *kisei*, literally, “chair,” but used liturgically, usually, as “throne [of glory].”

⁵“*Engage in words of Torah*” Others, simply “study.” Our translation adheres more closely to the original, on the assumption that the original authors chose this phrase over “to study” (which is used below) for a reason. The Hebrew word for “word” also means “things,” and so the Hebrew phrase is actually broader than the English, perhaps even as broad as “engage in Torah.”

⁶“*Sweet to us*” Or, “pleasant in our mouth.” That translation would work here, but immediately following we would then need “and in the mouth of the house of Israel, Your people,” which, we think, misses the mark.

⁶“*Know Your name*” To “know God’s name” meant to recognize God’s sovereignty.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

prayer book (composed around 860) were these postponed to the public synagogue service. Thereafter, public practice followed the precedent of Jacob ben Asher (c. 1275–1340), as recorded in his influential law code, the *Tur*. (See “Blessings and Study: The Jewish Way to Begin a Day,” pp. 6–16.)

In our custom, though not universally, the blessing over handwashing comes first, an echo of the time when all the blessings were said at home. It precedes the blessings

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over Torah study because sacred study requires clean hands, and human hands (which might rove over the body during sleep) are considered unclean upon awakening.

^{2,4}“*Formed humans... heals all creatures*” The parallelism here gives us acute insight into the rabbinic conceptualization of healing: First, “Blessed are You...who *formed* (= *created*) humans...,” and then, “Blessed are You...who *heals* all creatures.” So in rabbinic algebra, “Formed (Created) = Healed.” That is, healing is a kind of creating. Primo Levi intuits this age-old Jewish insight in his Holocaust memoir: he remembers being forced to watch a man die slowly on the gallows in Auschwitz. As the victim twists in agony, Levi thinks, “To destroy a man is difficult, almost as difficult as to create one.” Disease, like the gallows, destroys what God has made. Surely, the reverse too is true: those who heal, create (or re-create) as God once did.

The Halakhah, incidentally, bans administering medicine on Shabbat if a patient is not at least sick enough to be bedridden. Technically, the reason given is that giving the medicine might entail grinding, one of the categories of forbidden Sabbath work laid down by Torah. But that reasoning is after the fact. Already in the first century, the Gospels (Matt. 12:9–13; Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11) report the Jewish authorities accusing Jesus of healing a man with a withered hand on Shabbat. The underlying issue is that healing is creating. As God rested from creation on Shabbat, so the Rabbis prefer that we rest from healing then—except in cases of absolute necessity, of course.

This identification of doctors’ work with God’s explains the Talmud’s wonderment that human beings may effect cures at all. Surely that is God’s work. We may heal, the Talmud concludes, because “God has given us permission” to do God’s work—the work of continuing creation.

⁸“*Gave us His Torah*” One of several Torah blessings inserted here. We know of others that were once current also, for example, “Blessed...who chose this Torah and sanctified it and took pleasure in it for those who fulfill it” (Deut. Rab. 11). Of all the blessings created in antiquity, only blessings for Torah have come down to us in so many different versions—a testimonial to the centrality of Torah to Judaism.

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

and vice versa. How do we enter into life-sustaining intercourse with the outside world while still maintaining a physiological boundary?

We read (Gen. Rab. 1:3): “Rabbi Tanchuma opened his teaching by citing Psalm 86:10, ‘For You are great and do wondrous things....’ Rabbi Tanchum ben Rabbi Chiya said that if a goatskin bag has a hole, even one as small as the eye of a needle, all its air escapes; yet though a person is formed with many different orifices, the person’s breath does not escape through them. Who achieved this? As the psalm verse concludes, ‘Only You God!’”

In his commentary to the *Shulchan Arukh* (“Laws of Washing Hands in the

PRELIMINARY BLESSINGS

Morning," Section 6), Moses Isserles speaks of the mystery of life. While in utero, the mouth, for instance, must be closed, but upon birth, it must be opened or we would perish. There seems to be a kind of reversal of fetal openings and closings necessary for the maintenance of human life. In the final analysis, a human being bears humbling similarities to a goatskin sack filled with wind, a bag of breath. God graciously keeps enough breath or spirit within the body to sustain it. Thus the daily continuation of life is even more than just openings and closings, or delicate organic balance; life is a matter of getting the right things into the body and the right things out of the body—all in the proper order. For this reason, says Isserles, the blessing concludes with an image of God as wondrous healer.

²"Ducts and conduits" According to *Tzava'at Harivash*, the popular Chasidic manual of spiritual discipline, attributed to the Baal Shem Tov (Section 22):

Let whatever you experience remind you of the Holy One. If love, let it remind you of the love of God; if fear, let it remind you of the fear of God. When you go to sleep, think, my consciousness is now going to God. Even when you use the toilet, you should think, "I am now separating bad from good. Now only the good remains for the service of God." In this way you will be strengthened in your service of God.

And just this is the real meaning of the spiritual-meditative practices known as *yichudim*, that is, "unifications," the joining of deed to God. In earlier kabbalistic traditions, *yichudim* had meant unifying the potencies of different and often arcane divine names. Here, however, we encounter an example of Chasidism's revolutionary dimension. *Yichudim* have now become exercises of meditative awareness that bring every aspect of life—even bodily functions!—into the realm of the sacred. Everything is part of the universal divine organism. Through such *yichudim*—unifying meditations—even the most ordinary and filthy aspects of life become potentially sacred deeds.

⁶"*Make the words of Your Torah sweet*" Ya'akov Yosef of Polnoye, a second-generation Chasidic master (d. 1782), offers a parable (*Toldot Ya'akov Yosef, Sh'elah*, 172) to help us read the words of Torah so as to make them "sweet." He draws on one of the most fundamental principles of Jewish spirituality: doing a sacred deed *lishmah*, "for its own sake," purely and simply in response to a divine request. Indeed, as we see in the following teaching, not only do we sweeten the sacred words of scripture, we literally liberate the letters and return them to their divine source or root.

It once happened that some travelers lost their way and decided to go to sleep until someone came along who could show them the way. Someone first came along and led them to a place of wild beasts and brigands but then someone else came and showed them the right path. It is the same way with the letters of the Torah, through which the world was created. They came to this world in the form of travelers who have lost their way and fallen asleep. When someone comes along and studies Torah for its own sake, such a one leads them on the right path so that they can cleave to their root.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

The most notable exception to the opinion that blessings may be said in any language is that of *Arukh Hashulchan*, who argues that the talmudic license to say prayers in any language no longer applies, because we are no longer sensitive to the deeply mystical nature of the Hebrew language. If we translate them, we are likely to lose their deeper meanings, without realizing it (O. Ch. 62:3-4; 185:2-3).

In any case, a person saying a blessing as an emissary for others, such as a cantor, should be able to understand it in Hebrew (*Magen Avraham*, O. Ch. 102).



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2. FOR HEALTH

אשר יצר

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר יצר את-האדם
 בחכמה, וברא בו נקבים ונקבים, חלולים וחלולים. גלוי
 וידוע לפני כסא כבודך, שאם יפתח אחד מהם, או יסתם
 אחד מהם, אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך. ברוך אתה,
 יי, רופא כל-בשר ומפליא לעשות.

Blessed is our Eternal God, Creator of the universe, who has made our bodies with wisdom, combining veins, arteries, and vital organs into a finely balanced network. Wondrous Fashioner and Sustainer of life, Source of our health and our strength, we give You thanks and praise.

* *

3. FOR TORAH

לעסוק בדברי תורה

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצוותיו
 וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.

Blessed is the Eternal, our God, Ruler of the universe, who hallows us with His Mitzvot, and commands us to engage in the study of Torah.

והערבנא, יי אלהינו, את-דברי תורתך בפינו, ובפי עמך
 בית ישראל, ונהיה אנחנו וצאצאינו, וצאצאי עמך בית
 ישראל, קלנו יודעי שמך ולומדי תורתך לשמך. ברוך
 אתה, יי, המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל.

Eternal our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet to us, and to the House of Israel, Your people, that we and our children may be lovers of Your name and students of Your Torah.

Blessed is the Eternal, the Teacher of Torah to His people Israel.

*

נור, שאדם אוכל פרותיהם
 לעולם הבא, ואלו הן:

These are the obligations without mea-
 is without measure:

To honor father and mother;
 to perform acts of love and kindness;
 to attend the house of study daily;

to welcome the stranger;
 to visit the sick;
 to rejoice with bride and groom;
 to console the bereaved;
 to pray with sincerity;
 to make peace when there is strife.

And the study of Torah is equal to the
 all, because it leads to them all.

* *

4. FOR THE SOUL

יה היא! אתה בראתה, אתה
 אתה משמרה בקרבני. כל-זמן
 לפניך, יי אלהי ואלהי אבותי,
 הנשמות.

ש כל-חי, ורוח כל-בשר-איש.

The soul that You have given me, O (I
 have created and formed it, breathed
 me You sustain it. So long as I have l

BARUCH atah, Adonai
Eloheinu Melech haolam,
asher yatzar et haadam b'chochmah
uvara vo n'kavim n'kavim,
chalulim, chalulim.
Galui v'yadua lifnei chisei ch'vodecha
she-im y'patei-ach echad meihem,
o yisateim echad meihem,
i efshar l'hitkayeim
v'laamod l'fanecha.
Baruch atah, Adonai,
rofei chol basar umaflī laasot.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה
וּבָרָא בּוֹ נְקָבִים וְנְקָבִים,
חַלּוּלִים חַלּוּלִים.
גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כֹסֵא כְבוֹדְךָ
שֶׁאִם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם
אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם,
אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם
וְלַעֲמֹד לְפָנֶיךָ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

טלית
מחטבו
אשר יצר
אלהי נשמה
נסים בכל יום
לעסוק
והעבדנא
אלו דברים
קדיש ורבו

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai,
Our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who formed the human body with wisdom
creating the body's many pathways and openings.
It is well known before Your throne of glory
that if one of them be wrongly opened or closed,
it would be impossible to survive and stand before You.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh, working wondrously.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.
Baruch atah, Adonai, rofei chol basar umaflī laasot.

The form and substance of the human body are miracles of subtlety and beauty, shaped by the wisdom of the Creator.

Shabbat Morning I

Tallit

Mah Tovu

Asher Yatzar

Elohai N'shamah

Nisim B'chol Yom

Laasok

V'haarev Na

Filu D'varim

Kaddish

D'Rabanan

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe.
With divine wisdom You have made our bodies,
combining veins, arteries and vital organs
into a finely-balanced network.
Wondrous Maker and Sustainer of life,
were one of them to fail —
how well we are aware! —
we would lack the strength to stand in life before You.
Blessed are You, Adonai,
Source of our health and strength.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch atah, Adonai, rofei chol basar umaffli laasot.

DON'T LET ME FALL

as a stone falls upon the hard ground.
And don't let my hands become dry
as the twigs of a tree
when the wind beats down the last leaves.
And when the storm raises dust from the earth
with anger and howling,
don't let me fall.
I have asked for so much,
but as a blade of Your grass in a distant wild field
lets drop a seed in the lap of the earth
and dies away,
sow in me Your living breath,
as You sow a seed in the earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch atah, Adonai, rofei chol basar umaffli laasot.

121 USNAID, Rabbi Joseph
The Book of Jewish Values
Pg 3-4
Unit 5 Activity 3

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bi Nachman of Bratslav offered
ich I challenge you, and myself:
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even better tomorrow.

WEEK 1

DAY

1

SUNDAY

On Hearing a Siren

What is your reaction when you are talking with a friend and your conversation is suddenly interrupted by the piercing wail of an ambulance siren? Is it pure sympathy for the person inside—or about to be picked up by—the ambulance, or do you feel some measure of annoyance? Similarly, how do you react when you are awakened from a deep sleep by a series of clanging fire trucks or the wail of a police car?

I am embarrassed to admit that, along with many others, my initial reaction to such noises is often impatience and annoyance rather than empathy. My friend Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, known throughout the Jewish world as "Reb Zalman," suggests that whenever we hear the sound of a passing ambulance we offer a prayer that the ambulance arrive in time. Similarly, whenever our sense of calm is interrupted by fire trucks, we should pray to God that the trucks arrive in time to save the endangered people and home. We should also pray that no firefighter be injured. And when we hear police sirens, we should implore God that the police respond in time to the emergency.

Reb Zalman's suggestion is profound. By accustoming ourselves to uttering a prayer at the very moment we feel unjustly annoyed, we become better, more loving people. The very act of praying motivates us to empathize with those who are suffering and in need of our prayers. Furthermore, imagine how encouraging it would be for those being rushed to a hospital to know that hundreds of people who hear the ambulance sirens are praying for their recovery.

Speaking to a Jewish group once in Baltimore, I shared Reb Zalman's suggestion. After my talk, several people commented on how moved they were by this idea, but one woman seemed particularly emo-

tional when she spoke of this suggestion. When she was ten, she told me, she had been awakened from a deep sleep by passing fire trucks. It was almost one in the morning, and now, twenty-five years later, she still remembered her first response: it was so unfair that her sleep had been ruined.

The next morning she learned that her closest friend, a girl who lived only a few blocks away, had died in the fire. Ever since, she told me, whenever she hears fire trucks go by, she prays that they arrive at their destination in time.

Loving one's neighbor is usually carried out through tangible acts, by giving money or food to those in need, by stepping in and offering assistance to a neighbor who is ill, or by bringing guests into one's home. But sometimes loving is expressed through a prayer that connects us to our neighbor, even when we have no way of knowing just who our neighbor is.

D A Y

2

M O N D A Y

"Let Your Fellow's Money Be as Precious to You as Your Own"

If one is honest in his business dealings and people esteem him, it is accounted to him as though he had fulfilled the whole Torah.

—Mechilta, B'Shalach 1

Most Jews associate being religious with observing Judaism's rituals. Thus, if two people are talking about a third, and the question arises whether he or she is religious, the response invariably will be based on the person's level of ritual observance (for example, "She observes the Sabbath, she is religious," or "He doesn't keep kosher, he is not religious"). From these kinds of comments, common among Jews of

W E E K 1

4

all denominations, one could form a fairly unimportant extracurricular

How bracing it is, therefore, that the Talmudic sages insist on honesty in one's dealings with others, not just in the heavenly court for judgment, but in the earthly court for judgment, the person is required to conduct his or her affairs honestly?" (*Shabbat* 31a).

Having discussed this text in various places, I know that the Talmud believes that the heavenly court after one dies is interested in whether you observe the Jewish holidays and conduct your business affairs honestly?" (see *Leviticus* 19:11).

The Bible itself goes so far as to require that the merchants of Israel on merchants not defraud their neighbors by using completely honest weights and measures, and that you will long endure on the land (Deuteronomy 25:15).

Ethics of the Fathers (*Pirkei Avot*) offers a useful guideline concerning business ethics which you might find yourself: "Do not say to you as your own...." (*Ethics of the Fathers* 1:15).

Of course, the principle underlying the Golden Rule, "Love your neighbor as yourself," in the context of business ethics, such as taking risks with another person's money, is not your own (unless, of course, the person is taking such risks).

Instructing people to observe the Golden Rule might strike some as unattainable, but that is precisely why many people are so concerned about ritual observance and faith: by acting ethically about such matters than to act ethically in financial areas.

Theresa Marie "Terri" Schiavo (December 3, 1963 – March 31, 2005) was a woman from St. Petersburg, Florida whose medical and family circumstances and attendant legal battles fueled intense media attention and led to several high-profile court decisions and involvement by politicians and interest groups. Schiavo experienced cardiac arrest and collapsed in her home in 1990, incurring massive brain damage. She remained in a coma for ten weeks. Within three years, she was diagnosed as being in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) with little chance of recovery.

Beginning in 1998, Terri's husband and guardian Michael Schiavo petitioned the courts to remove the gastric feeding tube keeping Schiavo alive; Schiavo's parents Robert and Mary Schindler fought a series of legal battles opposing Michael. The courts consistently found that Schiavo was in a PVS and had made credible statements that she would not wish to be kept alive on a machine. By 2003, the matter, while still local to Florida, had received some national attention.

By March 2005, the legal history around the Schiavo case included fourteen appeals and numerous motions, petitions, and hearings in the Florida courts; five suits in Federal District Court; Florida legislation struck down by the Supreme Court of Florida; a subpoena by a congressional committee in an attempt to qualify Schiavo for "witness protection"; federal legislation (Palm Sunday Compromise); and four denials of *certiorari* from the Supreme Court of the United States.^[1]

Despite these interventions, the courts continued to find that Schiavo was in a PVS with no hope for recovery, and would want to cease life support. Her feeding tube was removed a third and final time on March 18, 2005. She died at a Pinellas Park, Florida hospice on March 31, 2005, at the age of 41.

From the website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terri_Schiavo

For Group 1: Arguing for the Husband

The following comes from the book Drugs, Sex and Integrity:

One case of active euthanasia recorded in the Bible is that of King Saul. Scripture relates:

Now the Philistines fought against Israel and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul...And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was in great anguish by reason of the archers. Then said Saul to his armor-bearer: "Draw your sword and thrust me through let [the enemy] come and thrust me through...." But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it...So Saul died...(I Samuel 31:1-6)

From this passage it appears that Saul committed suicide. However, in the next passage, it becomes clear that Saul's attempt at suicide failed, for he asks an Amalekite to slay him to help him die more quickly, in effect to engage in active euthanasia.

And [Saul] said unto me, "Stand...beside me, and slay me..." So I stood beside him and slew him...[helped him to die]. (II Samuel 1:9-10)

For Group 2: Arguing for the Parents

The following comes from the book Drugs, Sex and Integrity:

The value of *pikuach nefesh*, "saving a life," is paramount in Judaism. Life is sacred and preserving life takes precedence over virtually every other mitzvah. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Jewish law prohibits *active* euthanasia, considering it tantamount to murder.

Each book of the Torah contains at least one prohibition against murder, in addition to the sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments, "You shall not murder." A passage from the book of Deuteronomy makes explicit the biblical view that no human being has the right to "play God":

See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with Me: I [alone] kill, and I make alive... (32:39)

In the Book of Job, we see a concrete instance of a refusal to challenge the prerogative belonging only to God. Job suffers terrible afflictions, losing his wealth and children. His skin is covered with boils and bleeding sores. His wife urges Job to curse God and die. But Job responds:

What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? For all this did not Job sin with his lips (2:10)



A Chassidic Story – Gathering the Feathers



- A man appeared before his rabbi prior to Rosh Hashanah, declaring he wished to repent the slander he had committed. He claimed he would do anything the rabbi instructed him.
- The rabbi doubted the man's sincerity. He told him to rip open a feather pillow, scatter the feathers to the winds, and return to the rabbi's office for further instructions.
- The man thought the rabbi's instructions odd, but did as instructed.
- When he returned to the rabbi, the rabbi instructed him to gather the feathers – every last one.
- The man protested the impossibility of the task.
- The rabbi said, "The feathers are your words. Just as you cannot gather the feathers, you cannot undo your slander. The way to eliminate the harm of slander is not to engage in it in the first place."

From the website:

<http://faculty.niagara.edu/boxer/essays/rel/presentations/Numbers12.ppt#267>
,11,A Chassidic Story – Gathering the Feathers

The rabbi said, "Exactly. Just like your words. Once they're out, it's impossible to get them back."

M'KOROT

There are four biblical prohibitions that relate to *lashon hara*:

"Do not go talebearing among your people" (Leviticus 19:16). This is the commandment against being a gossip. If you have a problem with someone, you should talk to that person, not about the person to someone else.

"Do not carry false news" (Exodus 23:1). When you lie to others, God ultimately knows the truth. Once you get caught in a lie, people begin to know you as a liar.

"You shall not curse the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind" (Leviticus 19:14). This emphasizes how cruel it is to do something to someone who is unable to deal with it (for example, a deaf person can't hear the curse; a blind person can't see the stumbling block). This does not refer only to people who have a physical disability; it can also apply to anyone with limitations of any sort: mental, social, academic, or physical. You should be careful about commenting on the limited abilities of others.

"You shall not take revenge or bear a grudge against your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). How many times have you been upset with a friend and not been able to confront that person? When the feelings are not released, the anger is buried and turned into a long-term grudge and desire for revenge.

DISCUSS

What do these state (Solomon's wisdom) m

"One who goes t
is faithful of spiri

"Pleasant words a
the soul, and hea

"Death and life
—Proverbs 18:21

How to Combat Lashon Hara

- When you are speaking, think of the person's name. It's a start!
- Before you speak, ask yourself if your words are necessary. If not, keep your mouth or else your tongue shut.
- Ask yourself why you are speaking. Are you speaking to a third party. Are you speaking to someone who is not involved in something? Think about your words to jump out.
- Ask yourself, "Are my words necessary? How would I feel if someone were to say that about me?"
- Refrain from jokes that are based on anti-Semitic humor.
- When others start to gossip, do not join in. Do not be an object to what is being said. Do not mean that you have to be a part of it.
- Stay away from people who are known for their behavior. If you have a way of rubbing salt in the wound, do not do it.

3 Closing Meditation

אלהי נצר לשוני מרע

¹ My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. ²To those who insult me, may my soul be silent; may my soul be like dust to everyone. ³Open my heart to your Torah, that my soul might pursue your commandments. ⁴As for all who think evil of me, quickly bring their advice to naught and frustrate their plan. ⁵Do this for the sake of your name, for the sake of your right hand, for the sake of your holiness, for the sake of your Torah. ⁶For the sake of delivering your beloved, save with your right hand and answer me. ⁷May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be favorable before You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer. ⁸May the One who brings peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel. Say: Amen.

⁹May it be favorable before You, Adonai our God and our ancestors' God, that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our day, and grant us a share in your Torah. ¹⁰There we will serve You in reverence, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years. ¹¹And the afternoon offering of Judah and Jerusalem will reach God, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years.

אלהי נצר לשוני מרע ושפתי מדבר
מרמה. ולמקללי נפשי תדום ונפשי
כעפר לכל תהיה. פתח לבי בתורתך
ובמצותיך תרדף נפשי. וכל החושבים
עלי רעה, מהרה הפר עצתם וקלקל
מחשבתם. עשה למען שמך עשה למען
ימינד עשה למען קדשתך עשה למען
תורתך. למען יחלצון ידידיך הושיעה
ימינד וענני. יהיו רצון אמרי פי והגיון
לבי לפניך יי צורי וגאלי. עשה שלום
במרומו הוא עשה שלום עלינו ועל כל
ישראל ואמרו אמן.

יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו ואלהי
אבותינו שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה
בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך. ושם נעבדך
בראה פני עולם וכשנים קדמניות.
וערבה ליי מנחת יהודה וירושלים פני
עולם וכשנים קדמניות.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

"My God" This additional prayer exactly follows the typical pattern of the biblical lament. It opens with an invocation of God, *elohai*, "My God," continues with requests ("guard . . . frustrate their plan"), and adds a set of motivations ("Do this for the sake . . ."). The biblical and rabbinic liturgical pattern may be natural to human discourse. Compare: "Boss [invocation], please give me tomorrow morning off [request] so I can go to my daughter's school play [motivation]." This section is concluded by two biblical verses. The first ("May the words of my mouth . . .") is the conclusion of Ps. 19:15 and an appropriate ending both there and here.

The second verse is based on Job 25:2, which notes that God "makes peace in his heavens" (*oseh shalom*

bimromav). This highly mythological verse about *shalom* concludes this prayer, echoing the final blessing's theme of *shalom*, "peace/well-being."

CLOSING MEDITATION אֱלֹהֵי נֹצַר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ

¹ My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit. ² To those who insult me, may my soul be silent; may my soul be like dust to everyone. ³ Open my heart to your Torah, that my soul might pursue your commandments.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

"That the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our day . . . and the afternoon offering of Judah and Jerusalem will reach God, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years."

All non-Orthodox prayer books—Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist—have been of one mind in excising this paragraph. Conservative Jews are no more anxious for the restoration of the sacrificial cult than Reform Jews and Reconstructionists.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

"May my soul be like dust" Birnbaum

(Orthodox):

"lowly as

dust." *Sid-*

dur Sim

Shalom

(Conserva-

tive): "hum-

ble."

"Your

right hand"

Birnbaum (Orthodox): "power."

"Say [v'imru]" The popular "and let us say" is more convenient, but wrong. Artscroll (Orthodox) suggests "respond."

"Rebuilt" Literally, "Built."

"Earliest of" Literally, "Early." (p. 191)

...ITURGIES)

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"Built."

y, "Early." (p. 191)

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

"My God, guard my tongue from evil"

This personal meditation at the end of the Amidah may be omitted in times of emergency or even in just a pressing situation, even though, halakhically speaking, it is technically considered to be part of the Amidah. This is a proper spot to pray personally, in any language, for all of one's needs, and especially for the spiritual welfare and Jewish continuity of one's children and descendants (*Mishnah Brurah*). At the words near the end, *Oseh shalom* ("May the One who brings peace"), as taking leave of a sovereign, bow the back and head (but not the knees), and take three steps backward.

Turn to the

left and say

Oseh shalom

bimromav;

then bow

forward

while saying

the next

word, *hu*,

and con-

tinue to the

right for *ya'aseh shalom alenu*. Begin taking three steps forward now, still in the bowed position, and say *v'al kol yisrael v'imru amen*. If you can wait that long, it is customary not to walk forward until the prayer leader actually begins the repetition of the *Amidah*, or even (if possible) until he is about to begin the *K'dushah*. Nonetheless, you can walk forward earlier if necessary.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

THE AMIDAH ENDS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PRIVATE WORDS WITH GOD. TRADITION PROVIDES A MEDITATION FOR THOSE WHO WISH, BUT ANY WORDS ARE APPROPRIATE HERE, AS WORSHIPERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ENGAGE GOD IN SILENT DIALOGUE.

"My God, guard my tongue from evil"

Originally, private prayer was offered after the *Sh'ma* and Its Blessings (the rubric that now precedes the *Amidah*). When Gamaliel II ordained the *Amidah*, he wanted to be sure people said it, so he banned private prayer there. People thus moved their private prayer to the end of the *Amidah*.

The Talmud provides several examples of private prayers by the Rabbis of old, and this is one of them, attributed to

Mar bar Ravina, a late Babylonian master. Somehow, by the ninth century, it had become popular in the academies of Babylonia, and when Amram Gaon codified our first known prayer book (see Volume 1, *The Sh'ma and Its Blessings*, p. 8), he included this prayer as a fitting meditation for people who had nothing that they wanted to say on their own.

(p. 191)

אֱלֹהֵי, נִצַּר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ וּשְׁפָתַי מִדַּבֵּר
מִרְמָה. וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשִׁי תִדּוּם וְנַפְשִׁי
כְּעֶפֶר לְכֹל תִּהְיֶה. פָּתַח לְבָבִי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ
וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִרְדֹּף נַפְשִׁי.

CLOSING MEDITATION

⁴As for all who think evil of me, quickly bring their advice to naught and frustrate their plan. ⁵Do this for the sake of your name, for the sake of your right hand, for the sake of your holiness, for the sake of your Torah. ⁶For the sake of delivering your beloved, save with your right hand and answer me. ⁷May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be favorable before You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer. ⁸May the One who brings peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel. Say: Amen.

⁹May it be favorable before You, Adonai our God and our ancestors' God, that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our day, and grant us a share in your Torah. ¹⁰There we will serve You in reverence, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years. ¹¹And the afternoon offering of Judah and Jerusalem will reach God, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years.

וְכֹל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה,
מִהֲרָה הַפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקִלְקַל
מִחֲשַׁבְתָּם. ⁵עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמִי.
עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינִי. עֲשֵׂה
לְמַעַן קִדְשֶׁךָ. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן
תּוֹרָתֶךָ. ⁶לְמַעַן יַחַלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ
הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינֶךָ וְעַנֵּנִי. ⁷יְהִי
לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי-פִי וְהַגִּיוֹן לְבִי
לְפָנֶיךָ יי צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי. ⁸עֲשֵׂה
שָׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה
שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

⁹יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שִׁיבְנָה בַּיִת
הַמְּקֹדֵשׁ בְּמִהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ וְתֵן
חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ. ¹⁰וְשָׂם
נַעֲבֹדְךָ בִּירְאָה כִּימֵי עוֹלָם
וּכְשָׁנִים קְדָמֶנִּיּוֹת. ¹¹וְעָרְבָה
לִי מִנְחַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַיִם
כִּימֵי עוֹלָם וּכְשָׁנִים קְדָמֶנִּיּוֹת.

J. HOFFMAN (TRANSLATION)

"Reach God" Sacrifice was apparently thought of as something earth-bound that could be converted by the flame into smoke that reaches God. The whole point was that only by consuming the offering on a fire could it find its way on high. By contrast, Birnbaum and Artscroll (both Orthodox) prefer "be pleasing to God," thereby emphasizing God's will in accepting it.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

The first prayer book in Europe came into being in eleventh-century France, a work called *Machzor Vitry* ("The book of annual prayers composed by [Rabbi Simchah from the town of] Vitry"). Holding Amram in high regard, the author of this book simply tells people to say whatever Amram advocated. No longer can readers make up their own prayer at all! And with that decision, Jewish prayer dropped the original idea of reserving a spot for private meditation in the midst of public worship.

From time to time, rabbis spoke out against the omission, but the printing press virtually ended the matter by printing Mar's prayer and making it normative for everyone who read the prayers from a book and did whatever it asked of them, but no more and no less. A century ago, Reform Judaism reinstated a period of "silent devotion" here, and nowadays, it is common in all movements for Jews to offer their own prayers, either in addition to Rav's masterpiece, or in place of it. *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Conservative), for instance, says, "At the conclusion of the *Amidah*, personal prayers may be added." The Reconstructionist *Kol Haneshamah* provides two guided meditations along with a kabbalistic diagram, as well as Mar's prayer, with the further instructions, "If this prayer does not speak to you, make up your own."

וְכֹל הַחוּשׁוֹ⁴
 מִהֲרָה הִפָּר
 מִחֲשֵׁבֵתָם.⁵
 עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן
 לְמַעַן קִדְשׁוֹ
 תּוֹרַתְךָ.⁶ לְמַעַן
 הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמֵי
 לְרַצוֹן אִמְרֵי
 לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ צוֹן
 שְׁלוֹם בְּמָרוֹ
 שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
 וְאִמְרוּ אֵל
⁹יְהִי רָצוֹן מִי
 וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי
 הַמְּקַדְּשׁ בְּמוֹ
 חֻלְקָנוּ בְּ
 נַעֲבֹדְךָ בִּירָא
 וּכְשֵׁנִים קִדְ
 לִי מִנְחָת
 כִּימֵי עוֹלָם וְ

ELOHAI, n'shamah shenatata bi
l'horah hi.

Atah b'ratah, atah y'tzartah,
atah n'fachtah bi,
v'atah m'shamrah b'kirbi.
Kol z'man shehan'shamah b'kirbi,
modeh/modah ani l'fanecha,
Adonai Elohai
v'Elohei avotai v'imotai,
Ribon kol hamaasim,
Adon kol han'shamot.
Baruch atah Adonai,
asher b'yado nefesh kol chai
v'ruach kol b'sar ish.

אֱלֹהֵי, נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי
טְהוֹרָה הִיא.
אַתָּה בְּרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרַתָּהּ,
אַתָּה נִפְחַתָּהּ בִּי,
וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי.
כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי,
מוֹדֵה / מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאִמּוֹתַי,
רִבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים,
אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נִפְּשׂ כָּל חַי
וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ.

טלית
מה-טבו
אשר יצר
אלהי ושמח
נסים בכל יום
לעסוק
והעבדנא
אלו דברים
קדיש דרבנו

MY GOD, the soul You have given me is pure.
You created it, You shaped it, You breathed it into me,
and You protect it within me.
For as long as the soul is within me,
I offer thanks before You,
Adonai, my God
and God of my ancestral fathers and mothers,
Source of all Creation, Sovereign of all souls.
Praised are You, Adonai,
in whose hands is every living soul and the breath of humankind.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נִפְּשׂ כָּל חַי וְרוּחַ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר אִישׁ.
Baruch atah Adonai, asher b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol b'sar ish.

אֱלֹהֵי נְשָׁמָה Elohai n'shamah ... My God the soul ... B'rachot 60b

אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ asher b'yado ... in whose hand ... Job 12:10

Shema T'filah
Pg 196-197
Unit 5 Activity 4

Tallit

Shema

Asher Yatzar

Elohai N'shamah

Nisim B'chol Yom

Laasok

V'haarev Na

Eilu D'varim

Kaddish

D'Rabanan

MATTER IS NEVER destroyed,
only transformed.

So, too, can the soul evolve
higher and higher:
from instinct to inspiration,
haughtiness to holiness,
selfishness to service;
from individualism to union,
to join with the Soul of souls,
the Infinite One.

As the soul is magnified and sanctified,
so is the Infinite One exalted.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נִפְשׁ כָּל חַי וְרוּחַ כָּל בְּשָׂר אִישׁ.

Baruch atah Adonai, asher b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol b'sar ish.

MY SOUL came to me pure,
drawn from the reservoir of the Holy.
All the time it remains within me,
I am thankful for its thirst
for compassion and justice.
Let my eyes behold the beauty of all creatures;
let my hands know the privilege of righteous deeds.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ נִפְשׁ כָּל חַי וְרוּחַ כָּל בְּשָׂר אִישׁ.

Baruch atah Adonai, asher b'yado nefesh kol chai v'ruach kol b'sar ish.

And God blew into the nostrils the breath of life — נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים *nishmat chayim*, and the human
became a living being — נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה *nefesh chayah*.

Genesis 2:7

ELOH
t'horah h
Atah b'rat
atah n'fac
v'atah m's
Kol z'mar
modeh/m
Adonai El
v'Elohei a
Ribon kol
Adon kol
Baruch at
asher b'ya
v'ruach kc

MY GO
You crea
and You
For as lo
I offer th
Adonai,
and God
Source o
Praised a
in whose
.איש

הַי נְשִׁמָה
אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ

C. MOURNER'S KADDISH (KADDISH YATOM)

¹Magnified and sanctified be his great name in the world He created according to his will. ²May He establish his kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and in the life of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon. ³Say: Amen.

⁴May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity.

⁵Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, honored, extolled, lauded, and adored be the name of the Holy One—blessed be He—above all earthly blessings, hymns, praises, and consolations. ⁶Say: Amen.

⁷May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all of Israel. ⁸Say: Amen.

⁹May the One who brings peace in his heights bring peace for us and for all of Israel. ¹⁰Say: Amen.

וְתִגְדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא
דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ; וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ, וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעֵלְמֵי
עֵלְמֵיָא.

וְיִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם,
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר, וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא
מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשֻׁבְחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים,
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

s king over them.
d.

text, "none" is the
'He is God. There
Hebrew here and
t.

ie modern phrase
ixing the world,"

But the English
the Hebrew

and the ox's neck
dern readers may
f your kingdom"

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

¹ "*Magnified and sanctified*" The same two verbs are used together in Ezekiel's description of the eschatological war of Gog (38:23). Then, says God, "I will manifest my greatness and my holiness (*v'hitgadalti v'hitkadashiti*), and I will make myself known before many nations, and they will know that I am Adonai." By opening the *Kaddish* this way, we are put on notice that the prayer anticipates eschatological redemption.

¹ "*His great name*" God's name, rather than God, is to be extolled, following Deuteronomy (e.g., 12:5) and Psalm 113:2, where God's name, rather than God, resides in the (p. 152)

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

¹ "*Magnified and sanctified*" There are five kinds of *Kaddish*: (1) Mourner's *Kaddish*, as we have it here; (2) Full *Kaddish*, which adds a line before the last two paragraphs asking God to hear our prayers; (3) Half *Kaddish*, which omits the last two sentences of the Mourner's (p. 154)

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

¹ "*Magnified and sanctified be his great name*" Probably no Jewish prayer has been recited with greater fervor than the *Kaddish*, especially the version reserved for mourners to say as an act of filial piety on behalf of the dead. Still, in origin, this *Kaddish* is (p. 155)

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

¹ "*Magnified and sanctified*" Even Jews who rarely set foot in synagogue are familiar with the Mourner's *Kaddish* (*Kaddish Yatom*). The Talmud teaches that we are to thank God for both the good and the bad. Even bad news is to evoke a blessing. If, for instance, a man returning home from a journey hears cries of distress from his town, he is not to pray that such cries come from some other house than his. Such a prayer would be futile. What has been ordained has already come to (p. 156)

C. MOURNER'S KADDISH (KADDISH YATOM)

¹ Magnified and sanctified be his great name in the world He created according to his will. ² May He establish his kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and in the life of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon. ³ Say: Amen.

⁴ May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity.

GRAY (TALMUD)

⁴ "*May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity*" According to the Talmud, this congregational response actually sustains the world (Sot. 49a). Elsewhere (Ber. 3a) our recitation of that line is said to inspire God to express remorse for the destruction of the Temple and the resulting state of Jewish exile: "Happy is the king whom they praise so in his house; what does the father have who has exiled his children?" Reciting *Kaddish* for the deceased is not mentioned in (p. 156)

VOICE)

ctified" Even Jews in synagogue are mourner's Kaddish the Talmud teaches God for both the ven bad news is to or instance, a man n a journey hears his town, he is not s come from some is. Such a prayer What has been come to (p. 156)

SH YATOM)

great name in the . 2 May He e and during your house of Israel,

rever and for all

be blessed forever According to the gational response world (Sot. 49a). our recitation of inspire God to he destruction of resulting state of is the king whom house; what does exiled his ish for the oned in (p. 156)

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

¹ "Magnified and sanctified" As is well known, the Kaddish makes no mention of death. But the Kaddish is all about death. It is about the meeting place of two worlds, human finitude and God's eternity, which, of course, is the transition that the dead must make as they depart their earthly existence and enter life after death. Dov Baer Ratner (1852-1917) speaks of this intersection in his commentary *Ahavat Tsiyon Virushalayim* on Talmud Yerushalmi (Yeb. 15: 2). There the text (p. 157)

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ: וְנִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּתַיִיכוֹן וּבְיַמִּיכוֹן. וּבְתַיִי
דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזֶמֶן קָרִיב. וְיֵאמְרוּ אָמֵן.
יְיָהּ אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמָיָא.

LANDES (HALAKHAH)

¹ "Magnified and sanctified be his great name" The this-worldly yet messianic concept of *Alenu* (see above, "On that day Adonai shall be One") is now juxtaposed to *Kaddish*, where God's name so fills the world that no other reality is present. In *Alenu* God's presence leads us to the task of repairing the world. In *Kaddish* we face perfection itself. In *Alenu* we are challenged to do the perfecting. *Kaddish* is a way of experiencing that which is beyond this world.

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

THIS IS YET ANOTHER "CONCLUSION" FOR THE DAILY AND, FOR THAT MATTER, ALMOST EVERY OTHER SERVICE. ONCE, ANOTHER FORM OF THE KADDISH, THE FULL KADDISH (SEE P. 129), MARKED THE SERVICE'S END. BUT OTHER MATERIAL WAS INCLUDED, AND THIS VARIANT VERSION OF THE KADDISH WAS ADDED, TO "CONCLUDE" THE SERVICE ALL OVER AGAIN. EVENTUALLY, ONLY MOURNERS SAID IT. IN THE TRADITIONAL SIDDUR, THERE IS OTHER MATERIAL STILL, A "PSALM FOR THE DAY OF THE WEEK," FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER WHICH THIS

KADDISH IS REPEATED STILL AGAIN. THE REFORM SERVICE OMITTS THE DAILY PSALM AND EXTRA KADDISH.

THE PSALM OF THE DAY GOES BACK TO THE MISHNAH, WHICH DESCRIBES IT AS HAVING BEEN RECITED BY LEVITES IN THE TEMPLE. IT WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE SYNAGOGUE SERVICE ONLY IN THE MIDDLE AGES. BECAUSE OF CONSIDERATIONS OF

SPACE, WE HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO REPLICATE THE PSALMS HERE, AND WE PRINT THE MOURNERS' KADDISH ONLY ONCE.

READERS CAN LOOK UP THE DAILY PSALM, AS FOLLOWS: SUNDAY, PSALM 24; MONDAY, PSALM 48; TUESDAY, PSALM 82; WEDNESDAY, PSALMS 94:1-95:3; THURSDAY, PSALM 81; FRIDAY, PSALM 93; SATURDAY (SHABBAT), PSALM 92. IN THE HIGH HOLY DAY PERIOD—THE ENTIRE PREPARATORY MONTH OF ELUL, UNTIL SIMCHAT TORAH—PSALM 27 IS ADDED. AT A SERVICE IN THE HOUSE OF A MOURNER, PSALM 49 IS SAID. (p. 158)

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

⁵ Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, honored, extolled, lauded, and adored be the name of the Holy One—blessed, be He—above all earthly blessings, hymns, praises, and consolations.

⁶ Say: Amen.

⁷ May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all of Israel. ⁸ Say: Amen.

⁹ May the One who brings peace in his heights bring peace for us and for all of Israel. ¹⁰ Say: Amen.

וַיְתַבְרַךְ וַיְשַׁתַּבַּח, וַיְתַפְאֵר וַיְתְרוֹמֵם,
וַיְתַנַּשֵּׂא וַיְתַהַדֵּר, וַיְתַעֲלֶה וַיְתַהַלֵּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלָא
מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא
וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאִמְרֵן בְּעֵלְמָא, ⁶ וְאִמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

⁷ יִהְיֶה שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים,
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, ⁸ וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

⁹ עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, ¹⁰ וְאִמְרוּ
אָמֵן.

BRETTLER (BIBLE)

Temple. We see also a specific reference to Nehemiah (9:5), where the Levites pray, "May they bless your glorious name," and where God's name is "exalted beyond every blessing and praise."

¹ "In the world He created according to his will" Echoing the Genesis 1 creation story, and the first half of Nehemiah 9:6, "You made the heavens, the highest heavens and all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the waters and all that is in them." The implication is that as creator, God deserves our worship. Nehemiah 9:6 aptly concludes, "The heavenly host bows down to you."

² "May He establish his kingdom" A request for the arrival of the kingdom of God, the idealized future predicted by many prophets, including the well-known Zechariah 14:9, quoted at the end of *Alenu*: "Adonai will become king over the entire earth. On that day Adonai shall be One and his name shall be One." A similar idea ("Your kingdom come") comes from the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10 = Luke 11:2), which may have been composed around the same time as the *Kaddish*. (See L. Hoffman, "Magnified and sanctified," p. 172.)

² "In your lifetime" The Bible usually expects the kingdom of God to arrive only in some vague time in the future, such as "on that day." A few biblical texts, however (Isa. 56:1; Ezek. 30:3; Joel 1:15; Obad. 1:15; Zeph. 1:7, 14), anticipate God's salvation soon (*karov*). That is the position prayed for here.

³“Amen” Originally a solemn formula of acknowledgment (“verily”), as in the rituals in Numbers 5:22 and Deuteronomy 27:15–26, or in a response to Solomon in 1 Kings 1:36. Only in the late biblical period (e.g., Neh. 5:13; 8:6; 1 Chron. 16:36) did it become a liturgical response. It functions that way also in several Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁴“May his great name” A reflection of Daniel 2:20, also in Aramaic, “May the name of God be blessed from eternity to eternity” and in line with late biblical usage where God should be blessed *min ha’olam [v]ad ha’olam*, “from eternity to eternity” (Neh. 9:5; 1 Chron. 16:36).

⁵“Blessed, praised, glorified” The Bible has no similar structure of many verbs attached by “and” and applied to God. 1 Chronicles 29:11, however, attaches nouns that way: “Yours, Adonai, are greatness, might, splendor, triumph, and majesty.”

⁵“The Holy One” *Kadosh*, “the Holy One,” is regularly used biblically for God (e.g., Hos. 11:9; Isa. 40:25; Job 6:10); this particular phrase of the *Kaddish* recalls Isaiah 57:15, *kadosh sh’mo*, “holiness is his name.”

⁵“Blessed be He” Though the equivalent of this expression appears twice in the Bible (Num. 22:12; Ruth 2:20), it is not used there as a response to God’s name. In general, less awe surrounded God’s name in the biblical period, so such responses are not found there.

⁵“Above all earthly blessings” The four nouns joined with “and” mirror in style the eight verbs above, reinforcing the idea of God’s incomparability. Similarly, Nehemiah 9:5 says God’s name is “exalted beyond every blessing and praise.” Both the prayer in Nehemiah and the *Kaddish* thus embody a fundamental paradox: we praise a God who is above all praise.

⁵“Earthly” The implication is that prayers recited by heavenly angels (see Volume 1, *The Shema and Its Blessings*, p. 58, and Volume 2, *The Amidah*, p. 84) might be more suited to God, and Jews might thus be able to praise God properly only when God’s kingdom arrives and angelic secrets are revealed. The prayer returns to the noun *al’ma*, used here in its typical post-biblical geographic sense of “world,” not “forever.” Its earlier biblical meaning was temporal: “eternity.” This repetition in a different sense thus ties the *Kaddish* together, suggesting God’s incomparability in both a geographical and temporal sense.

וַיִּתְפָּרֵךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח,⁵
וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר
שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא,
מִן כָּל בְּרִכְתָּא
וּנְחֻמָּתָא, דְאִמְרֵי
אֱמִן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּי
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בֵּן
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל
אֱמִן.

the Levites pray,
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6 aptly concludes,

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CONCLUDING PRAYERS

DORFF (THEOLOGY)

Kaddish and consists of only the first two paragraphs and the response ("May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity"); (4) Rabbis' *Kaddish* (*Kaddish D'rabbanan*), which inserts a paragraph asking God's blessings on those who teach and study Torah; and (5) Burial *Kaddish*, recited as the casket is lowered into the grave by those relatives obligated to observe the seven-day mourning period of *shiva* (namely, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, and spouse) or when completing an entire talmudic tractate of study, which includes an expanded first paragraph on the theme of our hopes for a messianic era and a life after death. All five require the presence of a prayer quorum (*minyan*) of ten Jewish adults.

The Mourner's *Kaddish* is traditionally said by mourners—that is, those who have lost a parent during the previous eleven months or a child, sibling, or spouse during the last thirty days—and by those observing the anniversary of the death of those close relatives. (In some contemporary synagogues, though, the prayer leader or the full congregation says it in memory of the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust, assuming that at least one died on any given day.) The Mourner's *Kaddish* omits lines 7 and 8 of the Full *Kaddish* that asks God to answer our prayers because, presumably, God did not grant the mourner's prayers that the relative recover and live.

The text says nothing explicit about death or mourning; it simply affirms faith in God. It thus reminds mourners that life continues despite death, that God still rules over us, and that God deserves praise for our own lives and for the deceased whom we once knew. Especially after a tragic death, this affirmation may be the last thing that we emotionally want to say, but that is precisely its point: saying it reaffirms the value of life even in the face of death. It also helps us emote about the person we lost. It brings us out of our sadness and anger by having us utter appreciation and praise just when we are tempted to deny the importance of both. In praising God we link ourselves and the one we have lost to eternity.

The Full and Half *Kaddish* are used liturgically to mark off sections of the service, somewhat like a coda in symphonies, with a Full *Kaddish* ending a major section and a Half *Kaddish* ending a subsection. Since they are recited by the prayer leader, it is customary to give the honor of leading a service to a mourner or person observing the anniversary of a relative's death (*yahrzeit*). That way, he or she can say *Kaddish* as often as possible.

The Rabbis' *Kaddish* is recited after studying Torah, whether that be a section of the Torah itself or any of the books of the Oral Torah (e.g., Mishnah, Talmud) or even, according to some, any Jewish learning (e.g., history, philosophy). To ensure that every Jew studies at least something each day, the prayer book includes selections of Jewish texts at the beginning of the service (see Volume 5, *Birkhot Hashachar* [Morning Blessings], pp. 7–8). When it is recited after reading those texts that are embedded in the service, it is commonly recited only by mourners and those observing *yahrzeit*. Truthfully, though, anyone who participated in the study may recite it then, and after a learning session not connected with a worship service, everyone customarily does so.

We pray for those who carry on our tradition by studying and teaching it, for study of Torah is nothing less than an act that sanctifies God.

The Burial *Kaddish* is not well known because it is recited only at graveside or after completing an entire tractate of Talmud. Its expanded first paragraph, in Aramaic like the rest of the *Kaddish*, is comparatively hard to read, especially in a moment of grief. So it is customary in many places for the regular Mourner's *Kaddish* to be said at the grave. The Burial *Kaddish*, however, expresses hope for the messianic time and a world-to-come, so it is particularly appropriate at a burial.

ELLENSON (MODERN LITURGIES)

actually a doxology expressing praise of God, with no mention of death or mourning whatever. The emphasis on a prayer's literal theological content that informed nineteenth-century Reform Judaism in Europe might, therefore, have led these early Reformers to discard the *Kaddish* altogether as a prayer for mourning. But anthropologists regularly remind us that ritual surrounding mourning is especially resistant to change, and the rituals of Reform Judaism have proved no exception to the rule. All Reform prayer books have therefore retained the Mourner's *Kaddish*.

However, the rationalism of Reform's founders did lead the authors of the 1819 Hamburg *Gebetbuch* to address the fact that no mention was made of the dead in this prayer. They compensated for this "lapse" by inserting an Aramaic paragraph that read, "May there be to Israel, to the righteous, and to all who have departed from this world by the will of God, abundant peace and a good portion in the life of the world-to-come, and grace and mercy from the Master of heaven and earth, and say you. Amen." This paragraph was constructed from several traditional sources: (1) the *Ashkavah*, a traditional Sefardi prayer said by mourners after the Torah reading in a regular service; (2) the form of the *Kaddish* traditionally reserved for the graveside (see glossary, s.v. "*Kaddish L'it'had'ta*"); and (3) the traditional *Kaddish D'rabbanan* (the Rabbis' *Kaddish*; see Volume 5, *Birkhot Hashachar [Morning Blessings]*, p. 187). Geiger included this Hamburg version in his 1870 prayer book, as did both of the primary American liturgists, David Einhorn and Isaac Mayer Wise, whence it found its way into the classical Reform prayer book, the *Union Prayer Book (UPB)*. Despite the fact that the new version of the Mourner's *Kaddish* thus achieved considerable long-term standing in Reform tradition, no other Reform prayer book in the twentieth century (including *Gates of Prayer* [1975], the *UPB's* successor) has retained it. This ultimate failure of even an innovation that lasted over 150 years demonstrates the tremendous tenacity of folk traditions in matters surrounding mourning. The affective power of the classical version of the Mourner's *Kaddish* has proved more enduring than theory and a century and a half's sustained novelty. Similarly, the importance accorded the recitation of the original Aramaic has led the Conservative *Siddur Sim Shalom* and even the Orthodox *Siddur Kol Ya'akov* (Artscroll) to provide transliterations of this prayer for worshipers

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

who want to say the "authentic" words even if they cannot read them.

¹"*May the One who brings peace in his heights*" In an affirmation of universalistic inclusiveness that characterizes so many Jews in the modern world, *Kol Haneshamah* inserts (after "for all of Israel"), *v'al kol yoshvei tevel* ("and for all who dwell on earth"), and *Lev Chadash* (British Liberal) says, *v'al kol b'nei adam* ("and for all humanity").

FRANKEL (A WOMAN'S VOICE)

pass (Ber. 54a). Rather he is to declare: "Blessed is the true judge."

So in the Mourner's *Kaddish*, we press our grief into blessing, forcing praise from our mouths at the very moment when we may feel most like cursing God. It's a discipline, like all prayer. The words are not our own, the sentiments do not arise spontaneously from our hearts, the timing is artificial. We may derive no solace whatsoever from the rote recitation of this ancient Aramaic formula, which we do not understand and which, in any event, is so completely divorced from any references to death or loss. Worst of all, perhaps, nowhere does this prayer acknowledge the loneliness of the solitary mourner, who cannot even recite the words without an audience of nine others.

And so the community gathers to embrace the orphan, the widow, the one estranged by death. They force her to choose life, to bless God's will (*chiruteih*), and to imagine wholeness (*sh'lama*) in place of the brokenness she now feels.

The longer version of this prayer, known as *Kaddish Shalem* (Full *Kaddish*) contains an additional verse (*titkabel ts'lot'hon*) that asks God to accept all our prayers and supplications. Why has this verse been omitted from the Mourner's *Kaddish*? Perhaps the Rabbis understood that the mourner's heart might be moved to ask for what is not possible or appropriate—for the restoration of the dead to life in this world, for revenge, for the ending of the survivor's own life. Those distressed by the death of loved ones may not always turn to God with prayers and supplications acceptable to heaven—and, therefore, they are excused from uttering this request.

GRAY (TALMUD)

the Talmud, but a talmudic story (Shab. 152a–b) does link the living and the dead in a way that influences medieval thinking about the Mourner's *Kaddish*. According to Rav Judah, if a person dies without mourners, ten people may go and sit "in his place," which Rashi understood as being the place where he died. When one such person died in Rav Judah's neighborhood, Rav Judah gathered ten people daily to sit in the man's place. After seven days, the man appeared to Rav Judah in a dream, saying, "May your

mind be at rest, for you have set my mind at rest." Apparently, the living can do things that are "good for" the dead.

The French halakhic work *Machzor Vitry* (twelfth century) links this notion to the *Kaddish*. Rabbi Akiba is pictured as encountering the spirit of a dead man in great distress. Understanding that such distress vanishes if a son recites *Kaddish* for the deceased, R. Akiba finds the man's son, teaches him Torah, and has the son lead services along with the *Kaddish*, to save his father. Other medieval sources, especially the *Roke'ach* (Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, twelfth to thirteenth century), develop the notion that reciting *Kaddish* saves one's parents from punishment. The idea is codified by Moses Isserles' glosses (1530–1572) to the *Shulchan Arukh*.

KUSHNER & POLEN (CHASIDISM)

cites Psalm 140:8, "You protected my head on the day of armed battle." The Hebrew for "armed battle" (*neshek*) is read in the Talmud as "kiss." The verse then becomes, "You protected my head on the day of the kiss." "Kiss," Ratner suggests, defines the point where, as it were, the lips of one world meet those of another—for instance, "on the day the summer kisses the winter" (i.e., the autumnal equinox) or "when [one] exits this world and enters the world-to-come." Death itself holds no terror for the righteous, but the moment of transition from one world to another, the moment of the kiss—that is a potentially a time of real danger.

Indeed, even for a great *tsadik*, who has served God throughout his or her entire life, the earthly world is, by nature, dark and impure when compared with the blinding radiance of the next world. When, then, a *tsadik* goes on to the next world of true light and life, the transition is disjunctive, even jarring, like the shock suffered by a newborn infant when it leaves the womb and is born into the bright light of this world.

Ratner suggests that the aphorism "The righteous are greater in death than in life" refers to the moment when this world kisses the next. The greatness of the righteous stems from their ability to make the transition, the jump, to the next world, with its overpowering burst of bright light, and somehow survive the leap. He concludes his teaching by citing the verse from Proverbs 31:25, which speaks of a righteous woman, "she laughs at the last day."

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Kol Haneshamah
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CONCLUDING PRAYERS

L. HOFFMAN (HISTORY)

¹ “Magnified and sanctified” Nowadays known as the Mourner’s *Kaddish* (*Kaddish Yatom*); this plus the *Kaddish D’rabbanan* (the form of the *Kaddish* that follows study passages) are reserved for mourners to say. But that is the result of many centuries of development (see Volume 5, *Birkhot Hashachar [Morning Blessings]*, L. Hoffman, p. 189).

The *Kaddish* is probably among the earliest of our prayers. The Talmud associates it with the *K’dushah D’sidra* (see above, “A redeemer shall come”), as a prayer that sustains the world in hard times. Until the eighth century, then, it had nothing to do with mourning. It was a call for the coming of God’s ultimate reign on earth and probably followed a study session and even a sermon, which ended on the theme of hope. The *Kaddish* was said in Aramaic, the spoken language of the masses, because it was part and parcel of the study and sermon that were framed in the vernacular also. The *Kaddish*, then, was part of the ritual of study. It too voiced the hope implicit in the study of Torah.

It has long been recognized that the *Kaddish* parallels the Lord’s Prayer in Christian liturgy (“Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”). The Lord’s Prayer gets its name because in two of the four gospels (Luke and Matthew), disciples ask Jesus how to pray and receive this prayer as their answer. Whether Jesus actually said these words is uncertain, however, since the earlier Gospel of Mark (about 70 C.E.) does not have them, and we would imagine that if Jesus had commanded such a prayer, Mark would have known it and recorded it. Matthew and Luke are both written about 90 C.E. and have their own reasons for recording the prayer, which may have arisen after Mark but been attributed to Jesus—or it could very well go back to Jesus, just as people commonly assume.

By now, the attribution of the Lord’s Prayer to Jesus and its firm association with Christian, not Jewish, liturgy renders it inappropriate for Jewish recitation. But there is nothing distinctly Christian about its words or contents. Indeed, the *Kaddish* and the Lord’s Prayer share a great deal, even in the language used: *v’yamlikh malkhuteih* (“May He establish his kingdom”), for instance, and “Thy kingdom come.” Both are prayers for the “coming of the kingdom,” a theme that the two communities shared as they struggled under Rome in the first and second centuries.

The standard scholarly account comes from David de Sola Pool, the great twentieth-century scholar and leader of Sefardi Jews. He thought both prayers were derivations of an earlier but lost original—a prayer that he attributed to the Essenes, a community that Josephus says ran off to live in the desert because they thought Jerusalem was too sinful to inhabit. In Luke, the disciples ask, “Teach us to pray as John the Baptist does”; since John seems to dwell in the desert, Pool identified John as an Essene and thought Jesus inherited the prayer from John. The Rabbis would have gotten it via natural connections to the Essenes, with whom they shared a great deal, despite their differences on Jerusalem’s sinfulness.

In all probability, however, the two prayers were composed independently, without

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

end of services was reserved for mourners.

In sum, the *Kaddish* began somewhere in the first century, probably after 70, as one of many prayers calling for the “coming of the kingdom.” As the concluding part of a study session and a sermon, it was composed in Aramaic, the vernacular of the time. By the eighth century, somehow, it became a prayer to be said after a funeral. And by the twelfth century, a final *Kaddish* at the end of the service was reserved for mourners.

By then, however, Jews who said it treated the *Kaddish* as a magical means to save their departed from the tribulations of hell. But like an aspirin that cures a headache only if a single person takes the whole tablet rather than sharing it with others, so too, it was felt that a *Kaddish* worked its magic only if it was not shared. Only one person could say the *Kaddish* at a time. So a priority list was established. Someone in the first three days of the mourning week was asked ahead of someone in the last four days, for instance; and a person marking *yahrzeit* (the anniversary of someone’s death) was given even higher priority, since this was the only day in the year that he could say the prayer—unless, of course, he was just visiting town, not a regular member of the community, in which case he was low on the priority list (and should have stayed home to say it there). In small communities, there were usually enough instances of the *Kaddish* in an average day for everyone to get to say one of them. But as communities became larger, new opportunities for saying *Kaddish* were added to the service. That is why traditional worship has more than one *Kaddish* at the end—it was to make sure everyone who needed one received their own *Kaddish* to say.

By the early modern period, cities with substantial Jewish populations came into being, and it became impossible to add more recitations—especially since by then, people had printed prayer books in hand, and the number of *Kaddishes* was fixed on paper. Only then did Jews begin allowing all the mourners present to say the *Kaddish* together. But their prayer books already included several *Kaddishes*, not just one, so today, mourners say the *Kaddish* many times a day—another instance of how printed prayer books determine practice!

Reform Jews changed all that. Recognizing that the original practice called only for a single Mourner’s *Kaddish*, and wanting to streamline the service and end on a high note where all worshipers are together, they included only one *Kaddish* for mourners, then concluded the service with a benediction and a final song.

² “*May He establish his kingdom*” Sefardi custom adds here “And may He cause salvation to flourish and hasten his messiah” (*v’yatsmach purkaneih vikarev m’shicheih*). Maimonides (d. 1204) quotes the tenth-century Gaon, Saadiah, as saying, “May He bring the messianic end of time.” Some Sefardim also say, “May He free his people in his mercy,” and others add, “May He rebuild his Temple courtyard.”

⁵ “*Blessed [yitbarach], praised, glorified, exalted, honored, extolled, lauded*” Seven terms of praise, said by Rav Amram (eighth-century Babylonia) to correspond to the seven heavens that were believed to encircle the earth. God sits on a chariot in the outermost one. But Amram also knew a custom of adding an eighth term to the list. The people

any necessary original. We now know that early Jewish prayer was oral, a series of free *ad hoc* creations on specific themes, using stock phrases (often from the Bible) that prayer leaders had memorized (see Volume 1, *The Sh'ma and Its Blessings*, "The Way It All Began: The Jazz of Worship," pp. 3–5). Jesus' prayer (whether by him or someone else) and the *Kaddish* were perfectly good Jewish alternatives. The first entered Christian tradition, and the second became a staple for Jews.

Despite vast speculation, both how and when the *Kaddish* became associated with mourning is simply unknown. By the eighth century, a Palestinian source (*Massekhet Sofrim*) calls for it to be said when mourners return from the cemetery, however, so it may be that thereafter a Mourner's *Kaddish* became standard.

But this is mostly guesswork, and recently another possibility has been suggested. A legendary tale, repeated widely in medieval sources, pictures Rabbi Akiba seeing a suffering corpse run past him. It is a sinner who has been sentenced to everlasting punishment. But there is an "escape clause": if he has a son who leads the congregation in prayer, he will be released from his suffering. R. Akiba eventually finds the man's son, teaches him how to pray, and puts him before a congregation, whereupon the man is pardoned.

To start with, we see here that medieval Jews in France believed in hell, just as their Christian neighbors did. But in addition, Israeli liturgical scholar Israel Ta-Shema thinks we learn something about the *Kaddish*. It may be that designating the final *Kaddish* in every service for mourners is a later innovation than anyone thinks. Originally, as in the R. Akiba story, the idea was to lead the congregation in the Call to Prayer—the *Bar'khu* (see Volume 1, *The Sh'ma and Its Blessings*, p. 27)—and, as the leader of the service, to say the Half *Kaddish* that comes before it. At that time, also, people said biblical verses like Psalm 25:6 ("Adonai, be mindful of your compassion and faithfulness, for they are old as time"), as a sort of *Tachanun*; and in fact, when the real *Tachanun* came, at the end of the *Amidah*, they actually repeated the *Bar'khu* and Half *Kaddish*, so they had two points in the service—before the *Sh'ma* and after the *Amidah*—when they prayed for the souls of the deceased.

Saturday night especially, they tried to arrange for an orphan to lead services, since they believed that the dead were released from hell for Shabbat, but forced to return Saturday night. In some tiny towns, the only available mourners might still be under the age of thirteen and technically unable to lead services. But they allowed them to lead services anyway, since children were treated as little adults in training, and having a child lead services seemed like a good idea in any event.

All that changed in the twelfth century, when the concept of childhood changed also. Childhood began to be treated as its own separate stage in the life cycle. Christian monastic orders, for instance, became stricter about preventing children from joining their ranks. Jews responded similarly, inventing the ritual of bar mitzvah to mark the passage to adulthood. They also began prohibiting minors from leading services. They still wanted to give these children the chance to save their parents from hell, however. If they couldn't lead services, they could at least say a *Kaddish*, so the *Kaddish* at the

Kaddish (*Kaddish* that follows study many centuries of), L. Hoffman, p.

Talmud associates), as a prayer that had nothing to do sign on earth and d on the theme of masses, because it e vernacular also. e hope implicit in

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ndently, without

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

end of services was reserved for mourners.

In sum, the *Kaddish* began somewhere in the first century, probably after 70, as one of many prayers calling for the “coming of the kingdom.” As the concluding part of a study session and a sermon, it was composed in Aramaic, the vernacular of the time. By the eighth century, somehow, it became a prayer to be said after a funeral. And by the twelfth century, a final *Kaddish* at the end of the service was reserved for mourners.

By then, however, Jews who said it treated the *Kaddish* as a magical means to save their departed from the tribulations of hell. But like an aspirin that cures a headache, only if a single person takes the whole tablet rather than sharing it with others, so too, it was felt that a *Kaddish* worked its magic only if it was not shared. Only one person could say the *Kaddish* at a time. So a priority list was established. Someone in the first three days of the mourning week was asked ahead of someone in the last four days, for instance; and a person marking *yahrzeit* (the anniversary of someone’s death) was given even higher priority, since this was the only day in the year that he could say the prayer—unless, of course, he was just visiting town, not a regular member of the community, in which case he was low on the priority list (and should have stayed home to say it there). In small communities, there were usually enough instances of the *Kaddish* in an average day for everyone to get to say one of them. But as communities became larger, new opportunities for saying *Kaddish* were added to the service. That is why traditional worship has more than one *Kaddish* at the end—it was to make sure everyone who needed one received their own *Kaddish* to say.

By the early modern period, cities with substantial Jewish populations came into being, and it became impossible to add more recitations—especially since by then, people had printed prayer books in hand, and the number of *Kaddishes* was fixed on paper. Only then did Jews begin allowing all the mourners present to say the *Kaddish* together. But their prayer books already included several *Kaddishes*, not just one, so today, mourners say the *Kaddish* many times a day—another instance of how printed prayer books determine practice!

Reform Jews changed all that. Recognizing that the original practice called only for a single Mourner’s *Kaddish*, and wanting to streamline the service and end on a high note where all worshipers are together, they included only one *Kaddish* for mourners; then concluded the service with a benediction and a final song.

² “*May He establish his kingdom*” Sefardi custom adds here “And may He cause salvation to flourish and hasten his messiah” (*v’yatsmach purkaneih vikarev m’shicheih*). Maimonides (d. 1204) quotes the tenth-century Gaon, Saadiah, as saying, “May He bring the messianic end of time.” Some Sefardim also say, “May He free his people in his mercy,” and others add, “May He rebuild his Temple courtyard.”

⁵ “*Blessed [yitbarach], praised, glorified, exalted, honored, extolled, lauded*” Seven terms of praise, said by Rav Amram (eighth-century Babylonia) to correspond to the seven heavens that were believed to encircle the earth. God sits on a chariot in the outermost one. But Amram also knew a custom of adding an eighth term to the list. The people

SECTION 2

who added it didn't count the first one (*yitbarach*), so that they could pretend they had only seven. To facilitate their not counting it, they said it separately from the others, by adding it into the previous line, which is a congregational response, "May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity." To this day, we do that: We say, *y'hei sh'mei rabba m'varakh l'alam ul'al'mei al'maya* and then immediately add *yitbarach*.

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Only one person meone in the first last four days, for s death) was given he could say the r member of the have stayed home instances of the t as communities) vice. That is w make sure

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קַדִּישׁ יָתוֹם

KADDISH YATOM — MOURNER'S KADDISH

Mishkan T'fila
Pg 291-295
Unit 5
Activity 6

MEDITATIONS BEFORE KADDISH

1.

WHEN I DIE give what's left of me away
to children and old men that wait to die.
And if you need to cry,
cry for your brother walking the street beside you.
And when you need me, put your arms around anyone
and give them what you need to give me.

I want to leave you something,
something better than words or sounds.
Look for me in the people I've known or loved,
and if you cannot give me away,
at least let me live in your eyes and not in your mind.

You can love me best by letting hands touch bodies,
and by letting go of children that need to be free.
Love doesn't die, people do.
So, when all that's left of me is love,
give me away.

קַדִּישׁ יָתוֹם *Kaddish Yatom* . . . Mourner's Kaddish . . . The *Kaddish* is a hymn of praise to God and a prayer for the speedy establishment of God's sovereignty on earth, recited at the conclusion of rabbinic study and exposition of Scripture. In its essence it is not a mourner's prayer, and various forms of the *Kaddish* are used to mark the conclusion of each part of the service. The custom of reciting *Kaddish* for a year (or eleven months) after the death of a parent and on the anniversary of their death (*Yahrzeit*) originated in the Rhineland during the Crusades (eleventh century).

2.

קדש יתום

IN NATURE'S EBB AND FLOW, God's eternal law abides.
When tears dim our vision or grief clouds our understanding,
we often lose sight of God's eternal plan.
Yet we know that growth and decay, life and death,
all reveal a divine purpose.
God who is our support in the struggles of life, is also our hope in death.
We have set God before us and shall not despair.
In God's hands are the souls of all the living and the spirits of all flesh.
Under God's protection we abide, and by God's love are we comforted.
O Life of our life, Soul of our soul, cause Your light to shine into our hearts,
and fill our spirits with abiding trust in You.

3.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE is a finite flame.
Like the Shabbat candles,
life is kindled, it burns, it glows,
it is radiant with warmth and beauty.
But soon it fades, its substance is consumed,
and it is no more.

In light we see;
in light we are seen.
The flames dance
and our life burns down and gutters.
There is an end to the flames.
We see no more
and are no more seen,
yet we do not despair,
for we are more than a memory
slowly fading into the darkness.
With our lives we give life.
Something of us can never die:
we move in the eternal cycle
of darkness and death,
of light and life.

4.

WHY should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God in each hour of the twenty-four,
and each moment then:
In the faces of men and women I see God,
and in my own face in the glass.
I find letters from God dropt in the street,
and every one is sign'd by God's name.
And I leave them where they are,
for I know that whereso'er I go,
others will punctually come forever and ever.

5.

IT IS A FEARFUL THING to love
what death can touch.

A fearful thing to love,
hope, dream: to be —
to be, and oh! to lose.

A thing for fools this, and
a holy thing,
a holy thing to love.

For
your life has lived in me,
your laugh once lifted me,
your word was gift to me.

To remember this brings a painful joy.
'Tis a human thing, love,
a holy thing,
to love
what death has touched.

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IS HARD to sing of oneness when the world is not complete,
when those who once brought wholeness to our life have gone,
and naught but memory can fill the emptiness their passing leaves behind.

But memory can tell us only what we were, in company with those we loved;
it cannot help us find what each of us, alone, must now become.
Yet no one is really alone:
those who live no more, echo still within our thoughts and words,
and what they did is part of what we have become.

We do best homage to our dead when we live our lives more fully,
even in the shadow of our loss.
For each of our lives is worth the life of the whole world;
in each one is the breath of the Ultimate One.
In affirming the One, we affirm the worth of each one
whose life, now ended, brought us closer to the Source of life,
in whose unity no one is alone and every life finds purpose.

7.

YEISH kochavim she-oram magia artza
rak kaasher heim atzmam avdu v'ainam.
Yeish anashim sheziv zichram mei-ir
kaasher heim atzmam einam od b'tocheinu
orot eileh hamav'hikim
b'cheskat halayil
heim she'marim laadam et haderech.

יש כוכבים שאורם מגיע ארצה
רק כפאשר הם עצמם אבדו ואינם.
יש אנשים שזיו זכרם מאיר
כפאשר הם עצמם אינם עוד בתוכינו
אורות אלה המבהיקים
בחשפת הליל
הם שמראים לאדם את הדרך.

THERE ARE STARS up above,
So far away we only see their light
Long, long after the star itself is gone.
And so it is with people that we loved —
Their memories keep shining ever brightly
Though their time with us done.
But the stars that light up the darkest night,
These are the lights that guide us.
As we live our days, these are the ways we remember.

8.

WHEN CHERISHED TIES are broken, and the chain of love is shattered, only trust and the strength of faith can lighten the heaviness of the heart. At times, the pain of separation seems more than we can bear, but if we dwell too long on our loss, we embitter our hearts and harm ourselves and those about us.

The Psalmist said that in his affliction, he learned the law of God. And in truth, grief is a great teacher, when it sends us back to serve and bless the living. We learn how to counsel and comfort those who, like ourselves, are bowed with sorrow. We learn when to keep silent in their presence, and when a word will assure them of our love and concern.

Thus, even when they are gone, the departed are with us, moving us to live as, in their higher moments, they themselves wished to live. We remember them now; they live in our hearts; they are an abiding blessing.

9.

WE HAVE LIVED in numberless towns and villages; and in too many of them we have endured cruel suffering. Some we have forgotten; others are sealed in our memory, a wound that does not heal. A hundred generation of victims and martyrs; still their blood cries out from the earth. And so many, so many at Dachau, at Buchenwald, at Babi Yar . . .

What can we say? What can we do? How bear the unbearable, or accept what life has brought to our people? All who are born must die, but how shall we compare the slow passage of time with the callous slaughter of the innocent, cut off before their time?

They lived with faith. Not all but many. And, surely, many died, with faith in God, in life, in the goodness that even flames cannot destroy. May we find a way to the strength of that faith, that trust, that sure sense that life and soul endure beyond this body's death.

They have left their lives to us: let a million prayers rise whenever Jews worship; let a million candles glow against the darkness of these unfinished lives.

10.

OUR THOUGHTS TURN to those who have departed this earth: our own loved ones, those whom our friends and neighbors have lost, the martyrs of our people whose graves are unmarked, and those of every race and nation whose lives have been a blessing to humanity. As we remember them, let us meditate on the meaning of love and loss, of life and death.

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Unit Six: Freedom

Enduring Understandings:

- The theme of freedom in Shabbat liturgy can engage us in discussing real life issues which occur in a family as a child grows.

Essential Questions

- What are some of the different ideas of freedom?
- Where can the theme of freedom be found in our own lives?

Goals

- To expose the student to a variety of notions of freedom in both their own lives and in prayer.
- To provide students with an opportunity to access the plain meaning of each of the prayers in this unit. (For example: *Ma'ariv* is about evening creation)
- To offer students the opportunity to personalize the themes of the prayers.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar to or different from their own.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Give a one sentence summary of each of the prayers studied in this unit.
- Define the concept of "freedom"
- Connect prayers to their own lives through journals, discussions and projects.

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child and their family thinks about each of the prayers studied during this unit.

Activities:

Morning Blessings (who has made me free)

(Talmud Page 1)

What does it mean to be "free"? Why is this prayer stated in the prayer book when we would most likely argue that there are Jews in the world who are not free (by our definition)? Is it about being legally free or free to make our own decisions? How is someone's view changed when they learn that originally the blessing thanked God for not making me a slave?

Begin by asking students to write out their own personal definition of the word "freedom." Give each student about 5 minutes. Ask them to each read their definition out loud. As they do write key words that come out from their definition on the board.

Hand out the blessing both as written in the Reform movement (praising God for making us free) and in the Orthodox movement (praising God for not making us slaves.) Both of these versions can be found in the resource section. In chavruta ask the students to read both versions and then discuss what each one implies. What do they think the reasoning behind each version is?

After about 10 minutes ask the students to come back together and discuss what they talked about in their *chavruta*. Try to stress the idea of free will within this discussion.

After this discussion explain the idea of the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer hatov*. You may want to hand out page 30 from the book Count Me In or just use this page as a resource for you, either way you should look at pages 29-42 in the same book in order to help you teach this concept.

Within each family unit, ask them to discuss these concepts and how they play out in their lives. Provide for them a variety of texts which can be found in the resource section and is from The Jewish Moral Virtues pages 183-184. Ask them to discuss:

1. Are there times when they feel the pull of both within themselves?
2. Are there times when they feel the pull within the family?
3. When are the times when they feel the pull of both the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer hatov* the most?

Each family should come up with a plan to help each other remember to follow their *yetzer hatov*. This should be something they can create (i.e. a list of reminders, a sign in their house, a contract with each other...etc.) In a few weeks ask the students how this is going?

Conclude by having the families fill out their Talmud Page.

Nisim B'chol Yom (who frees the captive)

(Talmud Page 2)

Set Induction: Ask the class to think about the lesson the previous week. If we came to the conclusion last week that the word “free” in *Nisim B'chol Yom* means that we have free will, what does it mean this week to say that we bless God for freeing the captive? (some answers you should receive are that the people who are captive are not in jail, they are emotionally captive or that some people do not have the ability to use their free will.)

Ask the class if they think that this blessing is about emotional freedom or physical freedom? Allow the class to debate but in the end push them towards deciding that it is about physical freedom.

Continue by handing out the information about Darfur. Right now this is a big issue and problem. Hopefully it will not be in the future. If it is no longer something that needs our help go to the URJ website at www.urj.org or call the RAC (Religious Action Center) to find out how this class can help in the fight for all people to be free.

Ask the families to read the information together. This will give them the background on the subject. If possible, download the movies from <http://www.hrw.org/video/2004/sudan/index2.html> and show those to the class.

Ask the class to brainstorm ways they as a class can help with this situation. There are a variety of suggestions on the website and the information. Allow the class to really direct the rest of the session.

At the end of class the students should have already done something (like writing letters...etc) or plan to do something (buying and selling bracelets..etc.) Then each family should fill out their Talmud Page.

Asher Yatzar (*we have the freedom to choose how we take care of ourselves*)
(Talmud Page 3)

Begin this lesson by asking the students to look back in their Family Siddur to the previous unit where they also studied *Asher Yatzar*. Remind them about the Teri Schiavo case and what they discussed about euthanasia.

Now ask the students to look at this blessing from another point of view. Suggest that people might have the freedom to chose how they treat themselves and their bodies. There are three different topics I would like to highlight for this prayer. For this activity ask the group to split into three smaller groups (teen boys, teen girls, and parents.)

Topic one: Being Healthy

America is known for being the most unhealthy country in the world. With our fast pace lives we rarely have time to worry about what we put in our bodies or if we exercise. We also learn about the other extreme of anorexia, bulimia and other eating disorders. However, Judaism stresses the importance of our body with the prayer *Asher Yatzar*. If you would like to research the subject further go to the website you can download the whole resource guide at <http://urj.org/Documents/index.cfm?id=1855>

Traditionally, one way the Jews have understood taking care of our bodies is by keeping kosher. Many Jews no longer do this for a variety of reasons. Using the sheet provided read each of the 7 laws to keeping kosher and discuss why each might be included.

Afterwards discuss ways you can honor your body by eating healthier and exercising. If the students do not keep traditionally kosher, ask them to design their own 7 laws to keeping modern day kosher (eating less fast food, making sure the meat they eat was treated correctly when it was alive, exercising three times a week...etc.) At the end of this rotation hand them the pamphlet from the URJ on eating disorders. It can be downloaded at <http://urj.org/Documents/index.cfm?id=1853>

Topic two: Suicide

Teen suicide is a very serious problem in America and is definitely a way in which the person has not chosen to take care of his/her body. The discussions you will have in this group will be very different with the teens and with the parents. You may want to ask a counselor/therapist to lead this discussion.

Hand out the sheets from Kedushat HaGuf pages 24-28. Together read the first page and discuss what it has said. Then split this group into five new groups. Ask each group to read one the information on one of the headings on pages 26-28 (excluding "After High School.") Each group should read and discuss their topic. They should create a pamphlet which explains the concerns they read about and gives a message to teenagers who might be facing these issues. The pamphlets should be creative, encourage students to make something teens would actually want to read. When everyone is done, ask each group to present their pamphlet. Make sure the groups which is studying what Judaism says about it presents last.

Finally read the sheet with a variety of Jewish texts and continue discussing what Judaism says about suicide (provided in the resources.)

Topic Three: Rest

Another way to take care of ourselves is by resting enough. It has been proven through studies that teens need more sleep. But resting isn't just about sleeping it is also about taking the time to relax.

Begin with a text study. Ask the students to study the various quotes from The JGirl's Guide page 54-56 in chavruta. Answer the question: What reasoning does this text give for relaxing? How does it relate relaxing to taking care of your body?

Shabbat is a built in day to relax and rest. Ask each student to make a list of ten things they will try to do during Shabbat in order to relax more. Ask each person to pick one this week and try it. Next week, if they liked doing it, they should continue with that one and try another one. If they did not think it helped, then they shouldn't continue doing it.

At the conclusion of all the rotations ask the families to gather back together and complete the Talmud Page.

V'ahavta: See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity

(inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates as a reminder of the exodus story)

(Talmud Page 4)

During the exodus story the Israelites are told to put blood on the doorposts of their houses to signify they are Jews. Later we read in the V'ahavta prayer that we should place it on the doorposts of our house and on our gates. The Mezuzah connects us to the V'ahavta, the exodus story and to all Jews everywhere.

Begin with a text study of the *V'ahavta* prayer. For help with this text study refer to page 100-103 in My People's Prayer Book Volume 1. Concentrate the study on the idea of placing a symbol on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. What does this mean? Does it refer back to the Passover story? Did the Torah really mean for us to put *Mezuzot* on our doors?

In his book A Vision of Holiness, Rabbi Richard Levy suggests that Jews may want to choose texts to place in their *mezuzah* that are more appropriate for the room in which it is being hung. He writes:

I have heard not only to put God's words upon the doorpost, but to become conscious of the mitzvot that apply to each particular room. On the doorpost of my office at the Hebrew Union College is a mezuzah in which I have inserted not the traditional passage of the *Sh'ma* but the passage about the values of Torah from Psalm 19:8-12, as a reminder that I am to study and teach in my office as well as doing "work" there. Vision of Holiness page 132.

Ask each family to begin by choosing a room that is the most important or significant to their family. Then, using the texts provided, ask each family to study each of the text under the heading for the room they find the most important or significant. After studying the text, the family should choose one that stands out for them.

Together they will then make a *mezuzah* out of clay or tubing or other materials. They should then place their text inside the *mezuzah*. Once they are home they can place the *mezuzah* on the doorpost of the room they selected.

Mi Chamocha
(Talmud Page 5)

Performance Task

Mi Chamocha is the prayer which ultimately deals with freedom. Now that the students have learned a variety of ways freedom plays into their and other people's lives, they can begin to study this prayer.

Begin with a text study using the pages from My People's Prayer Book Volume 1 pages 130-134 provided in the resource section. After reading the prayer and discussing its meaning, ask the students why the theme of freedom is associated with a prayer which never mentions the word freedom? (This is because it comes from the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15) which is when the Israelites left Egypt and were crossing the Red Sea. They did not mention freedom in this section, but rather celebrated it.)

The crossing of the Red Sea and exiting Egypt is the greatest miracle the Jews ever saw. There are many times in our lives when we have to cross over big obstacles in order to be free to be ourselves. Many of these relate to resisting peer pressure regarding dress, the way we talk and the way we act. Using the worksheets with a bridge on it, ask the students to think of a time in their life they had to get over an obstacle. They should fill in the sheet so that "The Beginning" is the situation before the obstacle, "The Obstacle" is the obstacle, and "The End" is the situation afterwards. On the bridge the students should write the ways they made this transition happen.

When each person is finished they should share their image with the class. Each student should think about and answer the question: How did the theme of freedom play out in this situation?

Each family should then fill in the Talmud Page for this activity.

Resources

Activity 1: Nisim B'chol Yom (makes me free)

1. Borowitz, Eugene B. and Frances Weinman Schwartz. *The Jewish Moral Virtues*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999. Pages 183-184.
2. Gevirtz, Gila. *Count Me In*. New Jersey: Behrman House, 2005. Pages 29-42.
3. *Mishkan T'filah*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2006. Page 198.
4. Scherman, Rabbi Nosson. *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1984. Page 18-19.

Activity 2: Nisim B'chol Yom (Frees the captive)

1. Website: <http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuesudan/sudangen/> which I have cut and pasted into a worksheet

Activity 3: Asher Yatzar

1. Adelman, Penina, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz. *The JGirl's Guide*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005. Pages 54-56.
2. *Kedushat HaGuf: the sanctity of the body*. New York: Union of Reform Judaism Department of Jewish Family Concerns, 2006. pages 24-28.

Activity 4: V'ahvta

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 1*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997. Pages 100-103.
2. Levy, Rabbi Richard. *Visions of Holiness*. New York: URJ Press, 2005.

Activity 5: Mi Chamocha

1. Hoffman, Lawrence. *My People's Prayer Book Volume 1*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997. Pages 130-134.

Lesson Plan for Unit 6 (Freedom): V'ahavta

Goals:

- To connect the theme of freedom and the story of Passover with the *V'ahavta* prayer.
- To offer students the opportunity to create a daily reminder of both family and Jewish values
- To inspire students to make personal meanings of the *V'ahavta*.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a one sentence explanation of how the theme of freedom connects to the *V'ahavta* prayer.
- Create a Mezuzah for some family room in their house which includes a family oriented text inside.
- Explain and analyze what their family thinks about the *V'ahavta* prayer.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:20: Text Study

0:20-0:35: A Second Text Study

0:35-0:50: Creating a Family Mezuzah

0:50-1:00: Talmud Page

Materials:

My People's Prayer Book Volume 1: pages 100-103

Various texts about family

FIMO or air drying clay or tubing

Other art supplies depending on what type of Mezuzot you would like the families to make

Activity:

During the exodus story the Israelites are told to put blood on the doorposts of their houses to signify they are Jews. Later we read in the *V'ahavta* prayer that we should place it on the doorposts of our house and on our gates. The Mezuzah connects us to the *V'ahavta*, the exodus story and to all Jews everywhere.

PART I: Text Study

Begin with a text study of the *V'ahavta* prayer. For help with this text study refer to page 100-103 in My People's Prayer Book Volume 1 which are in the resource section. Ask the students to read this prayer and the commentary about it in *Chavruta*.

Ask the students to focus on the line which states that they should place it on the doorposts of their house and upon their gates. Answer:

1. What does this mean?
2. Could it possibly refer back to the Passover story?

3. Did the Torah really mean for us to put *Mezuzot* on our doors?

PART II: A second text study

Now ask families to group together. Provide each family with a variety of texts about family. These texts can be found in the resource section. Ask each family to read through the various texts and select one which is significant to their family.

PART III: Creating a Family Mezuzah

Provide each family with either FIMO (a type of clay that needs to be baked), air drying clay, or tubing. Allow each family the time to create their own family Mezuzah. They should all participate in making this object. Afterwards, they should place the text they choose inside of it. Finally, the family should decide where in their house it would be the most appropriate to hang their new *mezuzah*. Encourage them to choose a room where they all like to sit together or a room that means a lot to everyone in the family.

PART IV: The Talmud Page

Conclude this lesson by allowing each family to fill in the Talmud Page.

From Nisim B'chol Yom: Who Has Made Me Free

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 60%;"><p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשִׂי בְן/בַּת חוֹרֵין:</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

From Nisim B'chol Yom: Who Makes Free the Captive

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: fit-content;"><p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים</p></div> | |
| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
| | |

Asher Yatzeir

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחֶכְמָה, וּבָרָא בּוֹ נְקִבִים נְקִבִים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים, גְּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כֹסֵא כְבוֹדְךָ שָׂאם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם, או יִסְתַּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אֵי אֶפְשֶׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּים וְלַעֲמוֹד לִפְנֶיךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר, וּמַפְּלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת:</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

V'ahavta

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> |
|---|---------------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"><p>וְאַהֲבַת אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכֹל-לִבְבְּךָ, וּבְכֹל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכֹל-מְאֹדְךָ. וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה הַיּוֹם, עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וּשְׁנֵיתָם לְבִנְיָהּ, וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ, וּבְלִכְתּוֹךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ, וּבְקוּמְךָ. וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ, וְכִתְבָתָם עַל מְזוֹזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:</p></div> | |
| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
| | |

Mi Chamocha

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|--------------------------|
| | |
| <p>מי כמכה באלם יי, מי כמכה נאדר בקדש, נורא תהלת עשה פלא. שירה חדשה שבחו גאולים לשמך על שפת הים, יחד בלם הודו והמליכו ואמרו: ?? ימלך לעולם ועד:</p> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

Dorowitz, Eugene
The Jewish Moral
Virtues pg 183-184
Unit 6 Activity 7

Moral Virtues

warn us: "If the evil inclination ve you,' don't believe it" (Hag. l action only increases the evil. ractically invites the *yetzer ha-ra* he margin of things, but walks ustle. When it sees someone giv- inually preening, or strutting " (Gen. R. 22.12).

Controlling the *Yetzer ha-Ra*

out our evil tendencies threaten at the sages' optimism did not e in our *yetzer ha-tov*; they admit- e new that God, the source of all, combating the evil incli- stic Judah the Pious spoke for s when he offered the following a temptation to sin comes our quired me to convert, I would y out so hard a commandment ld I be able to not do this less- od in heaven helps us" (Judah ave learned anything from the ed during the Holocaust, it is ted in what it can do on its own

action to remember that we are . "R. Sinai said, the evil inclina- anding at the crossroads. First ng commands: chip it down, lit- ies, I will remove it altogether" id the source of our urges, for onest defeats—sometimes more ercy God showed in fashioning ted selves whole once again. 's help completes our hu-

Inclining toward Good—*Yetzer ha-Tov*

manity. As the prophet said: "Seek good and not evil that you may truly live and that *Adonai*, the God of hosts, may truly be with you . . ." (Amos 5:14).

From Our Tradition

Ⓢ Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezritch said: This is how our good inclina- tion should rule over our character traits: We need to learn how to be proud—and not be proud; how to be angry—and not be angry; how to speak—and to remain quiet; how to be quiet—and to speak. —Elkins, *Melodies from My Father's House*

Ⓢ Rava said: Though God created the evil inclination, God created the Torah as its antidote.

—B.B. 16a

Ⓢ In the world to come, *Adonai* will bring the evil inclination and slaughter it before the righteous and before the wicked. To the righteous it will appear as a great mountain; to the wicked it will appear as a strand of hair. The righteous will cry, and the wicked will cry. The righteous will say: How could we have conquered this great mountain? The wicked will say: How could we have not overcome this strand of hair?

—Suk. 52a

Ⓢ Why did Cain survive Abel? The Bible says, "'The Lord tries the righteous' [Ps. 11:5]. R. Elazar commented: 'A man had two cows, one strong and one weak. Upon which will he lay the yoke? Surely upon the strong.'"

—Gen. R. 32.3

Ⓢ Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye warns: It is impossible that the good we do should ever be totally free of our self-interest.

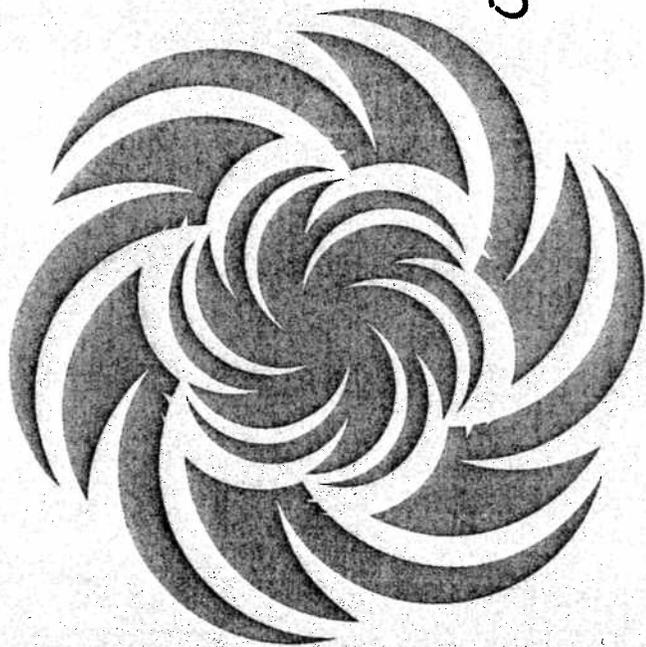
—Jacob Joseph of Polnoye, *Toldot Yaakov Yosef*

© All of history is a sphere where good is mixed with evil. The supreme task of man, his share in redeeming the work of creation, consists [of] . . . separating good from evil and evil from good.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Confusion of Good and Evil,"
in *The Insecurity of Freedom*

P A R T
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צֵאוּ וּרְאוּ אִיזוֹהֵי דֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁיִּדְבַק בָּהּ הָאָדָם... צֵאוּ וּרְאוּ
אִיזוֹהֵי דֶרֶךְ רָעָה שֶׁיִּתְרַחַק מִמֶּנָּה הָאָדָם:

Rabbi Yoḥanan taught, "Go forth and see which is the good way to which a person should hold. . . . Go forth and see which is the evil way which a person should avoid."

—*Pirkei Avot* 2:9



THE VALUE OF Free Will



Once a mischievous young boy noticed a sparrow nesting in a low bush. Quickly he grabbed the bird and walked over to his older sister. Holding the tiny bird behind his back, the boy said, "I have a

sparrow in my hands. Tell me, is it dead or alive?"

Suspecting that her brother wanted to trick her, the girl reasoned that the bird must be alive. For if it was dead and she said so, there would be nothing her brother could do to prove her wrong. But if the bird was alive and she said so, he might crush it just to prove her wrong.

The girl wanted to spare the bird's life and help her brother understand that he was responsible for his actions. So when the boy repeated his question, "Is the bird dead or alive?" she replied, "I do not know, for the answer is in your hands."

—based on *Genesis Rabbah* 19:11

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If you could have spoken to the young boy, what would you have said to help him make a good choice?

CHOICES AND Impulses

The Torah teaches that God created light, heaven, and the earth first. Then God filled the earth with great rivers and blue oceans and with insects, plants, and animals of every sort. But of the hundreds of thousands of God's creations, only human beings were given free will—the ability to understand

the difference between right and wrong—and the power to choose between the two.

The ancient rabbis taught that each time we are given a choice between good and bad, two impulses try to influence us. One is our desire to do what is good. That impulse is called *yetzer hatov*. The other impulse is our desire to do what is wrong. It is called *yetzer hara*.



When we're feeling grouchy and out of sorts and we can't switch our mood like the channels on our TV, it's best to wait before making an important decision. When we feel better, it is easier to pick up signals from the yetzer hatov.

POWER AND FREEDOM

Maimonides—a rabbi, doctor, scientist, and philosopher who lived in the twelfth century—taught, “Free will is given to every human being. If a person wants to turn toward the way of goodness and be righteous, that person has the power to do so. If a person wants to turn toward the way of evil and be wicked, that person has the freedom to do so” (*Mishneh Torah*).

In your opinion, why do people sometimes choose evil over good?

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Just as a piece of cloth can be used to make either a tallit or a thief's mask, so can our lives be used for either good or evil purposes. This tallit was made by Maxine Yablonsky.

Know Right from Wrong

Judaism teaches that all God's creations—including animals and the natural environment—should be valued and treated with respect. But only humans are made in God's image, and only humans are given the ability to know right from wrong.

For example, a dog can be trained to sit quietly while the family is at the dinner table. But it cannot understand that it's rude to interrupt people when they are eating. Unlike human beings, a dog can't understand the difference between right and wrong no matter how much of an effort you make to explain it.

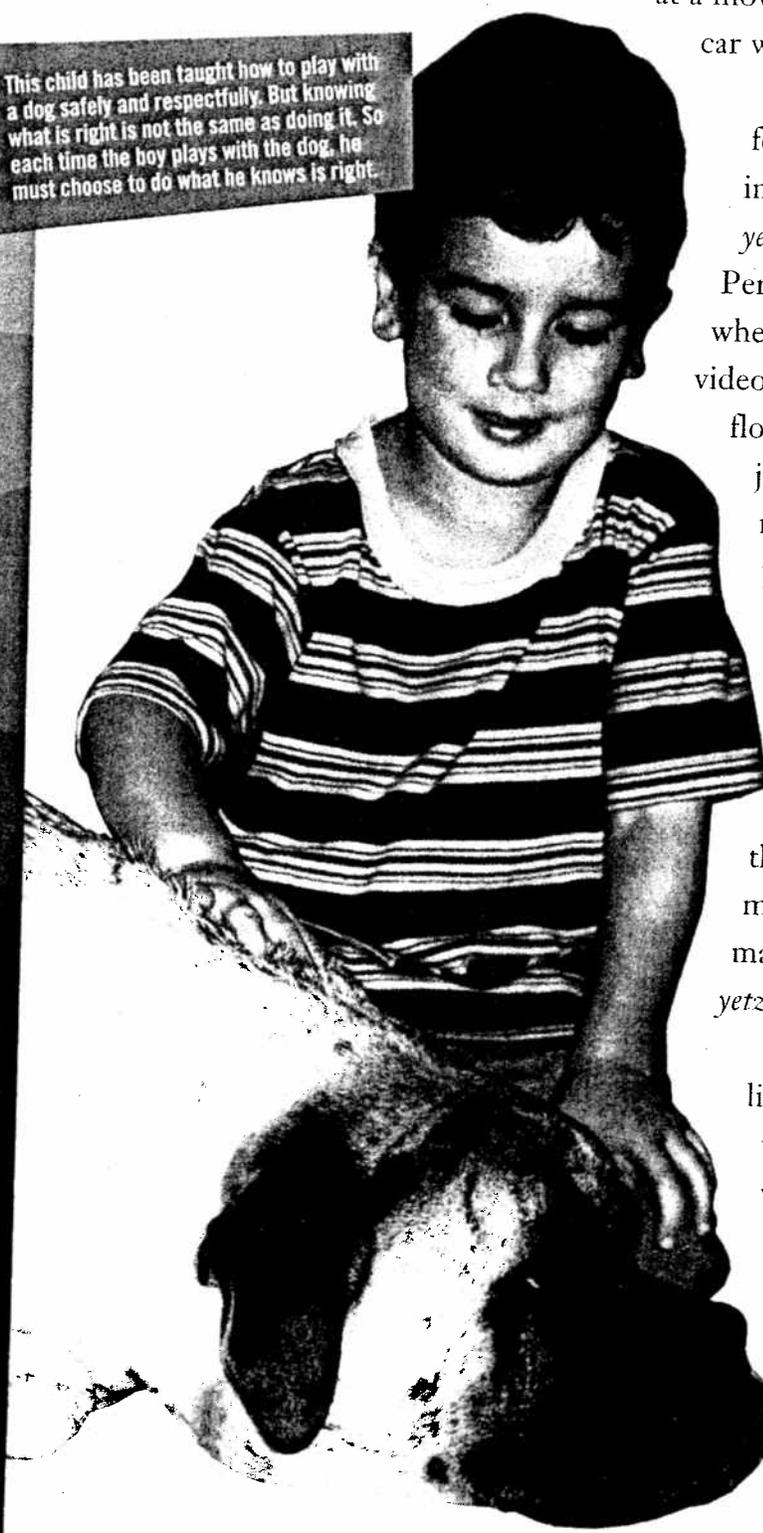
How would you train a dog to sit quietly while the family eats dinner?

How would you teach a young child that it is impolite to interrupt someone who is speaking?



Everyone is influenced by both the *yetzer batov* and the *yetzer hara*. For example, someone may be influenced by the *yetzer batov* to help an elderly person carry a heavy package or to visit a sick friend. That same person may be influenced by the *yetzer hara* to speak rudely to a stranger on line at a movie theater or to throw litter out a car window.

This child has been taught how to play with a dog safely and respectfully. But knowing what is right is not the same as doing it. So each time the boy plays with the dog, he must choose to do what he knows is right.



Think of a time when you felt a tug between the two impulses—the *yetzer batov* and the *yetzer hara*—and chose to do good. Perhaps you were considering whether to do your homework or play video games or whether to pick a flower from someone’s garden or just admire it. How did it feel to make the good choice? How did your choice influence the way you see yourself?

Now think of someone you admire and want to be like. In your view, how has that person been influenced by the *yetzer batov*? What decisions might he or she have had to make that required listening to the *yetzer batov*?

Sometimes we may not feel like listening to the *yetzer batov*, but we listen anyway because we want to feel good about ourselves or because we know that it will help us achieve an important goal. So we pay attention to the quiet voice inside us that tells us to study for a test, help our

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Bible Bio: Rebecca

Our patriarch Abraham sent his servant to Haran in search of a bride for his son Isaac. On arriving at a spring on the outskirts of the city, the servant ran to a young woman who had just drawn water from a well. He asked for a sip of water from her jar. Though she might have denied his request or given him only one sip, she let him drink his fill and watered his camels as well.

The young woman, whose name was Rebecca, responded to her *yetzer hara* by choosing to be generous and caring.

ותבל להשקות ותאמר גם לנמליך אשאב עד אם-כלו
לשותת:

"When Rebecca had let the servant drink until he was satisfied, she said, 'I will also draw water for your camels, until they, too, have had their fill.'" (Genesis 24:19)

Rebecca was chosen as Isaac's wife and became a matriarch of the Jewish people.

mom, or go to our music lesson, and afterward we feel better for having done so.

The *yetzer hara* wields its greatest influence when we feel bad, when we're hurt, angry, or jealous. For example, if a parent seems more tolerant of a younger brother's mistakes, the *yetzer hara* may tempt us to tease our brother or play an unkind trick. It may seem as if being unkind to our sibling will make us feel better. It may even feel good the moment we do it. But does the good feeling from hurting someone last?

THE EXTRAORDINARY ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE:

Lillian Wald

Lillian Wald (1867-1940) was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Cincinnati, Ohio. Though her wealth permitted her to choose a life of self-indulgence and luxury, Wald instead became a nurse and a peace activist, dedicating herself to relieving human suffering.



As the founder of the Visiting Nurse Service and the Henry Street Settlement, Wald provided important services to immigrants and the poor, including home health care and instruction in hygiene, parenting, English, and the arts. Wald fought for laws to protect the rights of women and children and was an active member of the Women's Peace Party.



The challenge to each of us is to overcome the impulse to do what we know is wrong and hurtful. The Talmud describes that impulse in three ways: At first, the *yetzer hara* is as light as a spider's web, but in the end it can become as heavy as thick ropes. At first, the *yetzer hara* is like a passerby, then like a guest, and finally it becomes the master of the

house. At first, the *yetzer hara* is sweet, but in the end it is bitter.

How does the *yetzer hara* go from being light, unimportant, and sweet to heavy, powerful, and bitter? Perhaps in the beginning we think, "I'll give into it just this once," but then find that we give into it again and again until finally it becomes acceptable or even a habit. Perhaps it's that at first it feels good to get back at someone with whom we are angry or it feels good to avoid taking responsibility for our actions, but then we discover how bad it feels to lose the friendship or the respect of others.

So, how good do we have to be to prevent the *yetzer hara* from gaining control? Must we never give into it? Must we be perfect?

A BAD HABIT

"When a person commits a sin once and then a second time, . . . it appears to that person that it is no longer a sin." (Talmud, *Yoma* 86b)

Do you agree with the ancient rabbis that the more often we commit a wrong, the less wrong it seems to be? Why or why not? Before answering, think of examples, such as copying someone's homework or lying.

OOH, IT'S SO TEMPTING

"Opportunity knocks only once, but temptation leans on the doorbell" (Anonymous).

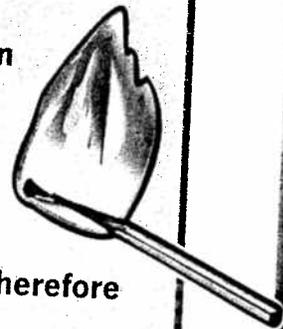
What helps you make good choices when temptation leans on the doorbell?



People Can Be Like Fire

Fire can nurture life through the warmth and light it provides. It can heat nourishing food, warm shivering bodies, and brighten darkened rooms. But it can also destroy. If a flame touches the edge of a curtain or the dry leaves on the forest floor, it can spread and destroy everything in its path.

People can be like fire. They can be a source of goodness and warmth or a source of destruction and hurt. But unlike fire, people have free will; they can make choices.



What might life be like if humans didn't have free will and therefore could do only good?

If you could, would you give up the gift of free will? Why or why not?

WE ARE IMPERFECT but Good

In his book *How Good Do We Have to Be?* Rabbi Harold Kushner explains, "Life is not a spelling bee, where no matter how many words you have gotten right, if you make one mistake you are disqualified. Life is more like a baseball season, where even the best team loses one-third of its games. . . . Our goal is to win more than we lose, and if we can do that consistently enough, then when the end comes, we will have won it all."

The Torah teaches that even the greatest heroes of the Bible—among them Noah, Sarah, Jacob, and Moses—made mistakes. Noah got drunk, Sarah was unkind to Hagar, Jacob tricked his brother and lied to his father, and Moses ignored God's instructions on how to bring forth water from a rock. How is it possible that the Torah's models of goodness are imperfect?

Think about it. How might you react if you were asked to model yourself on someone who had never made a

mistake, someone who was perfect—doing everything right, from scoring straight A's to never speaking a harsh word, never losing a tennis match, winning every science-fair competition and essay contest?



At first glance, this might look like a piece of art—a statue—but in fact it's a living person. However, there is an art to being a person; it is in doing one's best to live as a creature made in the image of God.

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Come Down to Earth

The Hasidic rabbi Moshe of Kobryn once looked up toward the sky and cried: "Dear angel! It is no trick to be an angel in heaven. You don't have to eat and drink, and earn money. Come down to earth and worry about these things, and we shall see if you remain an angel." (Martin Buber, *Tales of Hasidism*)



Write a short script or story about an angel who visits earth for a day and discovers how challenging it is to be a boy or girl your age.

ANGEL OR SAINT?

Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) worked in what is now Gabon, Africa, as a doctor and Christian missionary for over forty years. In honor of his lifetime of humanitarian service, including providing medical aid to those suffering from leprosy, Schweitzer won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952. It was Schweitzer's belief that "you don't have to be an angel in order to be a saint." What do you think he meant?

How can remembering Albert Schweitzer's words help you continue to work at becoming your best self after you've made a mistake or fallen short of your mark?



A scribe is highly trained to do the sacred work of writing and repairing Torah scrolls. Like other people, much as scribes try to work carefully, they sometimes make mistakes. When they do, all that is required is that they correct the error.

Our tradition teaches that no one is perfect but everyone can be wonderful. After all, despite their flaws, Noah was a righteous man who followed in God's holy ways of mercy and justice, Sarah was a courageous woman who went forth with Abraham to give birth to the Jewish people, Jacob struggled with his conscience, and Moses led the Israelites out of slavery and became the greatest prophet the Jewish people have ever had.

In fact, rather than being disappointed by our ancestors' imperfections, we are inspired by their lives. For it is precisely

because they were imperfect yet good that we know we, too, are capable of much goodness despite our flaws.

A MINYAN OF THIEVES?

"Ten people join together to steal a beam, and are not ashamed in each other's presence." (Talmud, *Kiddushin* 80b)

In your own words, explain what lesson the sages wanted to teach with that example.



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WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR our Choices

Have you ever done something you knew was wrong, felt a twinge of guilt, but told yourself, "No big deal—everyone does it"? Perhaps rather than do your homework, you copied a friend's, or maybe you gossiped about or teased a classmate.

Can we decide that doing something wrong is not so bad when lots of other people do it too? Does accepting that you are human—imperfect—mean that you don't have to try to become your best self?

Our tradition teaches that because we have free will, we are each responsible for our choices no matter what other people do. It tells us that we must strive to right our own wrongs and to become our best selves.

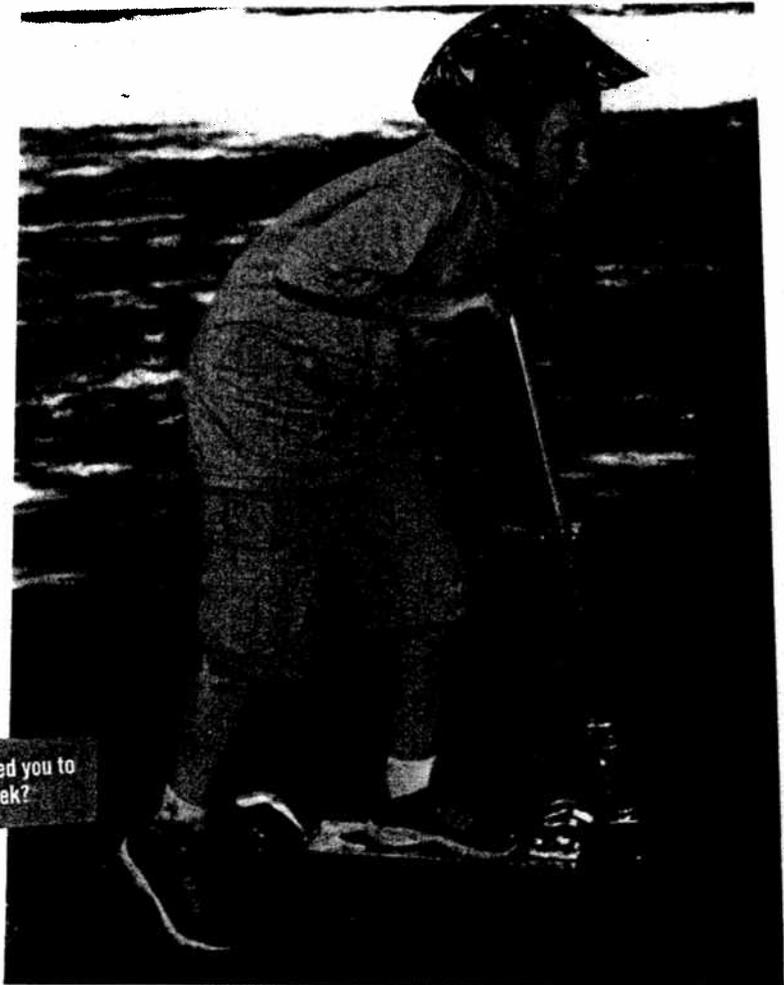
That is why on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we look back on the previous year to acknowledge both our achievements and our mistakes. That is why each year on those holy days we begin—though we never complete—the work of self-improvement. And that is why even though we may want to say, "I'm not responsible" or "They started it" or "It's not my fault!" we instead say, "I'm sorry; please forgive me. Can I make it up to you?" No matter what others do, we are responsible for our own actions.

Any time can be a good time to work toward self-improvement. In the middle of the year, in the middle of the street, you may imagine that you hear the wake-up call of the shofar, or ram's horn, asking you to think about the choices you've made, the ones you're proud of and the ones you would like to improve on.

We Don't Only Wrong Others

Sometimes we wrong ourselves. We wrong ourselves, for example, when we ride a scooter without wearing a helmet, when we let our fear of failure discourage us from accepting challenging tasks, or when we give in to peer pressure even though we don't agree with our friends.

Have you wronged yourself in any way this week? How can you develop the willingness to both forgive yourself and try to do better in the future?



How has the yetzer hatov influenced you to take good care of yourself this week?

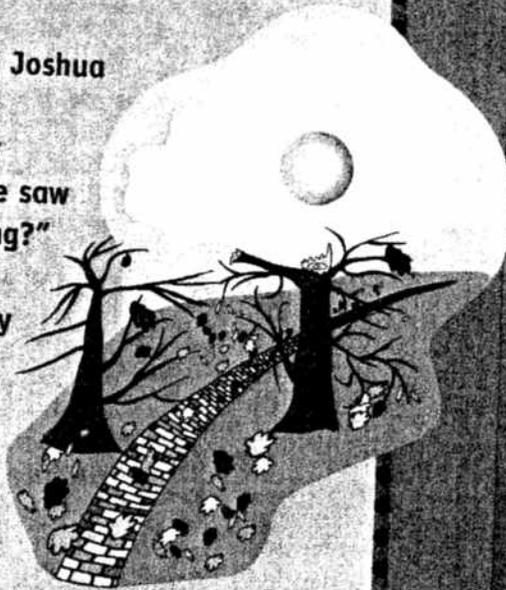
Ancient Stories for Modern Times

THEY DID IT FIRST!

One day while hurrying on his way, Rabbi Joshua ben Hananyah noticed a wheat field with a shortcut, a path that had been worn by other travelers. He began to cross the field when he saw a young girl. "Where do you think you're going?" she called to him. "This is my father's field."

"I am only following a path that is already made," the rabbi answered.

"Yes," she responded, "but the path was made by others like you who have already harmed the crops. Will you follow in their footsteps to do evil?" (based on Talmud, *Eruvin* 53b)



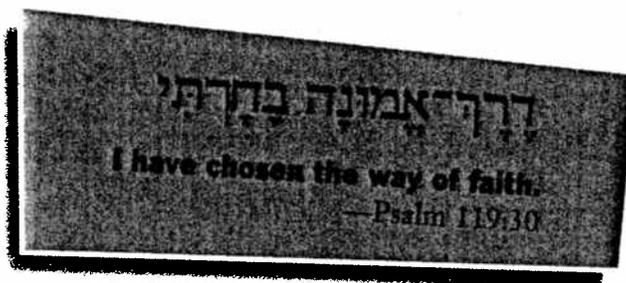
Summarize the lesson of this story.

In the story, a rabbi is taught by a child. What might the rabbis of the Talmud want us to learn from this?

STUDY HELPS US **Make Good Choices**

To help strengthen the influence of our *yetzer hatov*, our impulse to do good, Jewish tradition teaches us to study Torah. For Torah teaches what is good and how to take responsibility for our actions. The stories and laws of the Torah teach us how to learn from the goodness of others and how to recognize when others are leading us astray.

Learning to choose fair, kind, and responsible actions can help you select the friends, leisure activities, and work that will become a source of satisfaction and dignity. And learning how to forgive yourself when you make mistakes can help you accept the challenge of becoming the best person you can be.



נְסִים בְּכָל יוֹם

NISIM B'CHOL YOM — FOR DAILY MIRACLES

For awakening

BARUCH atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech haolam,

asher natan lasechvi vinah

Phavchin bein yom uvein lailah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לַשְּׁכִיבִי בִינָה
לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given the mind the ability to distinguish day from night.

For vision

Baruch atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech haolam,

pokei-ach ivrim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
פוֹקֵחַ עֵינִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who opens the eyes of the blind.

For ability to move

Baruch atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech haolam,

matir asurim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who frees the captive.

*For rising to the
new day*

Baruch atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech haolam,

zokeif k'fufim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who lifts up the fallen.

נְסִים בְּכָל יוֹם *Nisim b'chol yom* . . . These morning blessings evoke awe at the ordinary miracle of awakening to physical life: we open our eyes, clothe our bodies, and walk again with purpose; in spiritual life also, we are created in God's image, are free human beings, and as Jews, celebrate the joy and destiny of our people, Israel.

Though they are intended literally, we may perceive each blessing spiritually.

Information about Darfur

From the website: <http://rac.org/advocacy/issues/issuesudan/sudangen/>

Background

Sudan is a country in northeast Africa that was for decades engulfed in a civil war between its northern and southern regions. Sudan's National Islamic Front (NIF) government is an oppressive regime that has instigated violence against communities in the south of the country. Government-backed militias have engaged in systematic abuses of human rights against the population of the south, terrorizing its people with kidnapping, slave raids, torture, and massacres. The NIF-backed militias, known as Janjaweed, are now targeting civilians in the Western region of Darfur. The government in Khartoum has facilitated and participated in these atrocities. In the warfare and ensuing famine, the south lost more than two million people (8 percent of the country's population). Now, the situation in Darfur – a region roughly the size of Texas – is also dire.

In 2002, the U.S. passed the Sudan Peace Act, condemning Sudan for its practice of slavery and other human rights abuses, imposing significant financial and diplomatic consequences on the National Islamic Front government, and providing areas of southern Sudan with \$100 million in aid to be used for humanitarian and social services. In May 2004, the Sudanese government and the southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed three peace protocols, marking a hopeful step toward the end of war. In November 2004, peace accords between North and South were furthered while the situation in Darfur continued to worsen. On January 9, 2005, the Sudanese government and the Southern People's Liberation Movement signed the final peace agreement, bringing the North-South civil war to an end. The passage of the Sudan Peace Act was a major victory for our coalition. Yet even as the civil war ended, the violence in Darfur grew.

Based on the Reform Movement's 1999 resolution on our [Commitment to Africa](#), the RAC has worked in coalition to stop the atrocities in Sudan in the south.

Genocide in Darfur

The current crisis in Darfur has historical roots in the 21-year-long north-south conflict. In February 2003, two Darfurian rebel groups – the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) – demanded an end to economic marginalization and sought power-sharing within the Arab-ruled Sudanese state. They began attacking government targets, claiming that the region was being neglected by Khartoum and that the government is oppressing blacks in favor of Arabs.

The government responded to this threat by targeting the civilian populations from which the rebels were drawn. The government organized a military and political partnership with some Arab nomads comprising the Janjaweed; armed, trained, and organized them; and provided them effective impunity for all crimes committed. The historic tensions that exist between the mostly nomadic Arabs and Masaalit and Zaghawa farmers who populate Darfur aggravated tensions.

Today, an immense humanitarian crisis is gripping Sudan. Janjaweed are attacking the civilian populations of the Fur, Masaalit, and Zaghawa communities in Darfur. Villages and towns have been bombed and scorched, water sources and food stores have been destroyed, and civilians have been systematically targeted for mass killings, rape, and ethnic cleansing. The countryside is now emptied of its original Masaalit and Fur inhabitants. Livestock, food stores, wells and pumps, blankets and clothing have been looted or destroyed. Although specific numbers cannot be verified, according to recent reports by the World Food Program, the United Nations and the Coalition for International Justice, 3.5 million people are in need of food, over 2 million civilians have been internally displaced, and as many as 400,000 people have lost their lives. Furthermore, 5,000 civilians continue to die each month and over 200,000 have fled to neighboring Chad.

In November 2004, the crisis further escalated when the Sudanese police and army surrounded camps for the internally displaced, blocking aid agency access and then destroying some of the camps. The distressing news of the Sudanese government's efforts to hinder relief efforts for the people of Darfur is clear evidence of the deteriorating security situation and an escalating humanitarian crisis. As a result of the blocking by the Sudanese army and police of aid agency access to refugees camps, 160,000 displaced people were no longer reachable by road, and scores of aid workers were being forced to evacuate due to lack of security. The Sudanese government then made a deplorable statement that aid agencies in Darfur are the "real enemy," blaming them for aggravating the crisis. The Government appears determined to force those displaced by the conflict back to villages that remain unsafe and uninhabitable. As the world watches, the Sudanese government's actions have made an already terrible human rights crisis worse and it is the innocent people of Darfur who are paying with their lives.

The past year has seen the humanitarian situation in Darfur deteriorate, due to continued state-sponsored violence, increasingly violent attacks on humanitarian aid workers, a lack of funding for the African Union, and the weakened state of displaced Darfurians in both Sudan and neighboring Chad. The Janjaweed are using rape as a method to continue attacks on displaced Darfurians when they are forced to venture from the refugee camps to collect wood and water. Furthermore, famine and infectious diseases will potentially drive up the body counts rapidly unless immediate action is taken to provide necessary resources.

Legislative Summary

Sudan has become a much talked about issue within the Jewish community and in Washington. But, unfortunately, the difference being made in the lives of Darfurians is questionable. Words ring hollow without actions taken to prevent the continued genocide.

On July 23, 2004, the U.S. Congress unanimously passed a resolution declaring the atrocities being committed in Darfur, Sudan, "genocide," as defined under the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. On July 26, 2004, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Conscience declared a "Genocide Emergency," saying that genocide is imminent or actively occurring in Darfur.

In a statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 9th, 2004, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell denounced the atrocities taking place in Sudan and concurred that genocide is occurring. Secretary Powell stated the need for the continuation of peace talks, free flow of humanitarian aid and support for observers and troops from the African Union. His statements also marked the first time that one state party to the Genocide Convention used its authority to address genocide being committed by another state party to the convention.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has called Darfur "the worst humanitarian crisis of our time." Secretary-General Annan has reported to the Security Council on the situation in Darfur, concluding that there is "strong evidence" that war crimes and crimes against humanity have occurred on a "large and systematic scale."

During the 108th Congress, the United States allocated humanitarian assistance for Darfur through the Fiscal Year 2005 Foreign Operations bill and through the Sudan Peace Act of 2004. This money funded both humanitarian aid and support for African Union troops. In November 2005, however, lawmakers in Washington stripped \$50 million in U.S. funding for African Union troops from the Fiscal Year 2006 Foreign Aid Bill. Despite a plea from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Congress rejected an effort to reinstate this funding.

The United Nations Security Council passed two resolutions in the spring of 2005: one calling for targeted sanctions against the ruling party and one referring the perpetrators of the Genocide to the International Criminal Court. These are two significant steps in holding perpetrators accountable and providing incentives for the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed to stop their killing.

These declarations have not led to enough meaningful action and the genocide continues. Former Secretary Powell, Secretary Rice, the UN, and independent analyses by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) agree that addressing the crisis will require more funds than Congress originally appropriated for 2005 as well as stronger actions. And the situation on the ground remains unsafe and unstable. The African Union has provided 7,000 troops, yet these troops lack adequate funding and are not mandated to protect civilians, meaning that their presence has little value. The UN has also been hesitant to push for sanctions or enforce an arms embargo and a no-fly zone that could help to curb the violence.

The rapidly worsening situation in Sudan is further evidence of the need for greater effort on the part of all people of goodwill from around the world to address the crisis. Concrete steps to end the violence must be taken, such as targeted sanctions and the presence of more troops on the ground with a stronger mandate. Only with an immediate end to the violence and increased humanitarian assistance can the horrors being experienced by the people of Darfur be alleviated.

Legislative Update

The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act (H.R. 3127 / S. 1462) was introduced in the 109th Congress by Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) and by Representative Henry Hyde (R-IL). The Senate passed its version of the bill unanimously on November 18th, 2005. The House version of the bill enjoys bipartisan support, but is currently stalled. It remains unclear if it will be voted on.

On February 17, 2006 President Bush called for the levels of international troops in Darfur to be doubled in order to address the ongoing crisis in Sudan. President Bush also called for an increased role for NATO peacekeepers in Darfur and sent a supplemental funding proposal to Congress which included a request for \$514 million for Sudan, \$339 million of which is expected to be designated for Darfur peacekeeping and humanitarian programs. These actions signal the United States' commitment to increased action in the region.

Furthermore, on February 17th, 2006 Senator Joe Biden (D-Del.) also introduced Senate Resolution 383, which calls on President Bush to take immediate steps to help improve the security situation in Darfur, with an emphasis on civilian protection.

Position of the Reform Jewish Movement

The Reform Jewish Movement has been a leader pushing for an end to the civil war in Sudan and calling attention to the ongoing genocidal activity in Darfur. In 1979, the Union for Reform Judaism passed a resolution entitled "Genocide" which called for the United States to approve and for the President to ratify the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In December 1999 the Union then passed a resolution entitled "Jewish Commitment to Africa" which calls for the Secretary General of the United Nations and the President of the United States to condemn acts of violence against innocent populations, and reaffirms our commitment to basic international human rights. Finally, in 2004, the CCAR and the Union passed resolutions on the Current Crisis in Sudan.

On July 29 2004, to draw attention to the crisis gripping the people of Darfur, David Saperstein, along with RAC Legislative Assistant Zach Rosenberg and Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield (of Ben and Jerry's ice cream) was arrested in an act of civil disobedience outside the Sudanese embassy. News of the arrests was covered in the Washington Post, Associated Press and other major media outlets. The Reform Movement continues to push the President and State Department, and the Security Council of the United Nations to follow through on their commitments to Sudan.

In October of 2005, David Saperstein, along with Rabbi David Stern of Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, Rabbi Rick Jacobs of Westchester Reform Temple in New York, John Fishel, president of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation, and Ruth Messinger, president of the American Jewish World Service, visited Chad to assess the needs of the refugee camps and the Sudanese people who occupy them after escaping the terror and persecution in Darfur. They heard stories from Darfurian refugees about Janjaweed militias sweeping into towns; killing, raping, and branding women then burning the villages to the ground, and saw pictures drawn by traumatized children depicting the Sudanese government's helicopter gunships flying overhead, supporting the Janjaweed. Rabbi Saperstein wrote [an op-ed](#) calling for, among other things, stronger support for the NGOs that are providing humanitarian aid, Congress and the Administration to enact the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, and the United Nations Security Council to expand the mandate of the African Union troops in Darfur to include protection of civilian populations.

Jewish Values and Sudan

We are taught in Leviticus that “You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.” (Leviticus 19: 16). Yet blood continues to be shed on Sudanese soil. Our tradition teaches us that human life is sacred because all of humanity is b'tselem elohim, created in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26), and the Torah makes clear that we have an obligation to preserve the sanctity of life by speaking out in response to oppression and brutality in our world. As a people intimately acquainted with the horrors of genocide, we are obligated to speak out and take action when other peoples are similarly threatened with annihilation.

Teacher's Resource

Programming Suggestions/What You Can Do

- Invite a speaker for Shabbat services and encourage your rabbi to give a drash on Darfur.
- Organize a demonstration or a vigil. If you are in DC or NYC you can hold a demonstration in front of the Sudanese embassy or the United Nations. Organize a vigil at your high school or synagogue. Reach out to other groups in your community. Interfaith Prayers can be found on the RAC website. [Sample Prayers for Use in Jewish and Interfaith Worship](#) can be found on the Save Darfur Coalition website.
- Hold a press conference to release a statement calling for action.
- Meet with members of Congress and urge them to be more vigilant on this issue. You can use our talking points above to frame your conversation.
- Send emails, letters, faxes and phone calls by visiting the [RAC's Legislative Action Center](#) and urging your Representative to address the needs of the Sudanese people by cosponsoring and voting for the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act.
- Send letters to the ambassadors to the UN of Security Council member states and urge them to insist on prompt action to ensure effective implementation of demands set out in earlier Security Council resolutions threatening Sudan's leaders with penalties if conditions in Darfur do not improve (all member states of the Security Council can be found [here](#)).
- Write op-eds and letters to the editor.
- Collect signatures for a petition. Remember that petitions should include the names and addresses of the signatories and the petition statement should be printed on the top of each page.
- Put together a photo exhibit featuring pictures from Darfur (See photographs on [Save Darfur](#) website).
- Join the Green Ribbon Campaign by wearing a green ribbon, button, or rubber bracelet to support the innocent people at risk of death in the Sudanese region of Darfur, and in memory of those already dead. Use the ribbon as an opportunity to explain to others the importance of the cause. Green bracelets can be purchased through the Save Darfur coalition website at www.savedarfur.org. Try selling the bracelets to raise money for relief efforts and raise awareness by printing and distributing postcards with information about the genocide. You can send a check to Save Darfur Coalition, 1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 802, Washington, D.C. 20036. (Please include your shipping and email addresses.)
- Or, you can use a credit card online on the [donations page](#).
- Make sure to Write "I am ordering wristbands" in the comments box and send an email to wristbands@savedarfur.org confirming your order and shipping address.
- Raise awareness by showing a video on Darfur such as those from Human Rights Watch. Or host a screening of Hotel Rwanda and talk about the parallels between Rwanda and Sudan. Videos on Darfur can be downloaded [here](#).
- Hold a concert or other event to raise money to aid the relief efforts. Feature a local band and ask for donations at the door for humanitarian relief.
- Donate funds to the Reform Movement's Sudan Relief Fund. [Click here](#) to make a donation on-line, or send checks payable to the Union for Reform Judaism (write "Sudan Relief Fund" in the memo section of your check) to:

Union for Reform Judaism, Attn: Sudan Relief
633 Third Ave. 7th Floor
New York City, NY 10017

General Rules of Kashrut

From the website: <http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>

Although the details of *kashrut* are extensive, the laws all derive from a few fairly simple, straightforward rules:

1. Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals. Leviticus 11:3,4 and 9
2. Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
3. All blood must be drained from the meat or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
4. Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
5. Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy. (According to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat). Exodus 23:19 and Deuteronomy 14:21.
6. Utensils that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.
7. Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.

Texts About Life for Suicide Lesson **From the book Count Me In**

RABBI AKIVA TAUGHT, "BELOVED IS HUMANKIND, FOR WE WERE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, BUT IT WAS BY A SPECIAL LOVE THAT IT WAS MADE KNOWN TO US THAT WE WERE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD."

-PIRKEI AVOT 3:14

A Hasidic sage taught that every person should have two pockets: "In one pocket there should be a piece of paper saying, 'I am but dust and ashes,' When you are feeling proud, reach into that pocket, take out the note and read it. In the other pocket there should be a piece of paper saying, 'For my sake the world was created.' When you are feeling unhappy and lowly, reach into that pocket, take out the note and read it."

-Page 19

You have made humans just a bit less than divine, and have crowned them with glory and honor.

-Psalm 8:6

God created the human being in God's image, *b'tzelem Elohim*.

-Genesis 1:27

Love your neighbor as yourself.

-Leviticus 19:18

Jewish people have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people." Shabbat is an experience that unites us, calms us, reminds us of what is important in our lives, and makes us distinctly Jewish.

In his book *The Sabbath*, Abraham Joshua Heschel, a great 20th-century Jewish thinker, recommended that we

set apart one day a week for freedom ... a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence [from] external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization and a day on which we use no money.... Is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for [humanity's] progress than the Sabbath?

Shabbat is a day with guidelines for slowing down and taking time to just *be*. You may want to try following some or all of these guidelines to experience a day of rest in the Jewish tradition. You may just want to read about them and perhaps incorporate some of the suggestions that appeal to you in your daily life. If you've never observed Shabbat, start with one or two items and add more as you feel comfortable doing so.

M'KOROT

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the *Adonai*, your God. You shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female servant, your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlement. For in six days *Adonai* made the heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, *Adonai* blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." —Exodus 20:8-11

"What was created serenity, peace and quiet."

"I have a precious gift. Its name is Shabbat. I invite you to go and inform them." —Talmud

"There was a monarch who was intricately carved like the bride. So too the world but the only thing missing was Shabbat."

"Shabbat adds a sweetness that is needed to begin of a new day, a glass of wine, two friends or family." —Brad Pitt

"A person should rise early in the morning to prepare all that is necessary for the day. In one's employ, one should do the work personally in honor of the employer. One should not let a servant mince the vegetables; Rabbi Zeira would do it himself. One should arrange his house, bring in the wood, and clearing away objects to follow the examples of the sages. One should not belittle myself with such things. One should lend one's dignity to honor the Sabbath." —*Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim*

"What was created after it was already Shabbat? Tranquility, serenity, peace and quiet." —*Genesis Rabbah* 17:7

"I have a precious gift in my treasure vault,' God told Moses. 'Its name is Shabbat. I intend to give this gift to the Jewish People. Go inform them.'" —Talmud, *Shabbat* 10b

"There was a monarch who prepared a special wedding canopy. It was intricately carved and adorned; the only thing missing was the bride. So too the world was created intricately and majestically, but the only thing missing was Shabbat." —*Genesis Rabbah* 10:9

"Shabbat adds a sweetness and a rhythm to the week, and all that is needed to begin observing this day of rest are two white candles, a glass of wine, two loaves of bread and a tasty meal with friends or family." —Bradley Shavit Artson, *It's a Mitzvah*

"A person should rise early on Friday morning in order to prepare all that is necessary for Shabbat. Even if one has a full staff in one's employ, one should make it one's business to prepare something personally in honor of the holy day. Thus Rabbi Chisda would mince the vegetables; Rabbah and Rabbi Yosef would chop wood; Rabbi Zeira would light the fire; Rabbi Nachman would arrange his house, bringing out those items needed for Shabbat and clearing away objects used only on the weekdays. We should all follow the examples of these sages and not say, 'Don't expect me to belittle myself with such menial activities!' On the contrary, it lends one dignity to honor Shabbat by preparing for its arrival." —*Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 250:1

PIRKEI BANOT

"What I like about being Jewish is that you know when to work and when to rest." —Yaffa Yeshayahu, 33

"The Sabbath began at sundown Friday, just as it was dark, but the preparations began on Thursday morning. The good housewives did the marketing, and worked ahead feverishly and hard. The house had to be immaculate, the *kuchen* (coffee cake) baked, the children in their good clothes, to welcome the Sabbath—the day of rest—and peace and gladness.... There was evening service and then we had supper.... Never was the linen more snowy, never the meal more perfect.... In some of the very Orthodox families a prayer was said over the bread and wine and the candles lighted to welcome the Sabbath, but I never [do] that ceremony in our house." —Jennie Rosenfeld Gerstley, "Reminiscences"—of Chicago in the 1860s and 1870s

DO IT**Ten Tips to Prepare for Shabbat**

The fourth of the Ten Commandments that the Jewish people received on Mount Sinai was to observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as a day of rest, relaxation, and spiritual appreciation. Here are some suggestions for how you can prepare for the sweetness of Shabbat each week:

1. Wear something special.
2. Buy a treat (a chocolate bar or a magazine) and reserve it for Shabbat.
3. Help prepare a meal.
4. Clean your room.

5. Send someone a *Shab*
6. Call a grandparent or good Shabbat.
7. Take a long bath or sl self a face mask.
8. Share a highlight of th
9. Invite a special friend
10. Find an interesting or

BRINGING SHA

One way to add to a mitzvah (vah). This doesn't mean you means spending more time many people put flowers in t people make their own cand is beautifying the mitzvah of

MEET**Lady Shabbat**

In Jewish tradition, Shabbat is but Shabbat has been person other names of Shabbat are: Queen, Mother, and Bride. S these women in poetry, song been most of the writers of po the many images of Shabbat :

Preventing Youth Suicide

Suicide is a universal problem. There is no particular type of person who takes his/her own life. People of every race, religion, sex and age commit suicide.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young adults ages 15-24 years. Among college students, suicide is the second leading cause of death.

Girls are 3 times more likely to ATTEMPT suicide, but boys are 5 times more likely to COMPLETE suicide. Alcohol and/or drugs are involved in 50% of adolescent suicides. Guns and overdoses are two frequently used methods. Out of every 10 suicide attempts, 9 take place in the home.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered youth commit suicide three times more often than heterosexual youth. Recent studies indicate that nationwide more than half a million high school students attempt suicide every year.

Young adults often share their feelings and problems with their peers. In fact, over 90% of all suicidal adolescents talk to others about their suicidal feelings. They do NOT always talk to their parents, teachers, counselors but to their FRIENDS. Your understanding of suicide and awareness of the problem may help save the life of a friend or family member, or even your own life.

If you are concerned about a loved one, you should ask directly if they have suicidal feelings or if they plan to harm themselves. Asking may make the person feel relieved that someone finally recognized their emotional pain. Remember, talking to someone about their suicidal feelings does NOT put the thought of suicide into their head.

Most people think about suicide at some point in their lives. Nevertheless, the majority of these people find that their thoughts are temporary and things do get better. Suicidal people, however, feel that they can no longer cope with their problems and that suicide is the only solution. Suicide is not a spontaneous act. Suicide is an emotional erosion. Many stressful events occur in a person's life before he/she contemplates suicide. A person has thoughts of suicide after he/she has exhausted all known coping skills.

Most people with suicidal feelings are ambivalent, that is, part of them wants to live while part of them wants to die. Most often, suicidal people just want to be relieved of their emotional pain. They want to live.

Remember, suicidal people often give warning signs of their intent. They may show signs that they are depressed, always talking about death, and making final arrangements. Generally, a person will show more than one sign at a time. People who talk about suicide ARE seriously considering taking their own lives. These people ARE "crying" for help and this warning should NOT be ignored.

Taken from The Union for Reform Judaism Publication, *Preventing Youth Suicide*.
Available on the Union web page: <http://urj.org/jfc/resources/>

If you suspect that a friend or family member is thinking of suicide, ask that person about it. It is OK to talk about suicide, and it will not give the person an idea he or she has not thought of. Although this is difficult to do, it is the most important action that you can take. It is natural to feel anxious or nervous.

- Ask if the person is considering suicide if such information is not forthcoming.
- Talk openly and freely, ask direct questions about the person's intentions. Determine whether the person has a plan for suicide—the more detailed the plan the greater the risk.
- Take all threats seriously
- Do not say that everything will be all right.
- Trust your suspicions that the person may be self-destructive.
- Try to focus the problem.
- Tell them how every person is valuable and worthy of life.
- Communicate your concerns for the person. Be an active listener and show your support.
- Get professional help. Encourage the person to seek help from a counselor, teacher, clergy or someone who is trained to help solve emotional problems. If the person resists, you may have to get the necessary help.
- Remove all lethal weapons. (i.e. drugs and guns)
- Call any hot-line or crisis center.
- Do not swear to secrecy to the suicidal person. You may lose a friendship, but you may save a life. Break a confidence. Tell a responsible adult.
- Do not argue with a suicidal person. That person does not realize that he/she has everything in the world to live for. Arguments may make the person feel more guilty.
- Arrange with the person to be back in contact within a few hours. Offer yourself as a caring and concerned listener until professional assistance has been obtained.
- Do not leave the person alone if you believe the risk of suicide is immediate.
- Get the person to agree to do something constructive to change things.
- Explore with the person how they can take control.

Parents and other adults who work with youth need to teach them to cope with life situations. Young adults need to be provided with a foundation to deal with failure, understanding their mistakes, and learning from them in order to go on with their life. Many times, young people are not given this chance to fail. Youth need to learn to set realistic goals, to be flexible, and develop a sense of humor in dealing with life. This can be done in a variety of ways:

Show understanding and acknowledge your concerns through "I" statements,
Ask "how are you going to solve this problem?"

Listen without criticism.

Help him/her look at the consequences.

Give support even when you do not support his/her behavior.

Give permission to solve or not to solve the problem.

Be available during their crisis.

Ask about feelings. Try out a few words which express your feelings as if you were in this situation.

Feelings are not right or wrong. They are feelings.

Be informed:

Be aware of our youth's role models.

Know about drugs, alcohol, youth suicide prevention.

Communicate with our young adults—provide opportunities to discuss nothing in particular, listen, do not judge, discuss sex, substance abuse, and their feelings.

Be "for" our young people, by encouraging their growth through trial and error.

Be "askable":

Show interest in their activities.

Learn about the adolescent years.

Know where to turn in case you need help—crisis hot lines, clergy, professional help.

Check into school programs on self-esteem, human sexuality, etc.

COPING STRATEGIES

Try to be open with your feelings.

Don't withdraw.

Spend time with family and friends.

Avoid books, magazines, TV and movies that frighten or depress you or alienate you from family and friends.

Avoid negative daydreaming.

Consider the importance of religion in your life.

Get involved in clubs and organizations.

Pursue a hobby you enjoy and join others who share your interest.

Plan things to look forward to.

Set realistic personal goals.

Find volunteer work through which you can give of yourself to others.

Engage in regular athletic activity.

Eat a balanced diet.

Get enough sleep, and avoid late nights out.

Avoid drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

Avoid sexually intimate relationships outside of marriage or a committed relationship.

Learn to laugh at yourself and at life.

Regularly remind yourself that problems are temporary.

Admit that certain things, like physical appearance, are out of your control, and make the best of them.

Regularly spend some time alone to think and plan.

Learn to be more organized.

Don't tolerate abuse from anyone. Get help immediately.

Seek professional help if you feel overwhelmed or in trouble.

From American Cultural Traditions, Inc

HOW TO DEAL WITH MAKING MISTAKES

1. Accept the reality of taking risks. Everyone makes mistakes. A mistake is when you thought something was right, only to find out later that it was not a good choice.
2. Discover why your mistakes occurred. What needs were ignored?
3. Learn from your mistakes. Acknowledge your failure and change behavior. You can grow from this experience or crisis situation.
4. Work together with a parent, adult friend or peers to list possible solutions. Use trial and error until you find a successful solution.
5. It is OK not to be perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. Learning from our mistakes helps us to grow.

"IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF, WHO WILL BE FOR ME?"

*IF I AM ONLY FOR MYSELF, WHAT AM I?
HILLEL*

RISK FACTORS

Adolescence is one of the most stressful periods in one's life. It is both a turbulent and exciting age. People with particular background factors or emotional problems may be at increased risk of attempting suicide. Appropriate, professional mental health care is advised for such individuals. Factors leading to feelings of stress include not only unusual setbacks or disappointments but likewise special successes and the tensions of 'everyday living.' Some events that may lead to suicidal thoughts are:

- Death of a family member, pet, friend, teacher, etc.
- Separation or divorce, particularly when the parents fight over the kids or use them against each other.
- Conflict of religious values with life events (interdating, etc.)
- Trouble holding onto friends.
- Suicidal death of a friend or family member.
- Difficulty communicating with parents.
- Abusive use of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Being different (handicapped, gifted, etc.)
- Coping with elderly parents or grandparents.
- Starting at a new school (7th grade freshman year - high school or college.)
- Concern over sexual identity (early sexual experiences or homosexual feelings.)
- Failure in or pressures to achieve at school, sports, work, etc.
- Peer pressure to belong to a social group.
- Trouble with the law.
- Recent withdrawal from therapeutic help.
- Breakup of a relationship or romance.
- Chronic illness in self, family member or close friend.
- Gender identity conflicts.
- Past or current sexual or emotional abuse.
- Loss of self-esteem.
- Move to a new community.
- Previous suicide attempts.

WARNING SIGNS

People who are considering taking their own lives will often give warning signs or signals. Keep in mind that one sign alone does not mean that a person will commit suicide. A combination of several signs, however, may tell you that the person is seeking help. Some common signs are:

- Direct Statements like "I want to die," "I don't want to live anymore."
- Indirect statements like "I want to go to sleep and never wake up." "They'll be sorry when I'm gone," and "Soon this pain will be over."
- Depression: feeling of loss, hopelessness, helplessness, loneliness, isolation, increase or decrease in sleeping patterns, withdrawal from usual social activities, loss of interest or a new concern about grades by a poor student.
- Sudden energy following a depression. (Energy is needed to commit suicide.)
- Making final arrangements (giving away possessions, saying good-bye, etc.)
- Increased risk taking (reckless driving, etc.) and frequent accidents.
- Personality changes-withdrawal, apathy, moodiness.
- Themes of death and dying in a person's writing and artwork.
- Marked hostility to those around him/her.
- A detailed plan of how they want to die.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

College students or those who leave home after high school are also under a certain kind of stress. They may have never been on their own before. They are now responsible for their own livelihood. These young adults will experience feelings of loneliness and family separation.

They will also have the responsibilities of managing their household (meals, bills, laundry, dealing with roommates, controlling their finances, etc. Some have never had many responsibilities in their parent's home and when they get out on their own, they have a difficult time surviving. Do not make light of calls home or concerns these young adults may have.

A JEWISH VIEW

Judaism does not condone the taking of one's life. Persons who commit suicide are considered to have been incapable of understanding their own actions (*lo la-daat*).

Therefore, survivors of suicide attempts should receive counseling. And for completed suicides, burial rites are not denied, and mourning customs are observed as a source of comfort to surviving loved ones.

Judaism forbids suicide except under specific tragic circumstances (*kiddush ha-Shem*)—where the choice is forced conversion or forced death. With the exception of Nazi era, such conditions do not normally occur in our day.

Lo Alecha Ham'lacha ligmor v lo ata ben chorin l'hibatayl mi mena

It is not your duty to complete the work of life. Neither are you free to desist from it.

Pirkei Avot 2:20

MARC BRETTLER

You shall love Adonai your God” The central, and most misunderstood, section of the *Sh'ma* is its commandment to love God fully and completely. As in the previous “You have loved us most lovingly” (see above) a particular kind of love is intended. In its current liturgical framework, Israel is the child returning appropriate love to the loving, caring father. As such, the passage is likely subsumed under the metaphor of God as father (e.g. Exod. 4:22; Deut. 32:6). But that metaphor is relatively rare in the Bible, and in any event, it is quite (p. 101)

DAVID ELLENSON

You shall love” The major twentieth-century prayer books of American Reform Judaism — *The Union Prayer Book* and *Gates of Prayer* — follow the example set by David Einhorn’s *Olath Tamid* from over a century ago, by including as their *Sh'ma* only the first of the three traditional paragraphs (Deut. 6:4–9), along with the conclusion of the third (Num. 15:41). In so doing, they affirmed only those parts of the (p. 102)

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

You shall love” “Love” (*v'ahavta*) is functionally an imperative, even though grammatically a future verb. We maintain “shall” to attempt to capture the ancient style (ancient even for the Rabbis).

“Mind and body and strength” The Hebrew *levav*, *nefesh*, and *m'od* suggest that the Bible conceived of human-ness differently than we do. We divide ourselves into “mind,” “body” and (perhaps) “soul,” representing, respectively, our cognitive capacity, our physical matter and our holy essence. We also distinguish between thought (p. 102)

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

THE REST OF DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9 NOW FOLLOWS.

DANIEL LANDES

You shall love” Some congregations sing the entire *Sh'ma* or read it in unison. Either custom is proper, as long as it is not discordant or distracting.

“Today, in mind” We pause after “today” (*hayom*) so as not to imply that only “today” we keep the commandments “in mind.”

“When you lie down and when you stand up” This verse refers to the time of reciting *Sh'ma*, not the position in which it is recited. The traditional practice is thus to sit, not stand. The *Tur* contrasts God’s demand that we proclaim Him king with a similar order by earthly kings, who ask that their kingship be affirmed “while standing,” as a sign of a person’s servility.

The halakhic point of sitting is not sitting per se, but the absence of a requirement to stand. Thus, if we are (p. 103)

וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-
 לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ.
 וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר
 אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל-לִבְבְּךָ.
 וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָם
 בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכֹתְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ,
 וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ.⁸ וְקִשְׂרָתָם

⁴ You shall love Adonai your God with all your mind and body and strength. ⁵ Keep these words, which I command you today, in mind. ⁶ Instruct your children about them. ⁷ Use them when you sit at home and when you walk about, when you lie down and when you stand up. ⁸ Bind them to (p. 101)

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proper, as long as it
discordant or dis-

y, in mind" We
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to imply that only
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if we are (p. 103)

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1 thought (p. 102)

your hand as a sign and set them between
your eyes as a symbol. ⁹Write them on the
doorposts of your house and on your gates.

לאות על-גִּדְדָּהּ, וְהָיוּ לְטָטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינַיִךָ,
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מִזְוֹת בֵּיתְךָ, וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ.

MARC BRETTLER

odd to command a child to love a parent. It thus seems appropriate to understand this
love in a different way.

The covenant of Deuteronomy arose originally within the context of the vassal-
suzerain (dependent-overlord) treaties of the ancient Semitic world. (Indeed, the
Hebrew word *b'rit* means not just "covenant" but "treaty" in some contexts.) Thus,
Israel is God's vassal, and the commandments of Deuteronomy are obligations owed
toward God, the overlord. In return, God as suzerain has treaty obligations toward the
vassal, such as protection from third-party invasions.

These treaties customarily use the term "love." For example, the vassal treaties of
the early-seventh-century B.C.E. Assyrian (northern Mesopotamian) king,
Esarhaddon, which have significant similarities to Deuteronomy, call on the vassal to
"love the crown prince designated Ashurbanipal, son of your lord, Esarhaddon, king
of Assyria as you do your own lives." In fact, the main point of the text is that
Ashurbanipal alone shall be recognized as king, an idea quite close to the initial verse
of the *Sh'ma*.

"Love" here is therefore a technical term for acceptance of treaty obligations. In our
case of Deuteronomy, the expected love is quite extreme. We are to "love" God with all
of our "mind, body and strength"; express this love by keeping the commandments in
mind always ("when you sit, walk about, lie down and stand up"); and instruct them to
the next generation. We are expected also to surround body and house with reminders
of them: "Bind them to your hand . . . and set them between your eyes . . . Write them
on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

The ancient near east had amulets, but these written signs, symbols or door-writings
are not among them, since these have no protective power. They are to remind Israel,
as vassal, that God is the overlord (see above, "You shall love Adonai your God"). The
measures are intentionally extreme, in part because Deuteronomy was written to
remind Israel not to imagine there were other deities as well as Adonai (see esp. 1 Kgs.
18:21). In addition, the *Sh'ma* makes the point that God is more powerful than other
human political overlords, for God controls earthly kings.

The use of a political metaphor here is therefore subversive, undermining loyalty
to human rulers, relative to God. It is God's commandments which must be fully
obeyed.

SH'MA

DAVID ELLENSON

Sh'ma that they thought had been part of the original liturgy, and that, coincidentally, they believed with all their heart anyway: the Jewish community's wholehearted devotion to God and the central event in Jewish history — the Exodus from Egypt.

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

(cognition) and feeling (emotion). The Bible, however, groups thought and feeling together under *levav*; soul and body together under *nefesh*; and perhaps physical strength or endurance under *m'od*. When *levav* (or *lev*, from the same root) refers to an organ, it is the heart but the heart is metaphorically akin to the English "mind." For example, when biblical characters "think," they say they have something "in *lev*" (see, e.g., Deut: 15:9) — roughly translatable as "said to himself," or, less idiomatically, "said in his mind." For something to be "on your *levav*" (below) is what we would call to "have it in mind." *Levav*, then, refers at once to emotion and to intellect, a conceptual combination that English lacks. *Nefesh*, most often translated here as "soul" (SSS, Birnbaum, SLC, FOP) or "breath" (KH) is used biblically the way we might use "person": Deut. 24:7 speaks of a "person who steals another person," using *ish* "man" in the first instance but *nefesh* in the second. Similarly, it is the *nefesh* that transgresses (Lev. 4:2) and eats (Lev. 7:27). Yet every creature, it seems, has (or is) a *nefesh*. God's covenant with Noah is established with every *nefesh* ("every living being"?) and the laws of *kashrut* forbid eating any "living *nefesh* in the water" (Lev 11:10). *Nefesh*, then, is paradigmatically a person, yet refers to that which people have in common with all animals. Neither "breath of life," nor "soul" captures this meaning. (We use "soul" with a vaguely similar notion of "person" in the English expression "not a soul.")

Furthermore, *nefesh* and *levav* together form an idiom in biblical Hebrew (here, Deut. 11:13, 11:18, and 13:4; Josh. 22:5 and Josh. 23:14 etc.), probably used to represent the entirety of human existence, much the way we use "mind and body," or sometimes, "body and soul" depending on the context, but always in order to mean "the whole person." In Joshua, the combined term "*nefesh* and *levav*" modifies both "to serve" and later "to know," suggesting that the connection between "love" here and "heart" is at most a play on words, and probably a coincidence of our modern understanding of these words. Accordingly, we use the common English phrase "mind and body" for the corresponding Hebrew "*levav* and *nefesh*."

M'odekha seems to have been tacked on here, since it is missing from Deut. 11:13, for instance, which follows. Similarly secondary, relative to "mind and body" is our English "strength." SSS, Birnbaum, SLC and FOP have "might"; GOP offers "being," KH "what you have" and Artscroll "your resources."

"In mind" *Levav*, translated here, as above, as "mind." The repetition of *levav* raises the interesting conjecture that this paragraph is a three-fold elaboration of the ways God

, coincidentally, they
hearted devotion to
it.

is to be loved: 1) keeping God's instruction in mind (representing *levav*); 2) teaching children or acting on them ourselves (perhaps what one does with the *nefesh*); and 3), associating them with hand, eye and doorpost (the *m'od*).

"Instruct your children about them" Not "teach"; "teach" is reserved below for a different verb. The Hebrew verb here (*v'shinantem*) derives from the root for "tooth," a connotation missed in the English translation. The frequently used adverb "diligently" would add little, and so is omitted here.

"Use them" The usual translation is "speak of them," from *v'dibarta bam*. The verb *v'dibarta* (from the root *d.b.r*) usually refers to the communicative aspect of language, in contrast to *amar*, the vocal aspect of language. For instance, the common phrase, *Vay'daber adonai el Moshe leimor*, usually translated, "God spoke to Moses, saying," is really, "God communicated to Moses, using speech to do so." But *d.b.r* does not take a *bet* before its object, whereas here, we have just that *bet* (*bam*, not *otam*). We assume that the *bet* is instrumental, giving us, "Communicate, using them [these words]," or equivalently, "Use them."

"When you sit at home . . . when you stand up" The four Hebrew words rendered by "sit," "walk," "lie down" and "stand" represent four postures, and ought to do so in English. "When you . . ." is used to create the possibility of mimicking the Hebrew parallel structure: thus, "when you sit, when you walk, when you lie down, when you stand up." Others prefer "rise (up)," but the emphasis here seems to be on bodily posture, not the act of rising.

"To your hand . . . between your eyes" Both "to your hand" and "between your eyes" are almost certainly idioms, and so might be better translated idiomatically in English ("keep them at hand and in sight") were it not for the (current, but probably not biblical) association between these phrases and *t'fillin*.

"As a symbol" Others, "frontlets." But for most readers "frontlets" is enigmatic. Is it not clear that the original intention was anything more than metaphoric.

DANIEL LANDES

out walking when the time arrives to say *Sh'ma*, we need not sit down. We just halt momentarily, and say it standing. Even a worker up a tree just pauses from work. A driver in an automobile can say *Sh'ma* without stopping, as long as proper intent is present. We may not lie down, however, since lying face-down is servile, and lying face-up is arrogant.

"Bind them to your hand as a sign and set them between your eyes" Wearing *t'fillin* constitutes testimony to the *Sh'ma's* doctrine. Traditionally, not to wear them is held to constitute self-indictment as giving false testimony. When reference is made to the

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Blessings for Mezuzah

Unit 6: Activity 4

For An Office

Psalm 19:8-12

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תִּמְיִמָּה מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ עֵדוּת יְהוָה נֶאֱמָנָה מְחַכֵּמַת פִּתִּי:
פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרִים מְשִׁמְחֵי לֵב מִצְוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינַיִם:
יְרֵאת יְהוָה | טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת צְדָקוֹ יַחְדָּו:
הִנְחִמָּדִים מִזָּהָב וּמִפָּזָר רַב וּמִתּוֹקִים מִדְּבַשׁ וְנֹפֶת צוּפִים:
גַּם עֲבָדָד נִזְהָר בָּהֶם בְּשִׁמְרָם יִקָּב רַב: יג שְׂגִיאוֹת מִי־יָבִין מִנְסֻתָּרוֹת נִקְנִי:

8. The Torah of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
9. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
10. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
11. More to be desired are they than gold, even very fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
12. Moreover by them is your servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

For the Entrance to the Living Room

Genesis 18:1-5

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאֵלְנֵי מַמְרֵא וְהוּא יָשָׁב פֶּתַח־הָאֹהֶל כְּחֹם הַיּוֹם:
וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיֵּרָץ
לְקִרְאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי אִם־נָא מְצֵאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶל־נָא תַעֲבֹר מֵעַל עַבְדְּךָ:
יִקַּח־נָא מֵעַט־מִים וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁעֵנוּ תַּחַת הָעֵץ:
וְאִקְחָה פַת־לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לַבָּכֶם אַחֲרַי תַעֲבֹרוּ כִי־עַל־כֵּן
עֲבַרְתֶּם עַל־עַבְדְּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֵן תַעֲשֶׂה כַאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ:

1. And the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;
2. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the ground,
3. And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I beseech you, from your servant;
4. Let a little water, I beseech you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree;
5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and you comfort your hearts; after that you shall pass on; seeing that you are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as you have said.

Genesis 24:31-33

וַיֹּאמֶר בּוֹא בְרוּךְ יְהוָה לָמָּה תַעֲמֹד בַּחוּץ וְאַנְכִּי פָנִיתִי
הַבַּיִת וּמְקוֹם לְגַמְלִים: וַיָּבֹא הָאִישׁ הַבַּיִתָּה וַיִּפְתַּח הַגַּמְלִים
וַיִּתֵּן תַבָּן וּמִסְפּוּא לְגַמְלִים וּמִים לְרַחֵץ רַגְלָיו וְרַגְלֵי
הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ: וַיִּישָׂם [וַיּוֹשֶׂם] לְפָנָיו לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר
לֹא אֲכַל עַד אִם־דִּבַּרְתִּי דְבָרִי וַיֹּאמֶר דַּבֵּר:

31. And he said, Come in, you blessed of the Lord; why do you stand outside? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.
32. And the man came into the house; and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the feet of the men who were with him.
33. (K) And there was set food before him to eat; but he said, I will not eat, until I have told my errand. And he said, Speak on.

For the Entrance to the Dining Room

Genesis 1:29-31

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב | זֶרַע זֶרַע
אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ
פְּרִי־עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ: וְלִכְל־חַיַּת
הָאָרֶץ וְלִכְל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל | רוּמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וַיְהִי־כֵן
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד
וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי: פ

29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, on which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food.

30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, where there is life, I have given every green herb for food; and it was so.

31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 9:3-4

כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב נֹתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־
אֲדָמָת־בָּשָׂר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:

3. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4. But flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

כִּי יִהְיֶה אֶלֶּהֶיךָ מִבְּיַאֲד־אֶל־אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחְלֵי מַיִם
עֵינֹת וַתְּהַמֹּת לְצִאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָרִ:
אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעֵרָה וְגִבְוֹן וַתֵּאֱמַר וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ־זֵית שֶׁמֶן וַדְּבָשׁ:
אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְמִסְכַּנְתָּ תֹאכַל־בָּהּ לֶחֶם לֹא־תַחְסֹר
כֹּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבַנְיָהּ בְּרוֹזַל וַיִּמְהַרְרֶיהָ תַחֲצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת:
וְאֹכַלְתָּ וְשִׂבַּעְתָּ וּבִרְכַתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ:

7. For the Lord your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

8. A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey;

9. A land where you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig bronze.

10. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which he has given you.

MARC BRETTLER

Who is like You among the gods [elim], Adonai!" From the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15), one of the earliest pieces of biblical literature. When it was written, *elim* certainly meant real gods, but by the time it was incorporated into the liturgy, Judaism had long accepted "radical monotheism" and would not even admit the *theoretical* possibility of other deities. *Elim* was thus reinterpreted as "divine beings" like angels, or just as "mighty ones."

From here until the end of the blessing, we find grammatical tenses used in a particularly (p. 131)

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

Blessed are You, Adonai, who redeemed Israel" The *Shallah* is the last *piyyut* insertion in the *Yotser* set. Many poets exploited its theme to give voice to a collective yearn- (p. 132)

DAVID ELLENSON

Moses and the children of Israel" In response to the modern demand for gender equality, a whole host of liturgies (the British *Lev Chadash*, the Reconstructionist *Kol Han'shamah*, and the Reform Movement's gender-sensitive *Gates of Prayer*) have added the name of Miriam to that of (p. 132)

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

Singing" Lit., "saying," but the verb "saying" does not refer to any particular modality, being used rather in place of quotation marks, which had not been invented yet. (p. 132)

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

Who is like You" The Song of the Sea celebrates God's paradigmatic entry into history. Reciting it here celebrates the belief that God will enter history again, to inaugurate divine rule in the world to come.

"Who redeemed Israel" The final benediction, "Redemption," presents the Jewish response to a theme in Greek philosophy ever since Aristotle, who posited the existence of a god, but only as a logical necessity. Aristotle believed that every event has a cause immediately antecedent to it. Such a view results in an infinite (p. 133)

מִי כְמוֹתָהּ בְּאֵלִים יי
מִי כְמוֹתָהּ נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ,
שִׁירָה בְּשִׁמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ
מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה עָנוּ
כָּל־אֶמְרוּ

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

Who is like You" Elimelekh of Grodzisk (d. 1892), in his *Divrei Elimelekh*, offers an extraordinary insight into the meaning of redemption. It is based on a deliberate misreading of the *Mi kamokha*, and a daring Zoharic interpretation of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. Elimelekh begins with a traditional reading: *Mi kamokha ba'elim Adonai*, "Who is like You among the gods, Adonai!" This, he says, is an exclamatory question: "God, You are incomparable, inconceivable and incomprehensible. You are beyond any (p. 133)

Hoffman, Lawrence
My People's Prayer
Book vol 1
pg 130-134
Unit 6
Activity 5

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...nai will reign
...ck of Israel,
...ar Judah and
...ur redeemer,
...Israel's holy one.²
...who redeemed Isi

MARC BRETTLER
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"True and establish
(the ones before th
of heavenly praise
the *Shma's* central

Revered in praise, worker of wonders!

¹⁹At the seashore the redeemed sang a new song to your name. ²⁰Together they all gave thanks, exalting You with these words:

Adonai will reign for ever and ever.

²¹Rock of Israel, arise to help Israel, and deliver Judah and Israel, as You promised.

²²Our redeemer, Lord of Hosts is his name, Israel's holy one. ²³Blessed are You, Adonai, who redeemed Israel.

נֹרָא תְהִלָּתְךָ, עֲשֵׂה פִלְא.

יְשִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שְׁבַחוּ גְאוּלַיִם לְשִׁמְךָ עַל
שִׁפְתֵי הַיָּם. יַחַד כָּלֶם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ
וְאָמְרוּ.

יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעַלְמֵי נְעַד.

יְצוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוּמָה בְּעִזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וּפְדֵה כְנָאֲמֹךְ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. גְּאֻלָּנוּ
יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְיָ גְּאוּלַיִם יִשְׂרָאֵל.

MARC BRETTLER

significant way. God's actions in the past are recalled with quotations from the Song of the Sea given in the past tense ("sang a new song"), and the *chatimah* (the closing line of the blessing) too is in the past ("who redeemed Israel"). But it contains a set of commands dealing with the present ("arise," "deliver") and uses present participles (like "our redeemer"). The climactic hope for a new exodus (Exod. 15:18), however, is given in the future ("Adonai will reign for ever and ever"). This alternation of tenses cleverly reinforces the theme of Deutero-Isaiah (see above, "True and established") that the promised new redemption will mimic the past one. Indeed, it will occur not in the distant future, but in the near present, as all time periods — past, present and future — converge.

"*Adonai will reign for ever and ever*" Also from the Song of the Sea (see above, "Who is like You among the gods, Adonai!"), serving as its climactic conclusion (Exod. 15:18), a role which it plays in its liturgical recontextualization as well. The metaphor of God as king recapitulates the same image in the blessings before the *Sh'ma*, and recapitulates the idea of covenant or vassal-suzerain treaty which is central to the *Sh'ma* (see above, "You shall love Adonai your God").

"*Our redeemer, Lord of Hosts is his name, Israel's holy one*" It may not be accidental that this is a quotation of Isaiah 47:4 (Deutero-Isaiah), whose theology concerning the reliability of God in bringing about a second exodus so infused the preceding unit (see above, "True and established"). But the end of the blessing is also linked to the first two blessings (the ones before the *Sh'ma*) which describe the heavenly praise of God. The combination of heavenly praise before the *Sh'ma* and earthly praise after it are a powerful reminder of the *Sh'ma's* central message of Israel's responsibility to be loyal to the one true God.

G'ULLAH

"Rock . . . redeemer, Lord of Hosts" All images that unequivocally highlight God's tremendous power, and in this context serve as an introduction to the petitions of the *Amidah*. God is, moreover, *Israel's Holy One*, so it is right and proper for this God to accept petitions from individual Jews, with every possibility that they will be granted.

SUSAN L. EINBINDER

ing for redemption, mingling their sense of longing for a lost state of harmony with a hope that soon, they would be restored to their rightful place as God's people and in God's world.

DAVID ELLENSON

Moses here, acknowledging her role in leading the Israelites in song and dance at the sea.

"And deliver Judah and Israel, as you promised" Reform liturgies have often objected to the nationalistic overtones of this passage. Both *Hamburg Temple Prayer Books*, *Olath Tamid*, and *Minhag America* all omitted the troublesome promise of Jewish national deliverance. Even some twentieth-century prayer books (like *Lev Chadash*) have not restored it, although others (like *Gates of Prayer*) have readmitted it, to reflect their new-found positive attitude towards Zionism.

JOEL M. HOFFMAN

"Who is like You . . . Adonai!" Certainly an exclamation, not a question.

"Adorned . . . wonders" We have three sets of two words in Hebrew, and so, in English, three parallel phrases. Other translations of this famous line include: "glorious in holiness, awe-inspiring in renown, doing wonders" (Birnbaum), "majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, working wonders" (SSS), "mighty in holiness, too awesome for praise, doing wonders" (Artscroll) and "majestic among the holy-ones, Feared-One of praises, Doer of Wonders" (Fox). We prefer "wonders" to "miracles," because "miracles" departs too greatly from the most likely biblical point of view, a view which combined the dual present-day notions of God's miracles and other natural wonders into one concept.

"As You promised" Lit., "as [in] your speeches."

LAWRENCE A.

regress, since even the endless search for "something" caused by anything impersonal deity of thought know-verse consists of This doctrine of modern physics, polemicize against, of a system Epicureans, the I bring about a bet

Since the Epic Rabbis ruled that to come, the Epic loathsome form c in the world of h

LAWRENCE KUSH NEHEMIA POLEN

name or euphemism out end," or *Ayin* and for our own *g yesh*, "something," comprehend God

People too need thing." In human ity. One needs to simply nothing. B lessness is also deb All Being? How c sense of Nothingn our actions, our se the Temple, ascen Through humility through our deeds

LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

regress, since everything must be caused by something else. To extricate himself from the endless search for prior causes, Aristotle posited the existence of a First Cause: a single "something" that is the cause of everything that comes afterward, but is itself not caused by anything else. That First Cause is Aristotle's God. A similar notion of a purely impersonal deity who cared nothing for human destiny was preached also by the school of thought known as the Epicureans, who held also a pre-Aristotelian view that the universe consists of atoms swirling endlessly through space and colliding with each other. This doctrine of physical reality, which, incidentally, was remarkably consistent with modern physics, was easily adopted by the Rabbis. They, however, felt obliged to polemicize against the parallel Epicurean denial of a personal God and the denial, therefore, of a system of morality in which divine will plays a role. In contrast to the Epicureans, the Rabbis insist on a moral God who enters history to right wrongs and bring about a better age.

Since the Epicureans denied an end to history in the form of a world to come, the Rabbis ruled that even though the righteous of all nations receive a share in the world to come, the Epicureans do not. To this day, the Hebrew *Apikoros* means a particularly loathsome form of heresy, because of its denial of a God who cares enough to be active in the world of human affairs.

LAWRENCE KUSHNER
NEHEMIA POLEN

name or euphemism." In the words of the Kabbalists, God is *Ein Sof*, "the One without end," or *Ayin*, "Nothing." Nevertheless, as a concession to the needs of humanity and for our own good, God clothes Godself with qualities and names and actions, with *yesh*, "something." In this way we can know in a concrete manner how to serve and comprehend God.

People too need to maintain this balance between *Ayin*, "Nothing," and *yesh*, "something." In human terms *Ayin* or Nothingness, is egolessness, selflessness, radical humility. One needs to strip away all corporeality and substance, and be, in one's own eyes, simply nothing. But this also creates a religious problem since radical humility or egolessness is also debilitating. How can one who is utterly nothing serve the Holy One of All Being? How could an ant serve an eagle? Somehow therefore, without losing our sense of Nothingness, we must, at the same time, inflate ourselves with the notion that our actions, our service, might actually be like sweet fragrances of the sacrificial altar in the Temple, ascending to God. Otherwise there would be no need for human action. Through humility and selflessness we must, therefore, be *Ayin*, "Nothing," while through our deeds and service, striving also to be *yesh*, "something."

This also finds a kabbalistic parallel to the two trees in the Garden of Eden. The tree of life corresponds in mystical imagery to *Ein Sof*, "the One without end," *Ayin*, "Nothing" (the top of the sefirotic diagram). The tree of knowledge of good and evil corresponds to this world of multiplicity, division, corporeality, and tangible reality — *yesh*, "something" (the bottom of the sefirotic diagram), the world of action. The goal is to balance the two trees. And that, says the Zohar — in a daring teaching — was the sin of Adam and Eve: They only "ate from the tree of knowledge but *not* from the tree of life!" The goal is to eat from *both* trees, to restore the balance between *Ayin* and *yesh*, "Nothing" and "something," and, in so doing, to repair the sin of Adam and Eve.

And just this is the real meaning of *Mi kamokha*, "Who is like You among the gods, Adonai!" For the Kabbalists, the word *mi* is not an interrogative "who," but another name for God. And *ba'elim* "among the gods" can also be read as *bet ilan* ב' אילן "two trees." So now the *Mi kamokha* reads not as a question but as a statement: "'Who' [i.e., God] is two trees," the tree of life which is *Ayin*, "Nothingness," and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is *yesh*, "something," *ne'edar bakodesh*, *nora tehilot*, *oseh fele*, "adorned in holiness, revered in praise, worker of miracles."

And when we balance our power to act, our self-assertion, our *yesh*, our something, with the humility of being selfless, *Ayin*, Nothing, then we too can perform wonders. And this is redemption.



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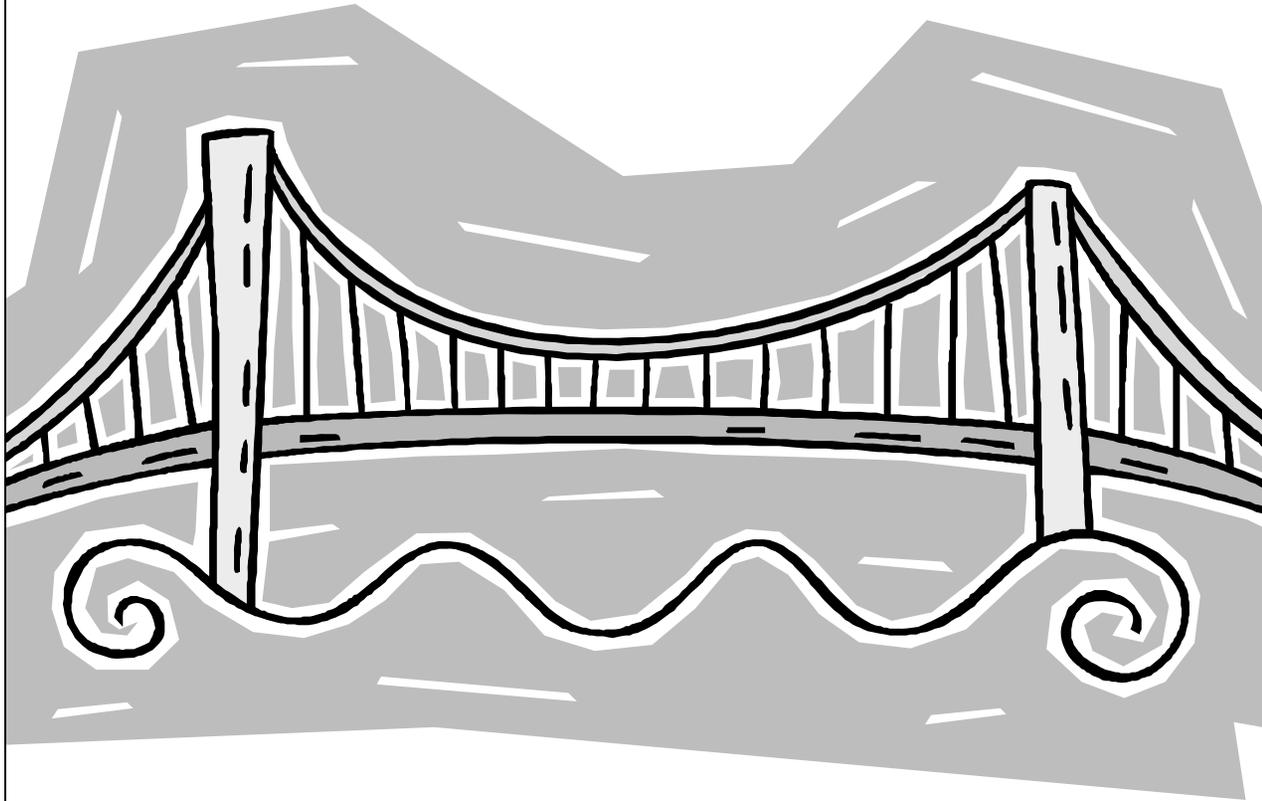
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The End

Unit Seven: Tension between Limitation and Freedom
Self

Enduring Understandings:

- Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the tension between the themes of limitation and freedom.
- Families with teenagers wrestle with the normal and important tensions between limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Essential Questions

- Where do we see the tension between limitation and freedom in Shabbat Liturgy?
- How do we see the tension between limitation and freedom play out in our own lives?
- How do we address the tension between the desire to be free and the knowledge we have to set limitations for ourselves?
- What can we do to become more aware of the tensions in our own lives?
- What conversations can we have to resolve this conflict?
- How can we better understand this tension in the lives of our family members?

Goals

- To expose the student to the tensions between limitation and freedom in prayer.
- To provide students the opportunity to understand how the conflict between limitation and freedom plays out in their own lives.
- To offer students the opportunity to discuss with their families real life issues.
- For parents and teens to understand and appreciate each other's ideas and how they may be similar or different from their own.
- To offer students the opportunity, through conversations with their families, to begin to address the conflict between limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Objectives:

By the end of this unit all students will be able to...

- Identify at least one prayer where the tension between limitation and freedom is found.
- Identify at least one situation in their own life where the tension between limitation and freedom is found.
- Express how they feel, in light of what Judaism says, about life issues (i.e. peer pressure, going to college...etc.)

Teens will be able to...

- Identify what their parents think about each of the real life issues studied in this unit.

Parents will be able to...

- Identify what their child thinks about each of the real life issues studied in this unit.

Activities:

This unit contains subject matter which may be difficult to talk about for teens and for parents, especially in a family environment. You might want to explain the rationale for studying this subject in this unit to class from the very beginning. You may also want to relieve their fears by acknowledging that they may be scared to talk about it or reserved. Explain that this is a comfortable atmosphere and that if they do not want to share they do not have to.

Although it is not essential to teach this unit in the following order, I would suggest beginning with the first activity listed. This activity examines prayer(s) which were studied earlier in the year. This activity will serve as a smooth transition from studying prayers to studying real life issues.

*Your class might have certain issues which are more important for your students at this moment in time. Although I have provided a list of topics and activities which fit in this unit, it may arise that other topics are more pressing for your class. You should feel free to use their concerns to help make this class more personable for them.

In Prayer:

(Talmud page 1)

This activity is almost identical to the first activity in unit four. This is done so that the students will have the same transition. It is okay for this repetitiveness to be transparent.

This lesson is a good way to both synthesize all that was learned in the past two units and also to transition between the units which teach prayer and this unit which focuses on teen issues.

Begin by explaining that at this point the students have learned to identify the themes of limitation and freedom in a variety of prayers and blessings. Give the students about 10 minutes to look through their family siddurim in order to remind themselves of the different prayers which have been studied.

Ask each student to pick one prayer in which they see both the theme of limitation and the theme of freedom. The one prayer which was studied under both themes earlier in the class is: *Asher Yatzar*. However, the group does not need to limit themselves to this one prayer.

Each family is to write a short teaching in which they identify the prayer, how both themes are seen in this prayer, how the themes compliment each other, how the tension is seen, and their own personal understanding of the prayer and these ideas. Give each family about 30 minutes to work on this. At the end of the class, give the families the opportunity to share.

End class with a brainstorming activity. As a whole class they should list of places or times when they have seen this tension play out in their own lives. If possible relate these back to the ideas that were given earlier by the class.

Although I have provided a list of topics and activities below, there may be some topics which arise through this brainstorming process. Do not be afraid to use one or more of these topics in addition to or in exchange for any of the topics below.

Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol:

As teens grow they need to begin understanding how to deal with the pull between freedom and limitations which is happening internally. Teens need to understand that they have the freedom to make their own choices and yet they need to set limits for themselves. Drugs, Smoking and Alcohol are three of the temptations teens will face growing up as they try to understand this tension within themselves.

Because these topics are so important and difficult to understand please spend two sessions discussing these topics. The following are two activities that you can use:

First Session:

(Talmud page 2)

The first session will look at various views of smoking, drugs and alcohol within the text. Since I would like each group to learn a little bit about each of the three ideas, this first session will be taught in stations. The group should be split into three groups: female teens, male teens and parents.

Station 1: Alcohol

Alcohol is something that is talked about a lot in both the Bible and also in rabbinic texts since so many holidays begin with the blessing and drinking of wine.

Begin this station by reading both the story of Noah and the story of Abraham drinking (Genesis 9:17-27 and Genesis 19:24-38.) In both of these stories someone became drunk and had bad judgment. Read both texts as a group. Discuss:

1. Do you think their drinking led to what happened in each situation?
2. What was the difference in the outcome for Noah versus Abraham?
3. Why do you think these two stories ended differently?
4. What is the Torah trying to tell us by placing both of these stories in the Torah?

Once you have finished this conversation, read the *midrash* (provided in the resources) Answer the question: What question(s) does this *midrash* answer about the nature of alcohol?

Station 2: Drugs

The texts speak less about drugs because until the 20th century it was not seen as much as a problem.

Begin by telling the following story:

Russia: Late 1800s

A Rabbi is concerned for the residents of his village. Lately, bands of marauders have come through, destroying property. Neighboring villages are reporting worse violence, including rapes and murders. The Rabbi decides he must address his community and insist they do whatever possible to avoid the dangers in their midst. In planning his comments, he realizes that the *parshah* (Torah reading) for the week is “*Va’etchanan.*” In the reading God urges the Israelites to ‘take heed, take exceeding care of yourself...take good care of your lives.’ (Deuteronomy 4:9, 15)

The Rabbi weaves together a *drash* (sermon), invoking the words from the *parshah*. He also refers to teachings from the Talmud and Maimonides about avoiding danger. Though the circumstances of his community are different, he plans to get his point across by applying the earlier teachings to the threats of his own times. He warns of being out alone or going to desolate areas. However, he knows that the marauders have no compunction about entering a village in the broad daylight and mounting great devastation. Therefore, he also urges the community to be proactive, to create hidden safe heavens wherever they can, such as in a basement, entered through a concealed opening.

(From Teaching Hot Topics page 86-87.)

After reading the story, ask the question: What are some of the biggest dangers today? (Some of their answers should include sex, drugs, alcohol, smoking, violence...etc.) After they are done, explain that they are going to be focusing on the issue of drugs.

If you are working with a group of teens continue by asking them to pair up in groups of two and write their own *drash* as if they were that rabbi today. They should talk about the danger of drug abuse to themselves and their friends. They should also recognize and discuss how this issue speaks to the tension between the freedom they want in their lives and the limitations they need to place on themselves. Like the rabbi who made a plan for the future, the teens should present a plan for how to deal with this tension, the peer pressure and the overall issue of drug abuse. When they are done, ask them to read it to the rest of the group. Discuss how they can help each other put this plan in motion.

If you are working with a group of parents, continue by asking them to pair up in groups of two. If they are there with their spouse/significant other, make sure they pair with that person. In pairs they should write their own *drash* as if they were that rabbi today. They should talk about the danger of drug abuse to their children today. They should also recognize and discuss how this issue speaks to the tension between the freedom they want to allow their children and the limitations they also want to set down. Like the rabbi who made a plan for the future, the parents should write out how they plan to ensure their children will stay safe from drugs. When they are done, ask them to read it to the rest of the group. Discuss how they can help each other put this plan in motion.

Station 3: Smoking

At first smoking was seen as something that would actually improve your health. Because of this, it was actually encouraged for a long time. The text study here begins with texts regarding taking care of your body.

Begin by studying in *chavruta*. The text study is included in the resources. Ask each pair to read through the various texts and discuss. They should focus their discussion on how these texts relate to the issue of smoking. After they come back together, ask them the following questions:

1. Why is it important to take care of yourself from a practical point of view?
2. What about from a spiritual point of view?

3. Looking at the third text, what does Maimonides believe the response should be to those who choose to endanger themselves? What is behind his thinking? Do you agree with him? What should our response be today?
4. Looking at the fourth text, what does this text say about “sickness” and our relationship with God? Some might argue that during sickness people often draw closer to God. How do you think abusive or addictive behaviors would affect a person’s relationship with God?
5. Do you believe smoking falls in line with the texts that we have read?

Questions from Teaching Hot Topics Page 88.

Second Session: See attached for the full lesson plan for this activity

(Talmud page 3)

In this session the students will learn about a more modern responsa to these issues.

Split the entire group into three smaller groups. Here it does not matter if families are together however there should be a mix of teens and parents in each group. Give each group one of the three worksheets that are in the resources. These sheets contain questions asked by Jewish people and answers by the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis.) One group will be researching smoking, one will be researching alcohol and one will be researching drugs. Ask each group to read over their information and then create a presentation to the whole group. Make sure each presentation states what the rabbis have said about the issue and also ask the groups to state their own opinion based on what they have read. Make sure also to include how they feel the tension between limitation and freedom fit into this discussion as well

After each group presents, ask the entire group to add in their own thoughts on both what the group stated the rabbis said, and also on their own opinion.

After all the groups have presented, ask the families to gather back together. Each family will be making a “Family contract.” This will be an agreement between parents and teens as to a plan of action. The contract could include the following:

1. An agreement by the parents to pick up their child if they call drunk without asking questions. (Safety needs to come first.)
2. A plan of action if the child seems to be addicted to alcohol, drugs or cigarettes.
3. A plan of how the teen will approach the parents if they become addicted to alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes.
4. An agreement to have open communication between every member of the family when it comes to these and any other issue.

Once the conversation is over, conclude by allowing families to fill out the Talmud Page.

Sexual Decisions/ Sexuality

Sexual decisions may be the area that teens have the most trouble sharing their thoughts about with their parents around. I do not believe that teens should be separated from their parents for the entire activity, but there will be parts in which teens and parents might want their own discussions.

Here are some of my suggestions regarding how to approach this subject:

1. Talk to a family therapist. If possible, have someone come in during this time.

2. You might also want to talk to and have present a sex educator. This person can help you guide the conversation in the right direction and answer any misinformation students have.
3. In the resources is a hand out to give all the students after the lesson. This will allow those students (teens and parents) who are too embarrassed to ask or discuss issues during class to read some information.
4. If you don't feel comfortable with this subject matter or with allowing students to ask you questions later about this subject, please consider having a phone number of a counselor to give the students.

Having said that let me explain how this fits into this unit. How a person uses or treats his/her body is the ultimate freedom. As teens grow, they need to learn how to set those boundaries and limitations for themselves and their bodies. This is where this tension comes in at this point in their lives.

Here is a time you may want to relieve their fears by acknowledging that they may be scared or reserved to talk about this subject matter. Remind them that this is a comfortable atmosphere and that if they do not want to share they do not have to.

Set Induction: Give the students the "Sex Information Test" which is in the resource guide. Give the students about 5-10 minutes to answer the questions. Then go over the answers with them by telling them which is the right answer and explaining why. This is also provided in the resources. Beginning with this test, allows the students to begin talking about the subject from a scientific point of view, something they might feel more open about doing.

Begin the next section by talking with the students. Explain: We have been studying the types of freedoms we are beginning to experience as we become adults or our children become adults. Part of these changes means a new understanding of the types of limitations a person needs to put on him/herself. It is important to respect our bodies. They are the most precious gift from God.

Continue by asking the students: Based on what we have studied so far, what do you think Judaism says about sex? Do you think there is a difference between what the text says about premarital sex versus sex after marriage?

After this discussion, continue by reading a response to premarital sex from the book Sex in the Text which is provided in the resources. This should be done in groups of 5-6 people. They should answer the questions from the book Sex in the Text:

1. What is your reaction to Rabbi Dorff's perspective on premarital sex?
2. In what ways do you agree with him?
3. In what ways do you disagree with him? Why?
4. In your mind's eye, try to age yourself 15 years. How will you feel about his advice then? Will your perspective either about yourself or your children have changed?
5. How do we see the tension between limitation and freedom in this article?

Finally, allow the students to individually write out a pledge for themselves. For the teens, this should be a letter which gives themselves limitations and their own freedoms when it comes to sex. They should write whatever they want. They will be

given an envelope in which to keep this letter. The parents should either as a couple or alone (discuss) and write a letter to themselves. In this letter they should explain in what ways they promise to deal with the issue of sex with their teen. This could be by promising to discuss the issue, making a plan for how to deal with it when it comes up, and/or what type of continual conversations will take place throughout their teen and early adult years. They also will be given an envelope to keep this letter in.

Complete the Talmud Page together.

Performance Task

As teens grow they need to learn to make their own limitations and embrace their freedoms. Throughout this unit the students have learned what types of new freedoms they are beginning to have and where they need to place limitations. Becoming aware of this tension will allow the teens and their parents the chance to discuss these issues in a self reflective way.

This activity is the performance task for the unit because the students will be able to take the information they have learned so far in this unit and apply it to their own personal life.

Provide the students with paper and pens. They should begin this project by looking through their Family Siddur.

The students should draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper. On one side they should write “limitation” and on the other “freedom.” They should begin listing events, feelings, issues or anything else in their own personal life which falls into one or both of these categories. Let the students know it is okay to write the same thing on both sides. The parents should focus on how this issue plays out with their children and how they react to it. The teens should focus on how this plays out in their own life and how their parents react to it. As often as possible, the students should write the name of a blessing next to the issue it is connected with.

When they are done, the families should discuss the list together and talk about a plan as a family to talk about these issues in the future. The list should be handed in to the teacher to look over. Over the course of the week, the teacher should read over all the papers to ensure that the students were able to connect the ideas of prayer with the tension between limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Resources

For activity 1: In Prayer

None

For activity 2: Drugs, alcohol and smoking part 1

1. *Davkewriter 5.0*, CD-ROM, 1996. Genesis 9:17-27 and 19:24-28.
2. Freeman, Susan. *Teaching Hot Topics*. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing Inc, 2005. Page 88.
3. Meyer, Rabbi David J. *The Rabbinic Driving Manual*. Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1997. Page 9

For activity 3: Drugs, alcohol and smoking part 2

1. Website: <http://ccarnet.org/documentsandpositions/responsa/>

For activity 4: Sex

1. Aaron, Scott. *Jewish U: A Contemporary Guide for the Jewish College Student*. New York: UAHC Press, 2002. Pages 55-57.
2. Website: www.ivillage.com
3. Yedwab, Paul. *Sex in the Texts*. New York: UAHC Press, 2000. Page 102-110.

Lesson Plan for Unit 7 (Tension between Limitation and Freedom): Drugs/Smoking/Alcohol

Goal:

- To provide students the opportunity to understand how the tension between limitation and freedom plays out when teens are thinking about drugs, smoking and drinking.
- To expose students to modern day responsa.
- To offer students the opportunity to discuss with their families a plan in dealing with these issues as they arise in their own lives.
- To provide the students the opportunity to understand the struggle a teen goes through to have his/her own independence and yet to honor the boundaries they have set for themselves.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Give a summary of what the rabbis say about smoking
- Give a summary of what the rabbis say about alcohol
- Give a summary of what the rabbis say about drugs
- Explain how their family feels about smoking, drugs and alcohol
- State at least two rules for how their family has decided to deal with the issues of smoking, drugs and alcohol
- Explain the connection between a teen's choice to smoke, use drugs or drink alcohol and the tension between limitation and freedom.

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:25: Looking at the modern day texts

0:25-0:40: Presentations

0:40-1:00: Family contract

1:00-1:10: Talmud page

Materials:

Paper

Pen

Picture frames

Modern day responsa (provided in the resource section)

Activity:

PART I: Looking at the modern day texts

Split the entire group into three smaller groups. It does not matter if families are together, however, you should have a mix of teens and parents in each group. Give each group one of the three worksheets that are in the resources. These sheets contain questions asked by Jewish people and the CCAR (Central Conference of American

Rabbis) responsa for these issues. One group will be researching smoking, one will be researching alcohol and one will be researching drugs. Ask each group to read over their information and then create a presentation to the whole group. Make sure each presentation states what the rabbis have said about the issue and also ask the groups to state their own opinion based on what they have read. Make sure also to include how they feel the tension between limitation and freedom fit into this discussion as well

PART II: The presentations

Ask each group to present. After each group does their presentation, ask the entire group to add in their own thoughts both on what the group stated the rabbis said, and also on their own opinion.

PART III: Family contracts

Each family should now group together. They will be making a “family contract” together. This will be an agreement between parents and teen as to a plan of action. The contract could include the following:

1. An agreement by the parents to pick up their child if they call drunk without asking questions. (Safety needs to come first.)
2. A plan of action if the child seems to be addicted to alcohol, drugs or cigarettes.
3. A plan of how the teen will approach the parents if they become addicted to alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes.
4. An agreement to have open communication between every member of the family when it comes to these and any other issue.

Picture frames will be provided (it is also possible to use picture frames that can be decorated and allow the families to decorate them together.) They should frame their contract and hang it somewhere in their house. This will be a constant reminder and a source for the entire family to know the expectations and rules for dealing with these issues.

PART IV: Talmud Page

After they are done, the family should fill out the Talmud Page together.

Prayer Which Has Both The Theme of Limitation and Freedom

| <i>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</i> | <i>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</i> | | | |
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| <table border="1"><tr><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>PASTE BLESSING/PRAYER HERE</i></td></tr><tr><td></td></tr></table> | | | <i>PASTE BLESSING/PRAYER HERE</i> | |
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| <p><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></p> | | | | |
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Smoking, Drugs, and Alcohol Part I

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| | | |
| <table border="1"><tr><td><p>In 1986 a seventeen-year-old teenager, whom we shall call David R., was stopped for speeding on a Midwest interstate highway. The police officer smelled alcohol on David's breath and gave him a Breathalyzer test, which determined that he was legally intoxicated. David was arrested for drunk driving.</p><p>At a preliminary hearing, David's attorney asked the judge to be lenient, considering that David had no previous record. The court transcript notes that the judge asked David how his parents felt about his actions. David replied that his mother and father were very angry but added that as a Jewish family they often drank as part o Jewish ritual: wine on Shabbat each week, four cups of wine at the Passover seder, even hard liquor in the synagogue on Purim.</p><p>"I know what I did was wrong, Your Honor," said Daivd, "but I started drinking in observance of my religion."</p><p>Shocked, the judge who was not Jewish adjourned the hearing and announced that he wished to study the matter further.</p><p>Was David correct? Does Jewish tradiation encourage consumption of alcohol?</p><p style="text-align: right;">From <u>Drugs, Sex and Integrity</u> page 9</p></td></tr></table> | | <p>In 1986 a seventeen-year-old teenager, whom we shall call David R., was stopped for speeding on a Midwest interstate highway. The police officer smelled alcohol on David's breath and gave him a Breathalyzer test, which determined that he was legally intoxicated. David was arrested for drunk driving.</p> <p>At a preliminary hearing, David's attorney asked the judge to be lenient, considering that David had no previous record. The court transcript notes that the judge asked David how his parents felt about his actions. David replied that his mother and father were very angry but added that as a Jewish family they often drank as part o Jewish ritual: wine on Shabbat each week, four cups of wine at the Passover seder, even hard liquor in the synagogue on Purim.</p> <p>"I know what I did was wrong, Your Honor," said Daivd, "but I started drinking in observance of my religion."</p> <p>Shocked, the judge who was not Jewish adjourned the hearing and announced that he wished to study the matter further.</p> <p>Was David correct? Does Jewish tradiation encourage consumption of alcohol?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">From <u>Drugs, Sex and Integrity</u> page 9</p> |
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| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | | |
| | | |

Smoking, Drugs, and Alcohol Part II

| <u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u> | <u>TEEN 'S COMMENTARY</u> |
|---|---------------------------|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"><p><i>From the Talmud</i></p><p>Eruvin 64a</p><p>The prayer of a truly intoxicated person is an abomination</p></div> | |
| <u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u> | |
| | |

Sexual Decisions/ Sexuality

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | |

Dear Rabbi,

I am very upset and hope that you can help me. You always taught us that Judaism has much to teach about the real world. Now that I am a freshman in college, I really need advice.

Specifically, I need to know what Judaism says about premarital sex. I have never asked my parents this question, since it would probably embarrass them. In our home sex is not a comfortable subject. Rabbi, can you give me some guidance?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Love,
Cindy

From Drugs, Sex and Integrity page 15

FAMILY'S COMMENTARY

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Genesis 9:17-27

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ זֶאת אוֹת־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר הִקְמֹתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵין כָּל־בְּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ:
פ [ששין] יח וַיְהִינּוּ בְנֵי־נֹחַ הַיְצָאִים מִן־הַתֵּבָה שֵׁם וְחָם וְיָפֶת וְחָם הוּא אָבִי כְנָעַן:
יט שְׁלֵשָׁה אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי־נֹחַ וַיִּמְאַלְהָ נֹפֶצֶה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: כ וַיִּחַל נֹחַ אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּטַּע כַּרְם:
כא וַיִּשְׁתֶּה מִן־הַיַּיִן וַיִּשְׁכַּר וַיִּתְגַּל בְּתוֹךְ אֹהֶל־הָאֵלֶּה: כב וַיֵּרָא חָם אָבִי כְנָעַן אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו וַיַּגִּד
לשְׁנֵי־אָחָיו בְּחוּץ: כג וַיִּקַּח שֵׁם וַיִּלְפַּת אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וַיְשִׁימוּ עַל־שִׁכְמֵם שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרָיִת
וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיהֶם וּפְנֵיהֶם אַחֲרָיִת וְעֶרְוַת אָבִיהֶם לֹא רָאוּ: כד וַיִּיקַח נֹחַ מַיִינוֹ וַיִּדַע
אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן: כה וַיֹּאמֶר אַרְוֹר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאָחָיו: כו וַיֹּאמֶר
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם וַיְהִי כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ: כז נִפְתָּ אֱלֹהִים לְלֶפֶת וַיִּשְׁכֵן בְּאֶהֱלֵי־שָׁם וַיְהִי
כְנָעַן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ:

17. And God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

18. And the sons of Noah, who went out of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan.

19. These are the three sons of Noah; and from them was the whole earth peopled.

20. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard;

21. And he drank of the wine, and became drunk; and he lay uncovered inside his tent.

22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.

25. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.

26. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.

27. **God** shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall live in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his slave.

Genesis 19:24-38

כד ויהוה המטיר על-סדם ועל-עמרה גפרית ואש מאת יהוה מן-השמים: כה ויהפך את-הערים האל ואת כל-הכפר ואת כל-ישובי הערים וצמח האדמה: כו ותבט אשתו מאחריו ותהי נציב מלח: כז וישכם אברהם בבקר אל-המקום אשר-עמד שם את-פני יהוה: כח וישקף על-פני סדם ועמרה ועל כל-פני ארץ הכפר וירא והנה עלה קיטר הארץ כקיטר הכבשן: כט ויהי בשחת אלהים את-ערי הכפר ויזכר אלהים את-אברהם וישלח את-לוט מתוך ההפכה בהפך את-הערים אשר-ישב בהן לוט: ל וילעל לוט מצוער וישב בהר ושתני בנתיו עמו כי ירא לשבת בצוער וישב במערה הוא ושתני בנתיו: לא ותאמר הבכירה אל-הצעירה אבינו זקן ואיש אין בארץ לבוא עלינו כדרך כל-הארץ: לב לכה נשקה את-אבינו יין ונשכבה עמו ונחיה מאבינו זרע: לג ותשקין את-אביהו יין בלילה הוא ותבא הבכירה ותשכב את-אביה ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה: לד ויהי ממחרת ותאמר הבכירה אל-הצעירה הן-שכבתי אמש את-אבי נשקנו יין גם-הלילה ובאי שכבי עמו ונחיה מאבינו זרע: לה ותשקין גם בלילה ההוא את-אביהו יין ותקם הצעירה ותשכב עמו ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה: לו ותהרין שתני בנות-לוט מאביהו: לז ותלד הבכירה בן ותקרא שמו מואב הוא אבי-מואב עד-היום: לח והצעירה גם-הוא ילדה בן ותקרא שמו בן-עמי הוא אבי בני-עמון עד-היום:

24. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;
25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.
27. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord;
28. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.
29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.
30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and lived in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to live in Zoar; and he lived in a cave, he and his two daughters.
31. And the firstborn said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth;
32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
33. And they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
34. And it came to pass on the next day, that the firstborn said to the younger, Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine this night also; and you go in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
35. And they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37. And the firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; the same is the father of the Moabites to this day.

38. And the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Benammi; the same is the father of the Ammonites to this day.

Taking Care of Your Body and Avoiding Dangerous Practices

(From Teaching Hot Topics Page 88)

“Take heed, and guard your soul diligently...Take good care of your lives.”

-Deuteronomy 4:9, 15

Rabbi Akiba said “A person is not permitted to harm him/herself.”

-Baba Kamma 90a

The Sages forbade many things that involve mortal danger. Anyone who does these things and says “I am endangering myself and what does it matter to others,” or “I don't care,” is to be flogged [by the Rabbinical court].

-Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Rotzayach 11:5

ONE SHOULD AIM TO MAINTAIN PHYSICAL HEALTH AND VIGOR, IN ORDER THAT THE SOUL MAY BE UPRIGHT, IN A CONDITION TO KNOW GOD. FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE TO UNDERSTAND SCIENCES AND MEDITATE UPON THEM, WHEN ONE IS HUNGRY OR SICK OR WHEN ANY OF ONE'S LIMBS IS ACHING.

-MAIMONIDES, MISHNEH TORAH, HILCHOT DE'OT 3:3

PRELUDE II:

Here is a midrash about being responsible for drunken behavior.

TANHUMA NOAH 13

When Noah was about to plant the vine (after parking the boat), Satan came and stood before him and asked what he was planting.

(Don't think of Satan as the guy in a red suit with a pitchfork. In Jewish folklore, he is one of God's attending angels, who is forever challenging human beings to see if they are able to live up to expectations.)

Noah said, "a vineyard."

Satan said, "Tell me about it."

Noah replied, "ITS FRUITS ARE ALWAYS SWEET, AND FROM THEM ONE MAKES WINE THAT GLADDENS THE HEART OF MORTALS."

[Psalms 104:15]

Satan then said, "Let's be partners in the operation of this vineyard." Noah said to him, "Okay."

So one at a time, Satan brought a lamb, a lion, a pig and an ape, which he slaughtered, and with their blood he fertilized the vineyard.

That is why, before you drink wine, you are docile as a lamb... If you drink in moderation, you become strong as a lion... When you drink more than is proper, you act like a pig; and when you become drunk, you dance like an ape and have no control over your actions.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you think that the rabbis believed this legend to be a true story?
2. What question(s) does this midrash answer about the nature of alcohol?

Meyer, Rabbi David
The Rabbinate
Dring Murrel
Page
Unit 7
Unit 2

For Group Researching Smoking
Responsum on Smoking¹
5753.23

She'elah

In view of the fact that it has been proven that tobacco smoking is extremely dangerous to human health, what should be the policies of the synagogue regarding smoking on its premises, including the offices? Should synagogues and rabbis take any action with regard to smoking of its members and others in the community off premises?

Teshuvah

Until a few years ago, the hazardous nature of smoking was not on the public or Jewish agenda. On the contrary, there were rabbis who thought that smoking was beneficial because of its curative properties. This was the claim of the famed Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697-1776) : "Tobacco is a healthful substance for the body ... its natural action is important in helping to digest food, cleanse the mouth, separate the humours, and help the movement of essential functions and blood circulation which are the root of health ... It is indeed beneficial to every healthy man, not only because of the pleasure and enjoyment it affords, but because it preserves one's health and medical fitness."²

Eventually, the position of halachic decisions on smoking changed. At the turn of this century, their opposition was not a matter of health, but of propriety. Rabbi David Hoffmann (1843-1921), head of the Hildesheimer Rabbinic Seminary in Berlin, stated in response to a query : "It is known that the Gentiles are very punctilious and forbid smoking in their houses of worship, and therefore, it might appear, God forbid, as a desecration of the Divine Name if **we** should permit it", and therefore forbade it for synagogues.³

As a result of more recent medical revelations on the health dangers of smoking, most rabbis came to the conclusion that not only is it without beneficial qualities, but on the contrary, the tobacco habit may be dangerous and even fatal. They dealt with two major issues : the danger to the non-smoker (in medical parlance: passive smoking) and the danger to the smoker himself/herself.

Danger to the Non-Smoker

A prominent halakhic authority, R. Moshe Feinstein of New York, forbade the widespread practice of smoking in rabbinical academies (*yeshivot*). He ignored medical findings, claiming that the deleterious effect of smoking had not been conclusively proved. Nevertheless, it should be prohibited even if it were not injurious to the health of others studying in the same room, but only disturbed them. He rejected the argument that

cigarette smoking helped students to concentrate. On the contrary, he considered leaving for a puff as considered a waste of time which could be spent in the study of Torah (*bitul talmud torah*). He also criticized the claim that since the room was already full of smoke, each smoker was adding only an insignificant amount. R. Feinstein retorted that each smoker was responsible for his portion of all of the smoke in the room and therefore for the discomfort of all those present who suffer from his habit.⁴

R. Eliezer Waldenberg of the Israel Chief Rabbinate Council went a step further, forbidding a host to smoke in his own home, if this habit bothers or harms his guests or members of the family, and especially children who might be present.⁵

Danger to the Smoker

Rabbinic respondents have been divided on the question of whether available medical evidence is sufficient to ban smoking as dangerous in the view of Jewish religious law.

R. Feinstein would concede only that, since "we may be wary of the danger of becoming ill from smoking, it would be better to be cautious."

However, in his view, it is impossible to forbid smoking for two reasons :

1. Tobacco is in very wide use and has become an entrenched popular practice. The Talmud states about such a habit : "Since the multitude are accustomed to it, 'the Lord will protect the foolish'".⁶

2. "We must especially note that some of the great Torah scholars in past generations were smokers and still are in our day."

The only thing that may be done is to advise against acquiring the habit and especially against allowing one's children to learn to smoke. Nevertheless, in his opinion, the Torah does not rule out offering a light or matches to a smoker.⁷

The sephardic chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, R. Haim David Halevi, disagreed with this ruling. A youngster asked him whether he must obey his father who sent him out to buy a pack of cigarettes. R. Halevi responded : "In view of the fact that physicians have universally warned against the great danger of smoking to human health, and since, in my opinion, it is forbidden by the Torah which commands : "You shall carefully preserve your lives" (Deuteronomy 15:4), you are not permitted to buy him cigarettes. Furthermore, whenever you see him with a cigarette in his mouth, say to him, 'Father, see what we are warned in the Torah about preserving life and we know that smoking is very harmful' - in the hope that he will understand, overcome and refrain."⁸

As a foremost expert on medicine in Jewish law, R. Eliezer Waldenberg accepts the findings of medical experts and proclaims that "smoking is the number one killer of humanity!" Disagreeing with R. Feinstein's position, he declares "that there is no reason to congratulate oneself ... and to rule that since smoking is widespread there is no reason to prohibit it." R. Waldenberg points to medical findings that "cigarette smoking is the main cause of death from cancer ... therefore it is certainly absurd to turn a blind eye on all this and to blithely conclude that (in a case like this) 'The Lord will protect the foolish'".⁹

The reality is that scientific evidence has conclusively proven that smoking is dangerous and even fatal. The United States Surgeon General has issued a 300 to 500 page volume every year on the dangers of smoking.¹⁰ There can no longer be any reasonable doubt about it.

Many smokers today see their habit as a strictly private matter, asserting that no one has a right to interfere or tell them to stop. Many modern rabbinic respondents reply by

quoting Maimonides: "The Sages forbade many things which involve mortal danger, and anyone who did so saying : 'Look, I am endangering myself and what does it matter to others' or 'I don't care', is beaten by the rabbinic court."¹¹ For according to the Halakhah,

we have stewardship rather than ownership of the body given to us by our Creator, and therefore may not jeopardize our life.

To whom, then, does one's body and life belong? R. Moses Ribkes (17th century) taught : "The reason the Torah warned us about preservation of life is that God graciously created the world to benefit His creatures so that they may be aware of His greatness and may work in His service by observing His mitzvot."¹²

What are the operative conclusions of these rabbinic verdicts for the smoking Jew of our day? There is almost universal agreement that this habit involves *pikuah nefesh*. There is a consensus of halakhic opinion which may be summarized as follows :

- (a) Smoking near anyone who may be disturbed or harmed by smoke is prohibited.
- (b) It is forbidden to harm oneself by smoking. (If a smoker cannot stop immediately, then he must make every effort to reduce the number of cigarettes smoked per day and to receive help to be cured of the habit.)
- (c) Children and adolescents are forbidden to begin or to become accustomed to smoking. Adults may not help or encourage them to acquire the habit.
- (d) Encouraging smokers in their habit, by offering a cigarette or a light, is prohibited.
- (e) Synagogues and rabbis should be involved in a serious educational campaign to convince congregants and members of the community. They should help to set up smoking cure groups.
- (f) Synagogues and rabbinic organizations should counteract the smoking advertisements sponsored by the tobacco industry (especially with their minuscule notice of the danger to health.) More people die of smoking than of gun-shot wounds or AIDS, yet the public awareness is comparatively weak.

The above sources indicate that the Halakhah can and must be a developmental and dynamic phenomenon which has taken cognizance of the discoveries of medical science. Jewish law in its position on smoking has progressed from the 18th century rabbinic view that "tobacco is healthful for the body" to the present day opinion : "Smoking is the number one killer of mankind." The Reform movement welcomes this halakhic progression.

Notes

1. Written by R. Moshe Zemer, a member of our Responsa Committee. It was previously published in Israel (in Hebrew) and was not part of our process, but has been included because of its importance.
2. Mor u-ketz'ah, O.H. section 511.
3. Responsa Melamed Leho'il OH # 15.
4. Responsa Igrot Mosheh, CM pt. 2, # 18.
5. Responsa Tzitz Eliezer vo. 15, # 39.
6. BT. Shabbat 129b; Psalms 116:6.
7. Responsa Iggerot Mosheh, YD, pt. 2, # 49.
8. Responsa Aseh Lecha Rav v.6, # 59.
9. Op. cit.
10. These have included, among others, volumes on Smoking and Health, 1964; The Health Consequences of Smoking, 1972; Smoking and Cancer, 1982; Smoking and Cardiovascular Diseases, 1983.
11. Yad, Hilkhot Rechitzah 11:5.
12. Be'er Golah CM 427, letter 90.

For Group Resarching Alchohol

Contemporary American Reform Responsa

73. Mind Altering Drugs for Pleasure

QUESTION: What is the Jewish attitude toward using addictive psychedelic (mind altering) drugs for pleasure in a manner akin to the use of alcohol, tobacco, coffee or tea? (M. D., Miami, FL)

ANSWER: There is very little discussion in the traditional *halakhic* literature about the use of drugs. The codes, as well as earlier sources, and the responsa occasionally refer to *samim* (drugs) and their use; this category includes all drugs. Furthermore, the paucity of references indicate that this was not a serious problem until the latter part of the twentieth century. Even when Jews lived in societies which utilized addictive drugs widely among certain classes, we seem to have escaped that phenomenon.

The *Talmud* quotes Rav Hiyah who was cautioned by his father, Rab, "not to get into the habit of taking drugs" (Pes. 113a), but we do not know their nature. This work also recognized that some individuals react distinctively to drugs and that they affect various parts of the body differently (Eruv 54a; Nid. 30b). It warned against use of eye paint which had been mixed with drugs, as the vapors might be injurious when inhaled (Nid. 55b). Interestingly enough, when Rashbam commented on Pes. 113a, he mentions that this was a caution against drugs which may become habit forming, and, therefore, expensive. Then he concluded by stating that drugs should never be used if some other form of medicine was available. From his perspective there was no danger of drug abuse among the Jewish population.

Alcohol was the substance most likely to be abused; tradition was well acquainted with this problem, and it dealt with it in a straightforward fashion.

In the Biblical period, abstinence was admired and was one qualification for becoming a Nazirite (Nu. 6.8). This state entered by a vow seems to have been of limited duration. For most people the maximum period was six years (M. Nazir 1.4; Ber. 73a; Ned. 3b). Some people in Talmudic times abstained without taking the vow of a Nazirite (Shab. 139a; B. B. 60b).

Alcohol was rendered partially harmless through its continual ritual use in the *qiddush*, which is part of virtually every Jewish holiday and all joyful life cycle events. The limit of consumption was defined as a *reviit*. Beyond that there are two states of inebriation: *shetui* and *shikur*. *Shetui* refers to a person who may be shaky but can speak coherently in the presence of a king; a *shikur* is one who can not do so (Eruv 64a). Such an individual may also be called "drunk as Lot" and is likely to be totally incoherent similar to a *shoteh* (*Shulhan Arukh* Orah Hayim 99.1; Yoreh Deah 244.13). If an individual in this state orders a divorce, the scribe may not write it (*Yad* Hil. Gerushin 2.14). Such an individual is not criminally responsible for his actions even if he causes an injury (Joel Sirkes, *Responsa* #62). However, when he becomes sober he must pay for the damages done.

An individual who is to act as a judge may not take the slightest drink (Joel Sirkes, *Responsa* #41), although if this individual sleeps or walks a certain distance after drinking a small amount, and so counters the effect of the alcohol, he may act as judge (*Ibid.* #140). There is some discussion about the weaker nature of modern wines in contrast to wines of former times, but the conclusion remains that those who drink can not render judgment (Bet Yosef to *Tur*; *Shulhan Arukh* Hoshen Mishpat 7.4)

There is even some discussion in the traditional literature about the statement which exempts a groom from various *mitzvot*, such as the recitation of the *shema*. Some authorities felt that this was because the groom should devote himself to conjugal *mitzvot* (Tosafot; Rosh) while others, like Isserlein, felt that he was not obligated as he might be under the influence of alcohol (*Terumat Hadeshen*, Vol. I #42; *Havot Yair*, #66). The *Midrashic* literature contains numerous citations which deal with the positive effect of wine as well as its negative influence. Moderation is encouraged while over-indulgence should be avoided (Ps. 104.15; Jud. 9.13; Prov. 31.6, 21.17, 9.1-6; Ez. 44.21; Is. 1.13; Ned. 20b; San. 70b; Eruv 65a; Ket. 8b; Meg 7b; *Gen. Rabbah* 36.7, etc.). For example, Ilai indicated that an individual was judged in three ways, by his drinking, his spending and his temperament (Eruv 65b). Drunkenness, in both men and women, was recognized as an evil which could only lead to wickedness (Ket. 65a; *Lev. Rabbah* 12.4). There was some discussion by Rambam and others about those who occasionally imbibed too much and those who have become alcoholics (Maimonides, *Responsa* #16 and 17. Such an individual is disqualified as cantor (Isaac Spector, *Ein Yitzhak*, Vol. 1, #1).

Tradition has been much slower in dealing with the other habit forming items such as tobacco, coffee or tea. These can all be considered hazardous to health to a greater or lesser degree. Jewish tradition has prohibited individuals from wounding themselves. In fact, a person should remove all possible dangers to life (Deut. 4.9, 4.15, Ber. 32b; B. K. 91.b; *Yad Hil. Rotzeah Ushemirah Hanefesh* 11.4; Hil. Shevuot 5.57; Hil. Hovel Umaziq 5.1). Smoking has only recently been condemned through a number of strongly worded responsa and articles (M. Aberbach, *Smoking and the Halakhah, Tradition*, Vol. 10, pp. 49 ff; F. Rosner, *Modern Medicine and Jewish Law*, pp. 25 ff; M. Feinstein *Noam*, Vol. 24; "Ban on Smoking in the Synagogue" in this volume). Moses Feinstein has followed the classical pattern in this matter by stating that as a great many individuals are involved, it is better to leave them ignorant of the prohibition so that they "sin unwittingly rather than knowingly" (*Igrot Mosheh*, Yoreh Deah, Vol. 2, #49). As a large number of scholars and pious individuals, including Baal Shem Tov, smoked, it was difficult for traditional authorities to move in this direction. The real danger of tobacco did not become known until the middle of the twentieth century.

Although coffee and tea contain drugs which may be dangerous, it is not currently felt that this is a major health hazard comparable to psychedelic drugs, alcohol or tobacco.

The traditional attitude toward alcohol and tobacco, which are habit-forming, has been to encourage moderation. Psychedelic drugs are far more dangerous to health and are used without the social controls provided by Judaism for the ritual use of alcohol. We would, therefore, conclude that the use of psychedelic drugs for pleasure is forbidden by Judaism. We should also note that they are also prohibited under the well-known principle of *dina d'malakhuta dina* (the law of the land is the law). As the law of the United States makes the use of these drugs illegal, we must abide by that law.

May 1985

For Group Researching Drug Abuse

The following are questions that people have asked about drug abuse and the answers that the Rabbis of the CCAR have given.

74. Drugs and Mystical Experience

QUESTION: Is it possible to use mind altering drugs in order to attain a mystical experience? (K. V., Los Angeles, CA)

ANSWER: The Jewish attitude toward mystical experience is shaped by *halakhic* and *kabalistic* views. Normative Judaism has been antimystical, or at least suspicious of mysticism. The *Talmud* cautioned that such literature not be studied until the student is mature (M. Hag. 2.1; 13b). Sometimes this struggle between the two forms of Judaism may be found in a single individual, such as Joseph Caro, author of both the *Shulhan Arukh* and the mystical *Magid Mishnah* (R. J. Z. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo, Lawyer and Mystic*).

The various Jewish philosophical and mystical works, which deal with heightened states of awareness of whatever form, demand that they be attained through study, introspection, the observance of the *mitzvot*, and a life of piety. External stimulants are, to the best of my knowledge, not mentioned by authorities in this field, like Gershom Scholem.

As psychedelic drugs promote no assurance that a "heightened state of awareness" will be attained, we would, therefore, have to classify such a use of these drugs as seeking pleasure. This is prohibited by Judaism; that question has been treated in another responsum. Mind altering drugs, therefore, may not be used by Jews to induce a "heightened sense of religious awareness" or to seek a mystical experience.

May 1985

72. Medical Use of Psychedelic Drugs

QUESTION: What is the Jewish attitude toward using addictive psychedelic (mind altering) drugs as part of the healing process? Such drugs would be used under the direction of a physician to deal with severe psychological disturbance. (M. S., Cleveland, OH)

ANSWER: A wide variety of drugs have been described by the Talmud, although none of them seem to have been mind altering (Julius Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, translated by Fred Rosner, pp. 433 ff). Various medieval physicians have given us the name of the drugs which they used. The most extensive list is that of Maimonides which contains more than two thousands items. We recognize that the medicinal use of drugs has expanded vastly in the last century and has become a regular part of medical treatment. This form of treatment, as well as all others, should be used under the general permission provided by the statements, "And he shall surely be healed," and "You shall live by them" (Ex. 21.19). When there is danger to life, the physician is encouraged to utilize all means at his disposal (*Shulhan Arukh* Yoreh Deah 116). The use of drugs in order to aid healing under the prescription of a physician is, therefore, permitted. It makes no difference whether the drugs are mind altering or not, as long as they have been prescribed to heal those who are

May 1985

151. Drugs to Relieve Pain

QUESTION: Does Jewish tradition set a limit to the use of drugs in order to alleviate pain? Frequently, physicians seem hesitant to prescribe drugs due to the fear of addiction or other reasons. What is our attitude toward pain and its alleviation? (Rena T. Hirsh, Santa Barbara CA).

ANSWER: Jewish tradition is not ascetic and does not endorse self affliction through pain. The only exception is *Yom Kippur* along with some of the lesser fast days. On that day we are commanded to "afflict our souls," but that does not entail real suffering, only fasting and abstinence from sexual intercourse. Even fasting is not necessary for those who are physically impaired. We feel no necessity to renounce this world and its blessings and so need not afflict ourselves in order to attain salvation in the next world. This is in vivid contrast to some forms of Christianity.

It is true that rabbinic tradition has interpreted the suffering of the people of Israel and of individuals, as either Divine punishment or as a test (Job; B B 5a; Shab 55a, etc). However, in none of the sources and many others has anyone been asked to seek suffering, rather we try to avoid it. During illness we may use every medical means available to avoid pain (*Shulhan Arukh* Yoreh Deah 241.13 and commentaries).

There are enormous variations in the pain threshold of individuals. Many physicians refuse to consider this or do not appropriately deal with the entire issue of pain. Sometimes this is because specialists, who do not communicate with each other, are treating the patient; each is concerned with a specific organ or system and none is aware of the total effect on the patient. At other times, it is simply due to indifference and a lack of interest in the patient, possibly because the attending physician has never suffered any serious pain. There is certainly nothing within Jewish tradition which would restrain the treatment of pain. We would have a greater fear of continuous pain than addiction.

We must be equally concerned with pain of the terminally ill. There is a fine line of distinction between alleviating pain and prescribing a drug which may hasten death. When the pain is great the physician should alleviate the pain and not be overly concerned about the latter consequence, as death is certain in any case. (W. Jacob (ed) *American Reform Responsa* #79, etc).

There is nothing within Jewish tradition that would keep pain medication from being given when medically indicated. We would hope that the patient be made as comfortable as possible and that this will help recovery or make the last days of life easier.

August 1991

149. Responsibility Toward a Drug User

QUESTION: What kind of ethical responsibility do parents have toward their son now in his thirties who is married and on drugs? There is considerable tension between the parents and both son and daughter-in-law. (Errol Canter, San Diego CA)

ANSWER: There is surprisingly little information about the use of drugs in the vast responsa literature. Although hundreds of thousands of responsa exist and many of them from societies in which drugs were widely used this does not seem to have been a Jewish problem in earlier periods. Certainly the use of drugs is prohibited as is anything else which may seriously injure an individual (Deut 4.9; 4.15; Ber 32b; B K 91b; *Yad* Hil Rotzeah Ushemirat Hanefesh 11.4; Hil Shavuot 5.57; Hil Hovel Umaziq 5.1). No one is to endanger their life or permanently effect their health in a negative fashion.

We must, however, ask whether this remains the responsibility of the parents or is it entirely in the hands of the younger generation. The traditional view has parents responsible for the acts of their children to the age of maturity. In an earlier time this was at age thirteen (*Bar Mitzvah* or puberty). In our age, although this remains technically so, parental responsibility in fact continues through the years of further education often to the end of college or certainly until secular legal maturity is reached at age twenty-one. After that time, although parents may advise and often will be called upon to help, their responsibility is limited. They may be much saddened and may feel guilty about what they did or did not do earlier in life. Most of these feelings are misplaced as someone in his thirties is completely independent and should be responsible for his own actions. It would be wise if the parents continue to be helpful and try to get the young man involved in a treatment program but direct responsibility is no longer theirs.

June 1989

with more tolerance, and in many cases Judaism has come to take a less harsh view on these issues as well. While we may agree from a psychological and sociological perspective that sex has been repressed in society to the point of causing psychological damage, Jewishly we understand that in the proper social context sex should not be repressed at all but rather enjoyed. In the modern world the challenge to Jews is making an ethical determination about what is the proper social context. In no place is it more important to determine that ethic than on the college campus.

Aaron, Scott
Jewish U
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Unit 7
Activity 4

Thinking it through before your brain drops into your pants

Sex on campus is so enticing in part because it represents freedom. The idea of doing things you fantasized about with someone new in your life in the privacy of your own room with no parents to contend with can be a real turn-on. It symbolizes adulthood and maturity, and society treats it as a "grown-up" act. You are exercising complete control over your own body with someone else who is doing the same, and it is completely your right to do so. As you well know though, the sex drive is rather impatient. It does not want to wait for fulfillment; it wants some now! That is the *yetzer hara* in classic behavioral mode. You logically know, though, that such behavior without some preparation is reckless and even dangerous and that there are emotional strings attached that your sex drive just doesn't want to notice at critical times. That is your *yetzer hatov* doing its job. And so the tug-of-war of freedom versus responsibility continues. Now is the time to think about your personal ethics and not when that incredibly hot person is sitting next to you in your room. A little forethought now can save you a lot of regret later, whether you choose to turn out the light or not.

- Start with the basics. This is not a childish question. Do you want to wait until you are married or not? Think back to the traditional model of marriage. Sex within marriage was preferable precisely because marriage was a safety net. Our ancestors knew that it is much harder to raise a child or to be sick alone than in a partnership. They even viewed having consensual premarital sex as the equivalent of being married! No matter how good your birth control is, nothing is foolproof, and if you are heterosexual, you run a pregnancy risk every time you engage in sexual behavior. Marriage is no guarantee of a perfect safety net either, but it does offer the safest scenario. How comfortable are you with the odds? Our faith has always valued abstinence for very practical reasons, not

because of moral prudishness. Two thousand years of tradition can't be completely wrong, can it?

- If you choose not to wait, what criteria are you using for choosing a sex partner? How well do you know the person? An important Jewish concept is that every person is made in the image of God, so anonymous sex with a drunken pickup or a prostitute would not be a Jewishly acceptable choice. At the same time, sex with someone you do know reasonably well but only desire physically doesn't work Jewishly either. The essence of God in all of us resides in our personalities and intellect, not our bodies, and encounters that are only physical do not fit a Jewish model. In our society today, the idea of depersonalized sex with no obligations or connections beyond the physical level has become normalized. At some level though, sex is not fulfilling if it is consistently just a physical act. You can disconnect your emotions from your body for a while, but you can't do it forever. That does not mean you have to love someone to be sexual with them, but Judaism would encourage having an honest relationship based on mutual trust before knowing someone intimately.
- In the twenty-first century, sex can literally kill you. This is a simple statement of fact. AIDS on campuses today is prevalent, prominent, and real. Unprotected sex can be as fatal today as a bullet to the brain. Judaism values life above all else, and there is no Jewish justification for choosing to engage in premarital sex without using condoms and birth control. There are two separate issues here. Condoms can literally save your life, and children can literally change your life. You owe it to yourself and your partner to protect each other from events for which neither of you is prepared. Judaism traditionally reserves sex for marriage because only in committed life relationships can people be sure of the best chances of mutual and familial support when life events such as children and illness occur. If you are not ready for that kind of a commitment but still think you are ready for sex, you must use appropriate protection for the life, health, and future of both of you.
- Homosexuality is a part of this discussion too. Jewish tradition has viewed homosexuality as an "abomination" forbidden explicitly in the Torah, and Orthodox Judaism still maintains a strict prohibition against it. However, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism have spoken out on theological grounds that homosexuals are not an "abomination," but rather are fully sanctified people who are biologically oriented by God and not by choice. Both of these movements have made public statements embracing gay and

lesbian Jews both as congregants and as Jewish professionals. Conservative Judaism has not embraced the same position to this point, but it has taken a position of narrowing the transgression to homosexual acts and not homosexuals themselves. Many gay and lesbian Jews do not feel free to express or admit to themselves or others their sexual orientation until leaving home and coming to campus. It is often a time of confusion, rebellion, adjustment, and self-acceptance, and can be a challenging time. Many Jewish gays and lesbians are estranged from Judaism, which seems to embrace a traditional heterosexual model, and often assume it has no place for them. Gay and lesbian Jews sometimes also feel no obligation to adhere to Judaism's positions on marriage and monogamy because they would not apply to them. But Judaism's teachings on sexual behavior have as much to teach Jewish gays and lesbians as they do straight Jews. Equally, just as for straight college students, abstinence until a life partner is found is surely the safest option for homosexual students, and protected, monogamous, consensual sex is the next best option. Connecting with a rabbi or other Jewish community leader on campus who can either support or refer you to a support system while you struggle with the very real issues of coming to terms with your sexuality can be both emotionally and spiritually helpful. If you think you cannot find a place within Judaism as a homosexual, think again and seek some help to find your way to an open and accepting Jewish place.

- Regardless of your sexual preference, remember that in Judaism no means no. The Talmud views a man who pursues a woman sexually against her will as a thief. We know today that sexually assaulting someone steals his or her dignity, sense of safety, self-esteem, and sometimes even the ability to love another person securely again. If you are the aggressor, you can be expelled from college for it and even possibly go to jail. Both men and women should seek guidance and advice about sexual assault and date rape from the local campus police, wellness center, women's groups, and student services.
- Remember, even if you choose not to be sexually active, you will hopefully meet someone special with whom you will want to spend quality time when you are not in class. Be sure to use good roommate etiquette when you bring that person home. Respect your roommate's space and privacy. Don't have an overnight guest without checking with your roommate first, and don't monopolize any shared space with your guest. A little courtesy at home can make both your new relationship and your roommate feel at home.

Looking for books on being Jewish and gay? Here are a few recommended resources:
 Balka, Christie, and Andy Rose, eds. *On Being Lesbian, Gay, and Jewish*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.
 Beck, Evelyn Torton, ed. *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.
 Elwell, Sue Levi, Rebecca T. Alpert, and Shirley Idelson, eds. *Lesbian Rabbis: The First Generation*. Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001.
 Raphael, Lev. *Journeys and Arrivals: On Being Gay and Jewish*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1996.

For resources for Jewish gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students, surf to <http://www.wcgljo.org>—the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

The following list is a sampling of books that explore a variety of perspectives on Judaism and sexuality:
 Boteach, Shmuley. *Kosher Sex: A Recipe for Passion and Intimacy*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.
 Isaacs, Ronald H. *Every Person's Guide to Jewish Sexuality*. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 2000.
 Westheimer, Ruth K., and Jonathan Mark. *Heavenly Sex: Sexuality in the Jewish Tradition*. New York: Continuum, 1996.
 Yedwab, Paul. *Sex in the Texts*. New York: UAHC Press, 2001.

Sex Quiz

1. How many Americans contract sexually transmitted diseases?
 - a. 1 in 4
 - b. 1 in 100
 - c. 1 in 1000
2. Which of the following is the most common STD in the U.S.?
 - a. Chlamydia
 - b. Gonorrhea
 - c. HIV
 - d. Syphilis
3. Which of the following STDs is (are) incurable?
 - a. Chlamydia
 - b. Gonorrhea and syphilis
 - c. Herpes and genital warts
4. Which of these STDs can be transmitted to a fetus or newborn by an infected mother?
 - a. Human papilloma virus (HPV)
 - b. Herpes
 - c. Chlamydia
 - d. All of the above
5. Which of these diseases can a woman catch through unprotected oral sex?
 - a. HIV
 - b. Herpes
 - c. Gonorrhea
 - d. All of the above
6. Which is an effective barrier against STDs during oral sex?
 - a. Latex dental dam
 - b. Latex condom
 - c. Polyurethane condom
 - d. Plastic wrap
 - e. All of the above
7. The risk of cervical cancer rises with infection with which of the following STDs?
 - a. Herpes
 - b. Human papilloma virus (HPV)
 - c. Gonorrhea
 - d. All of the above
8. When should you get an HIV test if you think you've been exposed to the virus?
 - a. Right away
 - b. One month after possible exposure
 - c. Three to six months after possible exposure

Answers to the Quiz

1. Answer 1 in 4
2. Chlamydia has the dubious distinction of heading the list of STDs. Gonorrhea ranks second, HIV third and syphilis eighth, according to the CDC. Chlamydia infects 4 million mostly adolescent women in the U.S and 15% of all infertility has been linked to it.
3. Herpes and genital warts are incurable, although treatment can relieve their symptoms. Chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis (caught in its early stages) are completely curable.
4. HPV, herpes and Chlamydia ALL can be transmitted from mother to fetus or newborn.
5. All three diseases -- HIV, herpes and gonorrhea --can be transmitted through oral, anal and vaginal sex (even if there are no visible signs of herpes and gonorrhea). If you're unsure of your partner's STD status, always use protection. It's that simple.
6. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, other than abstinence, a latex barrier (condom or dental dam) used correctly and consistently is most effective against the transmission of STDs during oral sex. Polyurethane condoms and plastic wrap can also be used.
7. After years of research into the cause of cervical cancer, scientists say human papilloma virus (HPV) is the culprit. If you've been diagnosed with HPV, get a Pap smear every six months.
8. The HIV test relies on the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood which become detectable three to six months after exposure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people who test negative for HIV three months after possible exposure get tested again at six months to be sure of an accurate result.

This quiz comes from www.ivillage.com

They have stated that the information for this quiz come from the Center for Disease Control

No contemporary sexual issue is more difficult to articulate than is the question of premarital sex. In his "This Is My Beloved, This Is My Friend": A Rabbinic Letter on Intimate Relations" (pp. 30-35), Rabbi Elliot N. Dorff tackles this thorny issue with great tact and perspicacity. While not a product of the Rabbinical Assembly's Responsa Committee per se, his paper, excerpted here, is in the spirit of the age-old question-and-answer process that makes up the vast and ever-growing legal tradition known as the responsa literature.

Part 7
Activities
4

The Rabbinical Assembly

The Rabbinical Assembly, founded in 1901, is the international association of Conservative rabbis. This paper was published by the Commission on Human Sexuality of the Rabbinical Assembly (New York, 1996). Please keep in mind that, since it was published in 1996, some of the technical medical details may be slightly out of date.

"This Is My Beloved, This Is My Friend": A Rabbinic Letter on Intimate Relations"

Non-Marital Sex

Judaism posits marriage as the appropriate context for sexual intercourse. We recognize, though, that many Jews are engaging in sexual relations outside the marital bond. Some of these sexual acts are adulterous, incestuous, or involuntary, and we resoundingly condemn them as a gross violation of Jewish law... We also condemn casual and promiscuous sexual encounters since they involve little or no love or commitment.

The non-marital relations which this section addresses, then, are not adulterous, incestuous, forced, or promiscuous; they are rather sexual relations between two unmarried adults which take place in the context of an ongoing, loving relationship. People engage in such relations for a number of reasons: because a suitable mate has not yet been, or may never be found, often despite painful and heartfelt searching; because one's life circumstances render marital commitment premature, often for emotional, educational, economic, or professional reasons; or because experience with divorce or the death of a partner has necessitated a gradual healing process, including experience of several transitional relationships prior to remarriage.

We want to say at the outset of this section that it is perfectly natural and healthy for unmarried people to hug and kiss each other as signs of friendship and warmth... Romantic relationships, from their earliest stages and throughout their unfolding, often use these forms of affection too. Holding hands, hugging, and kissing are perfectly natural and healthy expressions of both a budding romance and a long-term one. One must take due regard for the sense of modesty and privacy which Judaism would have us preserve in expressing our romantic feelings, and so the more intense forms of these activities should be reserved for private quarters. Within those norms, though, unmarried as well as married people routinely do and should engage in these practices as they build and strengthen the loving relationships which make them distinctly human.

The remainder of this section, then, deals exclusively with the issue of sexual intercourse outside of marriage. . . . Only marriages can attain the holiness and communal sanction of *kidushin* [holiness] because it is the marital context which holds out the most promise that people can live by those views and values in their intimate relationships. Judaism would therefore have us refrain from sexual intercourse outside marriage.

Why does Judaism posit marriage as the appropriate context for sexual intercourse? It does so because in that setting the couple can attain the three-fold purposes for marital sex described above—namely, companionship, procreation, and the education of the next generation. While non-marital sex can provide companionship as well as physical release, especially in the context of a long-term relationship, unmarried couples generally do not want to undertake the responsibilities of having and educating children. They may care deeply for each other, especially in a long-term relationship, but their unwillingness to get married usually signifies that they are not ready to make a life-long commitment to each other.

Some people, though, either will not or cannot get married, and the physical and psychological pleasures which sex provides lead them to engage in sexual relations with each other. Judaism cannot condone such relationships. Nevertheless, for those Jews who do engage in them, all of the concepts and values described . . . above apply to their sexual activities. That is, Jewish norms in sexual matters, like Jewish norms in other arenas, are not an “all or nothing” thing. Certainly, failing to abide by Judaism’s command that we restrict sexual relations to marriage does not excuse one from trying to live by the

concepts and values Judaism would have us use in all of our relationships, including our intimate ones. In fact, in the context of non-marital relationships, some of them take on new significance:

1. *Seeing oneself and one's partner as the creatures of God.* We are not machines; we are integrated wholes created by, and in the image of God. As such, our sexual activity must reflect our value system and the personhood of the other. If it is only for physical release, it degrades us terribly. While this recognition is a necessary component in marital sex, it is all the more imperative in non-marital sex, where the lack of a public, long-term commitment to one another heightens the chances that one or both of the partners will see sex as simply pleasurable release. In our sexual activities, we need to retain our human character—indeed, our divine imprint.

2. *Respect for others.* This means, minimally, that we must avoid coercive sex. Marriage is no guarantee that sexual relations will be respectful and non-coercive. Still, the deep relationship which marriage betokens makes it more probable that the two partners will care for each other in their sexual relations as well as in all of the other arenas of life. Unmarried people must take special care to do this, if only because they know each other less well and are therefore more likely to misunderstand each other's cues.

3. *Modesty.* The demand that one be modest in one's sexual activities—as well as in one's speech and dress—is another corollary of seeing oneself in the image of God. For singles it is especially important to note that modesty requires that one's sexual activities be conducted in private and that they not be discussed with others.

4. *Honesty.* Marriage is a public statement of commitment of the partners to each other, and sexual activity is one powerful way in which that commitment is restated and reconfirmed. If one is not married, however, sex cannot possibly symbolize the same degree of commitment. Unmarried sexual partners must therefore openly and honestly confront what their sexual activity means for the length and depth of their relationship.

5. *Fidelity.* Marriage by its very nature demands fidelity; unmarried relationships by their very nature do not. The value of fidelity, then, and the security, intensity, and intimacy that it imparts to a relationship are not really available to a non-marital relationship. In the spirit of this value, though, one should avoid short-term sexual encounters and seek, instead, a long-term relationship to which one remains faithful for the duration of the relationship. Infidelity breeds pain, distrust, and, in the extreme, inability to form intimate relationships with anyone. The Jewish tradition requires us to respect one another more than that; we minimally must be honest and faithful to our commitments so as to avoid harming one another.

6. *Health and safety.* This concern of the Jewish tradition is even more critical in non-marital relationships than it is in married ones, for most sexually transmitted diseases are contracted in non-marital, sexual liaisons. In our time, this includes not only recurring infections, like syphilis, but fatal diseases like AIDS.

From the standpoint of Judaism, marriage is the appropriate place for sexual relations. For those not living up to that standard it is imperative to recognize that sexual

contact with any new partner raises the possible risk of AIDS. That is not only a pragmatic word to the wise; it comes out of the depths of the Jewish moral and legal tradition, where *pikuah nefesh* (saving a life) is a value of the highest order. Moreover we are commanded by our tradition to take measures to prevent illness in the first place. Fulfilling these commandments in this age requires all of the following:

- (a) full disclosure of each partner's sexual history from 1980 to the present to identify whether a previous partner may have been infected with the HIV virus;
- (b) HIV testing for both partners before genital sex is considered, recognizing all the while that a negative test result is only valid six months after the last genital contact;
- (c) careful and consistent use of condoms until the risk of infection has been definitively ruled out either by the partner's sexual history or results of HIV testing; and
- (d) abstinence from coitus where there is demonstrated HIV infection in either partner.

If any of these requirements cannot be met, due to discomfort with open communication, lack of maturity, one partner's reticence to disclose his or her history, or doubts about the trustworthiness of the partner's assurances, then abstinence from genital sex with this partner is the only safe and Jewishly legitimate choice. AIDS, after all, is lethal; protection against it must be part of any sexual decision. We are always obligated to take care of our bodies, and that responsibility does not stop at the bedroom door. Sexual relationships must therefore be conducted with safety concerns clearly in our minds and hearts.

7. *The possibility of a child.* Unmarried couples should recognize that, even with the use of contraceptives, an unplanned pregnancy is always a possibility. Abortion may not be used as a retroactive form of birth control: Jewish law forbids abortion for non-therapeutic reasons. From the perspective of Jewish law, the fetus is not a full-fledged human being, but as a part of its mother and as a potential human being, it may not be aborted except when the life or physical or mental health of the mother requires it. "Mental health" here, as noted earlier, does not include simply not wanting to have a child. Consequently, couples engaged in non-marital sexual relations must use contraceptives, and they must be prepared to undertake the responsibilities of raising a child or giving it up for adoption if one results. All of the couple's options—raising the child, abortion, and even giving up the baby for adoption, the choice that may seem the least onerous—involve serious psychological consequences for all concerned, and, in the case of abortion, moral and sometimes physical ones as well. The implications of a possible pregnancy must therefore be carefully considered.

8. *The Jewish quality of the relationship.* Unmarried people who live together should discuss the Jewish character of their relationship just as much as newlyweds need to do. That ranges across the gamut of ritual commandments, such as the dietary laws and Sabbath and Festival observance, and it also involves all of the theological and moral issues described above.

Moreover, single Jews should date Jews exclusively so as not to incur the problems of intermarriage for themselves and for the Jewish people as a whole. Intermarriage is a major problem for the contemporary Jewish community,

for studies indicate that some 90% of the children of intermarried couples are not raised as Jews. Furthermore, intermarriage is a problem for the people themselves. Marriage is hard enough as it is, involving, as it does, many adjustments of the couple to each other; it is even harder if they come from different religious backgrounds. It is no wonder, then, that as high as the divorce rate is among couples of the same religion, it is almost double that among couples consisting of a Jew and a non-Jew. Consequently, single Jews should date Jews exclusively if they want to enhance their chances of staying together and of having Jewish children and grandchildren.

It should be clear from this discussion of the Jewish values relevant to sex that it is very difficult to live by them in the context of unmarried relationships. That, in fact, is a major reason why Judaism understands marriage to be the proper venue for sexual intercourse in the first place. We affirm the correctness and wisdom of that stance.

Nevertheless, committed, loving relationships between mature people who strive to conduct their sexual lives according to the concepts and values described above can embody a measure of morality, although not the full portion available in marriage. Indeed, serious Jews who find themselves in transitional times of their lives should feel duty-bound to invest their relationships with these concepts and values. Only then can their Jewish commitment have some of the meaning it should for the sexual components of their lives. That meaning can flourish all the more when and if they find themselves ready and able to marry, but Judaism should affect their sexual activities before and after then as well.

What is your reaction to Rabbi Doff's perspective on premarital sex?

In what ways do you agree with him?

In what ways do you disagree with him? Why?

In your mind's eye, try to age yourself fifteen years. How will you feel about his advice then? Will your perspective have changed? Why and how?

17. Conclusion

I warned you! Jewish texts are anything but consistent in their attitudes toward human sexuality. Together, we have studied texts that are prudish and conservative, as well as some that sound as if they could have been written by Dr. Ruth.

Amidst all of this cacophony, however, have you been able to discern any consistent trends, recurring themes, or reliable tendencies in our tradition? If so, what are they?

What appeals to you the most about Jewish perspectives on sex? Why?

What disturbs you the most? Why?

What do you want to know more about?

Unit Eight: Conclusion

Enduring Understandings:

- Shabbat liturgy can be accessed through the study of the themes of separation, connection, limitation and freedom.
- Families with teenagers wrestle with the normal and important tensions of separation, connection, limitation and freedom in their own lives.

Essential Questions

- What are some ways we can remind ourselves of the tension between separation and connection, limitation and freedom on a weekly basis?
- What are some of the ways we can implement what we have learned over the course of the last year in our lives in the future?

Goals

- To provide students with the opportunity to connect the prayers and the concepts.
- To offer students the opportunity to reflect on the year of study.

Activities:

In this unit there are only two activities.

Wrapping Ourselves in a Tallit

The Zohar teaches that God wraps God's self in light every morning like we wrap ourselves in a *tallit*. I believe that we also should think about family in the same way. We are all wrapped by the love of our family and love from God.

Begin by asking each family to read over the text from the Zohar (provided in the resources.) Ask them to concentrate on the following questions.

1. The light that is continued through time, what do you think the Zohar was talking about here?
2. Can we understand that light should connect us through time all the way back to our ancestors? Why or why not?
3. What does the text mean when it says "He wraps Himself in a light as in a garment."?
4. Connect the idea of creation with morning prayer.
5. Are we recreating the world everyday?
6. Who or what else do we have around us that can wrap us in love?

After the text study, bring the group back together to continue the discussion.

Continue with a project to make a *tallit*. On most *tallit* there is a blessing on the *atarah* (the part that goes against the neck.) Although there is no religious significance to this tradition, it is common to write a blessing. Each family should gather together and discuss the prayer they would like to put on their Tallit. This can be a prayer from the liturgy that was studied or a prayer that they write together.

Each student should be able to make their own Tallit. You can buy a kit to make the *tallit* at http://www.judaicartkits.com/catalog/adult_tallit_bk.htm or you can buy just the *tzitzit* string and ask the students to bring in their own fabric to use. Either way, begin

by allowing the students to decorate the cloth and add on their blessing. Then hand each family the instruction for how to tie the *tzitzit* (from the book Tzitzith) Allow the families time to make their *tallit*.

When they are done ask the families to come back together. Each family should share with the group what they placed on their *tallit* and why. Create a circle with all the families. Ask the parents to stand in the middle. The teens should hold their new *tallitot* over the parents. Ask each teen to give a blessing to their parent. The blessing should be their hope for their parents and family as they move on forward.

After each teen has said something. Ask the parents to come back to the outside of the circle. The teens should put their new *tallitot* back on and the parents should place their *tallitot* over the heads of the teens. The parents should give their child a blessing similar to what the teen did earlier.

When all the blessings are given. Ask the families to come back in the circle. Each person should have their own *tallit* on. Sing *Shehechianu* together as a prayer for the use of a new *tallit* and for a new beginning filled with new knowledge about Judaism, about life, and about family.

The Conclusion

Authentic Assessment Memorable Moment

Begin by allowing the students some time to look over their Family Siddur with their families. They should go through each prayer and remind themselves of what they wrote.

Each family should then pick one of the prayer (preferably one that is said on Shabbat morning) and discuss in length the prayer. Together they should write something that expresses the meaning of the prayer to their family, how it relates to the tensions that are seen in their lives and something to think about when praying this prayer.

After everyone is done ask them to prepare their family to read what they wrote and lead that prayer on the following Saturday morning service. You should make sure when they are picking their prayers that they don't pick the same ones. Before they finish that week's lesson, allow them time to fill out their final Talmud Page

Plan a service for the following Saturday where only the students in this class are invited. Allow each family to read their speeches and lead their prayer. As the teacher, try to relate the Torah study or *d'var torah* during services to the class or the students. After the *Amida* allow time for each student to say something about the past year of study. They can express appreciation for something new or maybe recognize that they have begun to think about something in a new way. Whatever they want to say, they can say. Have fun with this service and use it as a time to celebrate a year of learning and studying together.

Resources

For activity 1: Wrapping Ourselves

1. Kaplan, Aryeh. *Tzitzith: A Thread of Light*. New York: National Conference of Synagogue Youth, 1984. Pages 38-39.

For activity 2: The Conclusion

None

Lesson Plan for Unit 8: Wrapping Ourselves in a Tallit

Goals:

- To connect the idea of family with the idea of wrapping ourselves in a *tallit*
- To offer students the opportunity to connect prayer and creation with God and a *tallit*.
- To inspire students to create their own family blessing as they move forward.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Explain what the Zohar says about wrapping a *tallit*.
- Recite a prayer that their family has created.
- Make their own *tallit*

Time:

0:00-0:05: Setting up

0:05-0:20: Text study

0:20-1:00: Making the Tallit

1:00-1:10: Talmud Page

Materials:

Page with text from the Zohar

Either:

- a. A kit for making a tallit
- b. String, cloth, markers/paints and any other supply to decorate their Tallit

Stencils

Paint pens

Cloth paint

Activity:

PART I: The text study

The Zohar teaches that God wraps God's self in light every morning like we wrap ourselves in a tallit. I believe that we also should think about family in the same way.

We are all wrapped by the love of our family and love from God.

Begin by asking each family to read over the text from the Zohar (provided in the resources.) Ask them to concentrate on the following questions:

1. What do you think the Zohar was talking about when it talks about the light throughout time?
2. Can we understand that light to connect us through time to our ancestors? Why or why not?
3. What does the text mean when it says "He wraps Himself in a light as in a garment."?
4. Connect the idea of creation with Morning Prayer.
5. Are we recreating the world everyday?

6. Who or what else do we have around us that can wrap us in love?

PART II: Making the *tallit*

After the text study, bring the group back together to continue the discussion.

Continue with a project to make a *tallit*. On most *tallit* there is a blessing on the *atarah* (the part that goes against the neck.) Although there is no religious significance to this tradition, it is common to write a blessing. Each family should gather together and discuss the prayer they would like to put on their *tallit*. This can be a prayer from the liturgy that was studied or a prayer that they write together.

Each student should be able to make their own *tallit* but all the *tallit* in each family should have the same blessing on their *atarah*. You can a kit to make the *tallit* at http://www.judaicartkits.com/catalog/adult_tallit_bk.htm or buy just the *tzitzit* string and ask the students to bring in their own fabric to use. Either way, begin by allowing the students to decorate the cloth and add on their blessing. Then hand each family the instruction for how to tie the *tzitzit* (from the book Tzitzith.) Allow the families time to make their *tallit*.

PART III: The Talmud Page

When they are done ask the students to complete their Talmud Page.

Wrapping Ourselves in a Tallit

| <i>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</i> | <i>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</i> |
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| <i>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</i> | |
| | |

Conclusion

| <i><u>PARENTS' COMMENTARY</u></i> | <i><u>TEEN'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | |
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| <i><u>FAMILY'S COMMENTARY</u></i> | | |
| | | |

From Daniel Chanan Matt's Translation of The Zohar
Pages 51-52

God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light. (Genesis 1:3)

This is the light that the Blessed Holy One created at first
It is the light of the eye.

It is the light that the Blessed Holy One showed the first Adam;
with it he saw from one end of the world to the other.

It is the light that the Blessed Holy One showed David
he sang its praise:

"How great is Your good that You have concealed for those who fear You!"
(Psalm 31:20)

It is the light that the Blessed Holy One showed Moses;
with it he saw from Gilead to Dan

But when the Blessed Holy One saw
that three wicked generations would arise:

the generation of Enosh, the generation of the Flood,
and the generation of the Tower of Babel,

He hid the light away so they would not make use of it.

The Blessed Holy One gave it to Moses

and he used it for the three unused months of his gestation
as it is said:

"She concealed him for three months." (Exodus 2:2)

When three months had passed, he was brought before Pharaoh
and the Blessed Holy One took it away from him
until he stood on M. Sinai to receive the Torah.

Then He gave him back that light;

he wielded it his whole life long

and the children of Israel could not come near him

until he put a veil over his face

as it is said:

"They were afraid to come near him." (Exodus 34:30)

He wrapped himself in it as a *tallit*

as it is written:

"He wraps Himself in light as in a garment"

(Psalm 104:2)

Unit 8
Activity
1

you should sew the hem with cotton or silk. If you are making a cotton *Tallith Katan*, sew the hem with silk or rayon thread (but not wool). In no case, however, should you use linen thread, since together with the woolen Tzitzith, this would constitute *Shaatzet*.

You are now ready to place the Tzitzith in the Tallith or *Tallith Katan*.

Making Tzitzith

Whether or not you make your own, there are occasions when you may want to put Tzitzith on a Tallith or *Tallith Katan*. You might buy a Tallith and desire to put in your own Tzitzith or replace the ones already in. The Tzitzith may have become worn or torn and might need replacement. In any case, it is useful to know how to make them.

You can buy Tzitzith from any good Jewish book store, or your rabbi or advisor can order you a set. Look for rabbinical certification stating that they are made of thread spun especially for Tzitzith. Your rabbi can serve as your guide in this area.

The package of Tzitzith will contain 16 strings, four for each corner. Four of these strings will be longer than the rest, and they are usually wound around the others. One of these longer strings is used in each corner as the *Shamash* or "servant" string; this is the one you will use to make the windings.

- Separate the strings and you are ready to begin:
1. Take all four strings and place them through the hole. Adjust them so that they are all even (except for the *Shamash*, which remains longer on one

- side). The four strings are now doubled into eight.
2. Make a double knot, with four strings on each side. (It does not matter whether you make a square knot or a granny knot.) Before making the first knot, you should say, "I am doing this to fulfill the commandment of Tzitzith," or *LeShem Mitzvath Tzitzith* in Hebrew.
3. Take the *Shamash* and wind it around the other seven strings. Make seven windings.
4. Make another double knot.
5. Eight windings.
6. A double knot.
7. Eleven windings.
8. A double knot.
9. Thirteen windings.
10. A final double knot.

Your Tzitzith are now complete. It's as easy as that! Your Tzitzith should contain five knots and four groups of windings. The total number of windings should be 39.

Now that we have explored some of the basics of Tzitzith, we can look into their deeper significance.

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12. <http://www.urj.org/jfc>