Remember the Going Forth From Egypt:

A Curriculum Guide on the Exodus Narrative as our Master Story

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Curriculum Rationale

Who is the God of the Jewish people? Why do we observe Shabbat? How does the Jewish calendar connect us to the traditions of our ancestors? Why are we constantly reminded to be compassionate towards the stranger? These are a few of the fundamental questions asked by Jews today. Jewish education struggles to provide people with concrete answers to these theological and ideological dilemmas of Jewish life. These very same questions, though, are the most exciting entry points into the exploration of Judaism on an individual, familial, and communal level. But where do we begin this search for Jewish meaning, ritual, and tradition? The Torah. In fact, one single, event in the Torah shapes the very foundation on which Jewish ritual, theology, and ethics are based. This event is the Exodus.

"The Exodus is an orienting event - an event that sets in motion and guides the Jewish way (and, ultimately, humanity's way) toward the Promised Land - an earth set free and perfected."[1] The Exodus narrative is the "master story" of the Jewish people. Prayer, observance of Shabbat, celebration of the Jewish year, and ethical behavior all revolve around the *mitzvah* to remember **OUR** Exodus from Egypt. We remember the covenant given to us at Sinai not only through the reenactment of *yitziat mitzrayim* at the *Pesach* seder, but through our daily actions towards other people and towards God. The system of values that the Rabbis developed over time is based upon the covenantal relationship God establishes with the Jewish people after liberating them from their enslavement in Egypt.

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[1]Greenberg, Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Jewish Holidays.* New York: Summit Books. p. 25.

The experience of that liberation from Egypt is the "master story," which Michael Goldberg claims not only "informs us, but ***forms*** us."[2] From the moment the Israelites were brought out of Egypt, God commands them to remember this event throughout the generations to come. The *Tanach* proceeds to remind us of this event more than any other event in Biblical history. Consequently, our Sages infused the entirety of Jewish life and practice with this single event. Daily: the liturgy recalls for us God's redemptive acts. Weekly: we observe Shabbat to remind us of the sacredness of time as we were first commanded by God after being redeemed from Egypt. Yearly: we rejoice in our freedom *(Pesach)*, the acceptance of the covenant *(Shavuot)*, and the commemoration of the journey *(Sukkot)*. Ethically: we must act compassionately towards the stranger, the widow, and the orphan for we were once oppressed in the land of Egypt. The Exodus narrative, collectively, forms our Jewish identity as a historical people as we recall the story through these calendrical events. Individually, the in-depth study and observance of these daily, weekly, and annual rituals connected to the Exodus story contributes to the formation of one's self-definition as a Jew.

The units extrapolated from the Exodus narrative: daily liturgy, Shabbat, the Jewish calendar, and ethical *mitzvot*, are subjects which families can and should explore, question, and celebrate together. Often, religious school education neglects the parents' education which results in little reinforcement of the child's learning in the home. The family is the center of Jewish tradition and observance; therefore, a curriculum which studies the foundation of core Jewish rituals and *mitzvot* on a daily, weekly, and annual basis should be a shared learning experience for a family. As the families learn of the Exodus narrative and its subsequent traditions, families can celebrate and create their

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[2]Goldberg, Michael. *Jews and Christians Getting Our Stories Straight.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985. p. 13.

own Jewish customs and memories. The most valuable and memorable Jewish education a person can have is one surrounded by those with whom Jewish life is experienced. We pray with our community, we celebrate Shabbat and the Jewish festivals with our friends and family, and most importantly *mitzvot bein adam l'chavero* are the values by which we live our day-to-day lives; through every interaction with each person in our lives. As families learn together about the master story of the Jewish people, they can also begin to develop their own traditions and rituals through which they remember the Exodus event.

The covenant with God throughout time and space is constantly evolving as we define and create individual, familial, and communal relationships with God. The Exodus is the single event which enables the Jewish people throughout history to maintain this covenant with God in an ever-changing world.

CURRICULAR GOALS

1. To help families know the Exodus narrative up through *shirat hayam* (Song of the Sea) (Exodus 1-15:21) and identify why it is referred to as the "master story" of the Jewish people.

2. To help families understand that the most formative event in Jewish history is remembered through both the retelling of the story through words as well as our individual and collective actions.

3. To introduce families to specific *mitzvot,* Jewish liturgy, and rituals connected to *yitziat mitzrayim* which demonstrate the historical and religious significance of the Exodus narrative in all parts of Jewish life.

4. To help families examine the Jewish calendar on a daily weekly, and yearly cycle to learn how *yitziat mitzrayim* has been infused in Jewish life and tradition.

5. To give families the opportunity to create their own Jewish memories and customs connected to *yitziat mitzrayim* through the study of *mitzvot*, Jewish liturgy, and rituals.

OUTLINE OF UNITS

I. The Exodus Narrative

In this unit the families will be given a basic introduction to Torah as *atz hayim*, "the tree of life", in order to frame our study of Torah - specifically the Exodus narrative. The families will then be introduced to the two major themes of the curriculum - **Exodus as the "master story" of the Jewish people and how our ritual and ethical actions (according to the Jewish calendar) are Judaism's "learning activities" in order for us to REMEMBER the central event of our history.**

II. Daily: Mitzvot

In this unit families will examine several of the *mitzvot* which are directly related to our obligation of remembering *yitziat mitzrayim* - the *mitzvot* of: *tallit, tefillin, mezzuzah*, leaving the four corner's of one's field, and not oppressing the stranger. Families will also learn the way in which *mitzvot* are categorized into ethical and ritual *mitzvot* as well as begin the process of developing their own definition of commandedness.

III. Prayer

In this unit, families will explore one of the central components of the morning service - the *Shema* and its blessings. The *Shema* and its blessings reflect upon three characteristics of God - Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer. This section builds up to God's major act of redemption in history - the Exodus from Egypt. In this unit, the families will explore the blessings of this section as reflections of this event.

IV. Weekly: Shabbat

We are commanded to remember/observe the sabbath day and keep it holy to remember God as Creator of all and God as the One who redeemed us from Egypt. Shabbat, therefore, is a weekly observance of that transformation from bondage to liberation. In this unit, families will learn how the Shabbat rituals act as tools of that transformation.

V. Yearly: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot

In this unit the families will explore the yearly festivals that send us on a personal and collective journey through time and history. The *shalosh regalim* reenact our experience of liberation from Egypt, revelation at Sinai, and our wanderings through the desert. The families will examine a few of the rituals of each of the festivals which are central to the active remembrance of this on-going, transgenerational journey.

Curricular Notes for the Teacher

- Some of the projects in the curriculum encourage separate adult study or activities. It is important for generational as well as peer learning to take place in a family education setting. Therefore, the activities are divided into three categories: Adult, Children, and Family activities.
- This curriculum could be scheduled for half a year if families were meeting on a weekly basis or could extend over a full year. The unit on the festivals of *Pesach, Shavuot,* and *Sukkot* can be broken down by festival so that the families can celebrate the festivals on the actual date in the Jewish year. Ideally, the teacher should make every effort to schedule the lessons on the festivals as close to their actual dates as possible due to the fact that many of the activities are centered around festival rituals.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

- Celebrating one of the major festivals together: building a sukkah and sharing a meal together, a Pesach seder, a culmination of our learning together at Shavuot, and/or Shabbat service and meal. Details for these celebrations are found in the learning activities within each of the units.

- Create a *mitzvah* project for each family or group of families specifically related to one of the *mitzvot* we will study. Since *mitzvot* is one of the first units it can be an on-going project that can culminate at the end of the year with a presentation by each family on: the project they chose, how it relates to *yitziat mitzrayim*, and how it has created new meaning of the Exodus event for them.

- Have the families create their own "master story". A story that describes an event that forms their identity as a family. (Can be told through art, song, a video, an heirloom, etc.) Then describe a way in which the story will become ritualized in their lives and how it will be passed on to future generations. *This would be an excellent culminating activity for the curriculum.*

UNIT I - The Exodus Narrative (Exodus 1-15:21)

Objectives: At the end of this unit families will be able to:

- Define the term *atz hayim* as related to Torah, why the Torah is considered a "tree of life," and how it connects to how these families are engaging in the study of Torah
- Contextualize the Exodus narrative in the Torah by understanding what comes before and after the actual narrative
- Teach (for the parents) and recall the main points of the Exodus narrative
- Categorize some of the biblical allusions to the Exodus narrative in 3 major categories: why Israel should accept God's covenant, motivation for how Israelites should treat each other and strangers, and knowledge of the Exodus event showing sovereignty of God
- Define the term *yitziat mitzrayim*
- Identify core elements of Jewish life derived from the Exodus narrative (which will be covered in this curriculum).

Key Concepts

I. Torah as *atz hayim* - the Tree of Life - "It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and whoever holds on to it is happy; its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17-18). The Torah itself is the foundation of Jewish life. The metaphor of Torah as a tree signifies the perpetual growth and development from generation to generation through the study of Torah and fulfillment of the *mitzvot.*

- the two wooden posts that hold the Torah scroll are called *atz hayim*
- in the blessing we say after we read the Torah we bless God for giving us a Torah of truth and ***planting*** in our midst eternal life
- As we return the Torah to the ark we sing the passage from Proverbs 3:18

II. The Exodus narrative

A. Location of Exodus in Torah - It is important to understand the Exodus narrative in relation to what comes before and after it in the text. If the narrative is in fact our "master story" than the stories which surround the narrative help us create a context in which we both observe and participate in the development of a people, nation, and religion.

BEFORE: Connection with Genesis

1. The process of fulfilling the promises made to the individuals and families of Genesis is set in motion. God reveals God's self to Moses as the God of his ancestors and the phrase "Israelite people" is used for the first time (Exodus 1:9, 3:6, 15, 16). When God speaks to Moses at the Burning Bush, God refers to God's self as the "God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Exodus

3:16). The threefold reference to Joseph in the initial verses of Exodus also forge a close link to the concluding chapters of Genesis. (Sarna, pp. 5-6).

2. The stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph - the beginning of the journey to the Land of Israel....

The covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12): God commands Abraham to leave his homeland and go to another land, a place God will show him.

Isaac marries Rebekah (Genesis 24:1-25:18) - Abraham sends his servant back to his homeland to find a wife for Isaac. Rebekah is chosen and brought to Isaac in Canaan (the Land of Israel).

Jacob leaves Canaan for fear of Esau but returns later on in life- After working for Laban (Genesis 31), his reconciliation with Esau (Genesis 33), Rebekah dies and Jacob settles in Canaan with his twelve sons (Genesis 35).

Joseph goes down to Egypt (Genesis 39): Jacob and his sons go to Egypt at God's command (Genesis 46). Jacob dies and asks to be buried in the Land (Genesis 47:30). In death, Joseph wishes to be buried in the land of his forefathers (Genesis 50:24).

AFTER:

1. Exodus - Receiving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai and the 10 commandments (Chapter 19-20), The Golden Calf (Chapter 32:1-33:6), Building of the Tabernacle (Chapter 35:1-38:20)

Leviticus - Laws of Sacrifice (Chapters 1-7), Dietary Laws (Chapter 11:1-23), Laws of Holiness (Chapters 17-26) - Festival Calendar and Biblical Holy Days (Chapter 23:1-44)

Numbers - People wandering through the desert (Chapters 10-22:1), Just before entering the Promised Land (Chapters 25-end)

Deuteronomy - The final four discourses of Moses which recall the Israelites journey from Horev to Moab.

B. The Exodus Narrative

Major Events in the narrative:

1. The birth of Moses, Moses' early life, and call (Chapters 2-4)
2. Moses' mission in Egypt (5:1-7:13)
3. The first nine plagues (7:14-10:29)
4. The tenth plague and the Exodus (Chapters 11-13)
5. Beginning of the journey in the wilderness and deliverance at the sea (14:1-15:21)

C. Future references to *yitziat mitzrayim* throughout the Torah

There are numerous Biblical allusions to the Exodus event and they can be grouped into categories by function*: The three categories mentioned here become the rationale for Judaism's belief in God, observance of the *mitzvot*, and every Jew's responsibility to each other.

1. The basic historical reason why Israel should accept and obey God's covenant. In the introduction to the Ten commandments both in Exodus and Deuteronomy, God is their deliverer from slavery in accord with the ancient promise. (Exodus 20:2, Deut. 5:6)

2. A motivating reason for the Israelite's proper treatment of each other and of strangers. "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 22:20, 23:9, 23:15, 29:44-46)

3. Knowledge of the Exodus event as showing the sovereignty of the God of Israel. " (Joshua 2:10, 9:9)

*these categories are from the Exodus chapter in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, p. 701.

III. The Master Story of the Jewish People

A. What does it mean to be the "master story" of the Jewish people?

1. Michael Goldberg says it is a story that not only "informs us, but ***forms*** us." How does the story ***form*** us? Judaism ensures that this story is retold every day through our words, our actions, our prayers, our observances of Jewish ritual. In our retellings of this narrative we not only recall this historical event, but we add ourselves to the event. We create our personal, Jewish memory of the Exodus from Egypt. As we reenact the event we form our own Jewish identities as we study, learn, practice, and teach the Jewish actions which recall the Exodus.

B. Jewish actions which make the Exodus narrative our "master story"

1. Daily Prayer:
   a. *Kriat Shema* - in the *V'ahavta* we remember the God who took us out of Egypt (we are commanded to say it 3 times a day)
   b. We recite the words our ancestors sang as they crossed the Reed Sea - *Mi Chamocha?*
2. *Mitzvot*
   a. 36 times in the Torah we are obligated to recall the redemption from Egypt through various actions
   b. You should not oppress the stranger for you were a stranger in the land of Egypt
3. Shabbat
   a. The Friday evening *kiddush* tells us to remember *yitziat mitzrayim*
   b. In Deuteronomy 5: 13-15 we are commanded to observe Shabbat in order to remember that God took us out of Egypt.

4. Yearly

a. *Pesach* - "In every generation a person is obliged to see themselves as though they had actually gone forth from Egypt." - this is the *mitzvah* we fulfill on *Pesach*

b. *Shavuot* - this is the link between the two major Exodus commemorations. It is the "second great historical experience of the Jews as a people - the experience of revelation." (Greenberg, pp. 25-26).

c. *Sukkot* - Commemorates the journey by reconstructing the wilderness trek.

C. Jewish Memory

Jewish memory is not simply the act of recalling an event in history. We remember and recall Jewish events by performing an action. The Exodus narrative is our master story because we are obligated to reenact the event on a daily basis. We remember the event each time we recite the *Shema*, each time we help another person, each time we attend a *Pesach Seder*. By creating Jewish memory through our Jewish actions we are placing ourselves and our families in the timeless history of our people. It is said that we all stood at Sinai when Moses received the Torah, so each time we engage in Torah we are reenacting the acceptance of Torah at Mt. Sinai. It is our obligation to continue to create Jewish memories for ourselves and our children so that the traditions of our heritage are never forgotten.

<u>Possible learning activities</u>

Family:

- Torah is the Tree of Life

  The families will compare the different parts of a tree to a Torah. And then create a tree with each of the different parts which represents the Tree of Life.

  Roots: The Torah is the foundation of Judaism. We are called "The People of the Book". God gave Moses the Torah at Mt. Sinai so that the people would be able to learn and study the words of our tradition and teach them to the future generations. Torah, therefore, is our source of life - our ROOTS which hold us firmly to the ground.

  Roots - represented by words of Torah

  Trunk: The Torah records the ancient history of our tradition which we continue to build on. The trunk of a tree is strong, it is what remains throughout time, it maintains its strength, and is deeply connected to the roots. So too, our biblical history is the strength of our tradition. It keeps us connected to the source of our origins and reminds us of our obligation to Jewish life.

  Trunk - pictures of major biblical events

  Branches: From our history, the rabbis developed values and morals to guide our lives. The branches of a tree stem from the roots and trunk, but also add new life to a tree. Some branches will die, but others will grow and bring new life to the

tree. The words of the rabbis written down in volumes of *midrash, talmud, mishnah*, etc., which continue to be written today, are our guide to Jewish living.
Branches - names of commentaries, famous rabbinical scholars, etc.
Leaves: Each year a tree sprouts new leaves. The leaves add color and new life to the tree. We are like the leaves which blossom, grow, die, and then grow again. Each generation adds a new set of voices to Torah through learning and practicing, the leaves represent the cycle of life which comes and goes with each new generation.
Leaves - pictures of ourselves and members of our families

- In order to get a sense of what leads up to the Exodus narrative - particularly the theme of the patriarchs continually striving to reach the Promised Land which God has promised them - begin with the telling of a story. Each family will be given a one of the major stories of the patriarchs to tell to the group. They can act it out, tell it through words, a song, a picture, a poem, etc. The stories should really stress the idea that each of the patriarchs were constantly on this journey towards the Promised Land.

- Bibliodrama of the Exodus narrative - giving each family a certain piece of the Exodus narrative to act out. [See the explanation of Bibliodrama in the resource section]. As each family acts out their story, engage the other families in the drama by interrupting the story with questions about the feelings and thoughts of the characters in the narrative.

- Have the families retell/act out the story of the Exodus through their own personal experience; as if they were present at the Exodus itself. Each family must include the major events of the story as listed in the key concepts.

- Take a story familiar to families (i.e. George Washington and the cherry tree) - Have the families turn it into a "master story." Michael Goldberg says that a master story is something that not only "informs us, but **forms** us." Are there things you would have to add or take out to the story of George Washington to make it a master story? Would the story have to be told in a certain way? Would there have to be certain actions or rituals connected to the story?

  Then look at the Exodus narrative. We have no historical evidence aside from the story in the Torah that this event ever took place. What components of the story are historical and what elements of the story were added to make it the "master story" of the Jewish people? (see Sarna's section "Historical Background" pp. 7-14) *divine intervention is added - God's miracles (the ten plagues, splitting of the Sea of Reeds), the commandment to observe this redemption from Egypt for all time*

  What rituals or actions are connected to the Exodus narrative in order to make it the master story? (this will just be an introduction to the rituals and traditions we will be

studying throughout the curriculum) *Pesach seder, treatment of each others and strangers, observing Shabbat, reciting Mi Camochah?, etc...*

What aspects of the story **FORM** us as Jews?

- Have each member of the family share a Jewish memory - How does that memory affect their actions? How would they be different without that memory? How will they pass that memory on to the next generation?

- Have each family try and remember as much of the Exodus narrative as they can. Which parts did they remember and why? What learning activities helped them remember the narrative? (Hopefully the **active** part of the activities, like the role play or bibliodrama, retelling the story to their children, etc. were the main sources of how they remembered the story.) Emphasize the point that action is the source of remembrance in Judaism

Adult:

- Give each parent a different quote about Torah. The quotes will reflect on different aspects of who can study Torah, why we should study Torah, when we should study Torah, and with whom. Each parent will read their quote and then share with the other parents how their quote relates to the Torah being "the tree of life."

- The metaphor of a Torah as a tree of life is exemplified through the four elements of Jewish life we will be examining in this curriculum. The major Jewish actions of our lives are derived from the central narrative of Torah - the Exodus from Egypt. Through the branches of prayer, *Mitzvot*, Shabbat, and the *Shalosh Regalim* (Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot) Torah continues to grow and blossom. Give each adult a tree with four branches on it. Each branch represents one of these four areas of Jewish life: prayer, *mitzvot*, Shabbat, and the *Shalosh Regalim*. For each branch of Jewish life the adult will write down an association or memory in that area from their own life. At the end of the curriculum, each person will revisit these four areas of Jewish life and add new associations and/or memories that have developed over the course of this curriculum.

- Do a text study of the Exodus narrative: Torah study of the Exodus narrative according to the three categories (mentioned above) of the Biblical allusions to *yitziat mitzrayim* in Torah. If we examine the story according to these 3 categories we can then see the foundation for these allusions in the actual narrative. Each of the three categories can be related to crucial elements of the Exodus narrative.

  1. The Exodus event is the basic historical reason why Israel should accept and obey God's covenant. Who must first accept and obey God's covenant in order to take on the position of leadership in rescuing the people from slavery in Egypt? MOSES

  a. How did Moses respond to God's call? Fear, Courage, Self-doubt, or humility (see Field's Commentary, pp. 14-16)

b. Moses had doubts, fears, humility in accepting his role - Moses agrees after God promises to provide Moses with constant guidance and support through God's actions as well as through other people (i.e. Aaron).
c. The people of Israel also have these hesitations in accepting God's covenant even after witnessing God's powers against Egypt and for the people of Israel (i.e. the plagues, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds). They express these same fears, doubts, and humility throughout their wandering through the desert. God's persistence, patience, loyalty, and constant reminders of the Exodus (with the help of Moses) allow the people to develop faith in God, and accept and obey the covenant.

2. A motivating reason for the Israelite's proper treatment of each other and of strangers

a. The experience of slavery in Egypt teaches the Israelites to be compassionate. Why was God compassionate towards the Israelites? (See Exodus 2:23-25) Why does this commandment become central to Judaism? How do we remember the suffering in Egypt so that we may act compassionately towards our neighbors?

3. Knowledge of the Exodus event as showing the sovereignty of the God of Israel

a. Study the passages of the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds - God's miracles (see Fields commentary, pp. 34-36)

Then have the parents teach the story to their children. Work with the families on the process of how to teach the story to their children. What are the different ways in which we impart information to others? (i.e. storytelling, audio visual aides, drama, art, music, etc.) Have the parents record how they teach the story to their children to compare with how Judaism teaches us to remember the Exodus event.

- Text study with the adults on a number of passages that talk about the importance of remembrance in the Jewish tradition.[1]

  Possible questions for the discussion: How do these passages connect memory to actions? How is memory different in the identity of a Jew? Is remembering a passive or active experience in Judaism?

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[1]For a text study on the Jewish approach to remembrance - I have included a series of passages from various Jewish authors and texts.

Children:

- How is a tree like Torah?

Tree	**Torah**
(Roots, Branches, Leaves)	What are the Torah's parts?
It's pretty to look at	The Torah is written in a special script and dressed up
We have to take care of our trees	We keep the Torah in a special place
Trees allow us to breathe	How does Torah allow us to breathe?
Trees need water and sunlight	What does the Torah need to live?
All trees grow fruit/flowers	What are the fruit of Torah?
Other comparisons??	

The children can then each make their own representation of how the Torah as a tree of life.

Resources for Unit I

Fields, Harvey. *A Torah Commentary For Our Times* - Volume 2: Exodus and Leviticus. New York: UAHC Press. 1991.
(Provides a good translation and summary of each Torah portion in Exodus along with a range of biblical commentary, important themes in each portion, suggestions for further reading, and questions for study and discussion.)

*Fox, Everett. *The Five Books of Moses.* New York: Schoken Books. 1995
p. 241 begins the book of Exodus
(This is a good English translation of the Torah with Fox's running commentary throughout. He also begins the book of Exodus with a good introduction to the major themes and structure of the book.)

*Plaut, W. Gunther. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary.* New York: UAHC Press. 1981.
(Plaut provides the JPS English translation of the Torah and includes commentary, modern and classical commentaries, and Gleanings on each portion of the Torah. He also begins each portion with a few introductory words).

Sarna, Nahum. *Exploring Exodus: The Origins of Biblical Israel.* New York: Schocken Books. 1996.
(Sarna's book is an scholarly work on the book of Exodus which provides historical data to the time period in which the events of the Exodus possibly happened.)

*These two sources will be important throughout the entire curriculum as we explore the references to the Exodus narrative in *mitzvot,* the prayer book, Shabbat, and the festivals of *Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.*

UNIT II - Daily: *Mitzvot*

Note to the teacher: The reason for placing the concept of *mitzvot* at the end of the unit is very deliberate. My goal is to integrate the concept of *na'aseh v'nishma*, which means that the families will first engage in experiential learning (*na'aseh*) which leads to understanding (*nishma).* Therefore, the families will have concrete experiences to reflect on when exploring the concept of *mitzvot.*

Objectives - At the end of this unit families will be able to:

- Place the *mitzvot* into the categories: ethical and ritual *mitzvot*
- Identify specific ethical and ritual *mitzvot* connected to *yitziat mitzrayim - tallit, tefillin, mezuzah,* do not oppress the stranger, and leaving the four corners of one's field
- Define the term *mitzvah* for themselves
- Explain what *tallit* and *tefillin* are and when they are traditionally worn
- Explain what a *mezuzah* is and how it is used

Key Concepts

I. Ritual and ethical *mitzvot*

A. There are two major categories of *mitzvot*: ritual and ethical

1. **RITUAL** - These are the *mitzvot* which are in Hebrew called *bein adam l'makom* - "between humans and God." Ritual *mitzvot* are the commandments to perform ritual acts.

2. **ETHICAL** - These are the *mitzvot* called *mitzvot bein adam l'chavero* "between one person and another." Ethical *mitzvot* are the commandments which define how we are to treat ourselves and others.

Ritual Mitzvot	Ethical Mitzvot
Tefillin/Tzitzit	Love your neighbor as yourself
Mezzuzah	Visit the sick
Brit Milah/Simchat Bat	Help the needy
Kashrut	Console the bereaved
To pray with sincerity	Do not oppress the stranger
Netilat yadayim	Honor father & mother
Lighting candles	Perform acts of love & kindness
lulav/etrog	Rejoice with bride & groom
Havdalah	Welcome the stranger
Pesach seder	"Pe'ah" - 4 corners of the field
Pe'ot	

II. *Mitzvot* connected to the Exodus narrative

A. Ritual *Mitzvot* connected to *yitziat mitzrayim*

1. *Tallit/tefillin*- Numbers 15:37-41

"*Adonai* said to Moses: Speak to the children of Israel and instruct them to make for themselves fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments throughout the generations. Let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. And they shall be *tzitzit* for you, that you may see it and remember all the commandments of *Adonai* and perform them; and not be led astray by the temptations of your heart and eyes. So that you may remember to do all My commandments; and be holy to your God. **I am *Adonai*, your God, who has brought you from the land of Egypt to be your God. I am *Adonai*, your God.**

***Tallit* Facts**

1. The wearing of Tallit derives from the *mitzvah* of putting fringes on the corners of one's garment. Putting *tzitzit* on the corners of any rectangular piece of fabric transforms it into a tallit.
2. The purpose of *tzitzit* is to remind us of the commandments.
3. Traditionally, a tallit is worn by males, 13 years and older, yet most liberal synagogues encourage women to wear them as well.
4. A tallit is worn during the *Shachrit* service (morning service) every day and on Kol Nidre (the evening service of Yom Kippur). It is customary in some congregations for the leader of the *Ma'ariv* (evening) service for Shabbat and festivals to wear one.
5. The tallit is not worn in the evenings because of the passage from Numbers says one is supposed to "look at" the *tzitzit*, which has been interpreted to mean by the light of day.
6. The rabbis show, through gematria (numerology) that the knots of the four *tzitzit* add up to 613.

***Tefillin* Facts**

1. The tradition of wearing *tefillin* is derived from four different verses in the Torah, each of which speaks of a "sign upon your hand and a symbol between your eyes" (Exodus 13:9, 13:16*; Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18)

***Both of the verses in Exodus are directly connected to God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt.**

2. The word *tefillin* is usually translated by the Greek term phylacteries, which means amulets, but they are not amulets. They are small leather boxes containing the above cited verses and wrapped around one's arm and forehead before prayer.
3. *Tefillin* are worn during the *Shachrit* (morning) service on weekdays. They are not worn on Shabbat or the festivals. One interpretation of why they are not worn on Shabbat is because *tefillin* are referred to as being a *ot* (a sign) and since Shabbat is also a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, to wear *tefillin* on Shabbat would be superfluous.

4. *Tefillin* are, traditionally, worn by males 13 and older but in liberal synagogues women may choose to also wear *tefillin.*
5. The *tefillin* - box (*bayit*/house) and strap (*retzuah)* - are made from the skin of a kosher animal. The *bayit shel yad*, which is worn on the arm, has one compartment. This contains a piece of parchment on which are written the four verses cited above. The *bayit shel rosh* worn on the forehead also contains the four verses, one in each of its four separate compartments. It also has the Hebrew letter *shin* inscribed on one side of the *bayit* and a four-branched *shin* on the opposite side. The letter *shin* stand for *Shaddai*, one of the biblical names for God. When the *tefillin* strap is wrapped around the arm and hand in the appropriate way, the letters in the word *Shaddai* are formed.

(The blessings recited when putting on *Tallit* and *Tefillin* are provided in the appendix)

2. Affixing the *Mezuzah*

The commandment for putting a *mezuzah* on the doorpost of one's house comes from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which is part of the *V'ahavta* prayer: "You shall love *Adonai*, your God, with all your heart, with all our soul and with all your might. Let these words I command you today be upon your heart. Teach them thoroughly to your children and speak of them while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your arm and let them be for frontlets between your eyes. **And write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates.**"

The act of putting a sign upon one's door to signify a Jewish home resonates deeply with *yitziat mitzrayim* when God told Moses to have the people place blood on the doorposts of their homes so that God would "pass over" their homes when sending the plagues over the Egyptians. [See Exodus 12:1-13 (God tells Moses) and in 12:21-23 (Moses tells the people)]

***Mezuzah* Facts**

1. The literal meaning of the word *mezuzah* is "doorpost," but it has come to refer to the biblical passages and encasement which are affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes.
2. The *mezuzah* is a piece of parchment (made from the skin of a kosher animal) on which are written the first two paragraphs of the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These passages are written in 22 lines by hand by a scribe called a *sofer*. On the back of the parchment *(klaf)* the letters *shin, daled, and yod* are written. As a word, they are pronounced *Shaddai*, one of the Biblical names for God. As an acronym, they stand for the phrase *Shomer Dlatot Yisrael (*Guardian of the doors of Israel).
3. The *klaf* is rolled with the text on the inside so that *Shaddai* can be seen through an opening in the case. If there is no opening, the word or its first letter *shin* appears on the case itself.
4. One is required to affix a *mezuzah* not only to the doorpost at the entrance, but also to the doorpost of every room except a bathroom, storeroom, or kitchen. It has also become

common practice for synagogues and Jewish community buildings to put up a *mezuzah*, but its not required on public buildings.
5. The *mitzvah* of affixing a *mezuzah* applies only to permanent structures and not to temporary or casual places (i.e. *sukkah* or tent).
6. The *mezuzah* is affixed on the right-hand side of the doorpost as one enters, within the upper one-third of the doorpost. The *mezuzah* is placed diagonally, with the top toward the inside; it may be placed vertically if the doorpost is too narrow.

B. Ethical *mitzvot* connected to the Exodus narrative

More than any other *mitzvah* in the Torah, THIRTY-SIX times (double *chai)* we are obligated to recall the redemption from Egypt. This illustrates the central role of compassion within the Jewish tradition. When we recall *yitziat mitzrayim* we are not only being commanded to remember what it was like to be slaves in Egypt, but we are also commanded to make a conscious effort to act compassionately towards our fellow human beings.

1. "You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)*
*This is only one version of this commandment which appears a number of times in the Torah.

The prohibition of oppressing the stranger appeals, specifically, to the historical memory of the Jewish people. Some commentaries on this commandment question whether or not the memory of our own oppression in the land of Egypt is compelling enough for us to act compassionately towards others. For some people, the memory of oppression is enough to identify with the suffering of a stranger. Consequently, the negative commandment NOT to oppress the stranger is translated into the positive commandment of **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:34).**

2. "When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow - in order that *Adonai* your God may bless you in all your undertakings....Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment." (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

Tzedakah - comes from the root צ.ד.ק which means justice. To translate it as charity is incorrect. The words charity comes from the Latin word *caritas*, meaning "from the heart." Charity is a voluntary act motivated by your feeling another's pain and finding in yourself the desire to help. *Tzedakah* is a matter of justice and therefore an obligation. We are obligated to be generous to those in need whether or not we feel like it. The Torah says that one who does not give *tzedakah* to the needy is not simply uncharitable of heart, but in violation of the law. (adapted from a *D'var Torah* written by Laurie Newman)

III. Concept of *Mitzvot*

A. *Na'aseh v'nishma* - "We will fulfill and we will hear/understand"
The concept of *na'aseh v'nishma* has been the framework for this unit. The families are creating their own understanding of *mitzvot* by experiencing them. In other words, *na'aseh v'nishma* means **experience leads to understanding**. The source of *na'aseh v'nishma* comes in Exodus 24:7 when Moses gives the laws (the Torah) to the children of Israel.

Nishma is not just to hear, but to understand. True understanding is when people are able to reflect on their experiences and integrate them in a way that is personally meaningful and relevant to the family.

This concept of **experience leading to understanding** is at the foundation of how Judaism teaches us to remember *yitziat mitzrayim.* Each of the *mitzvot* learned in this unit reflect how the actions between us and God as well as between one another are ways in we remember OUR redemption from Egypt.

Possible Learning Activities
[As mentioned at the beginning of the unit, families are given the opportunity to fully experience and engage in the *mitzvot* by **doing** *(na'aseh)* and then reflect on their experiences so that they may have a personal understanding *(nishma)* of the *mitzvot* which are connected to the Exodus narrative.]

Family:

- **Ritual & Ethical Mitzvot:** Give families a variety of both ritual and ethical mitzvot without telling them which are ethical and ritual. Have the families come up with their own categories for the *mitzvot.* After the families have come up with their categories have each family share their categories. Display each families' categories for everyone to see. Ask them how they arrived at their categories. What are the relationships between the *mitzvot* under each category? What criteria did they use to categorize the *mitzvot?* Are there any patterns to the way in which families categorized their *mitzvot?* Then explain how the rabbis created two major categories of ethical and ritual *mitzvot.* Finally, give the families a chance to place the original list of *mitzvot* into the categories of ethical and ritual *mitzvot.* In some cases it may not be possible to place *mitzvot* into one category or the other. When the boundaries of each category become blurry this is an opportunity to teach how ethical and ritual *mitzvot* can and do overlap. (adapted from Joyce & Weil's *Models of Teaching*, Ch. 10: "Thinking Inductively")

- Have someone from the community who wears *tefillin* come in and share with the families their understanding of the *mitzvah* of wearing *tefillin* and how it is done (i.e. how to wear *tefillin*).

- Each family can make a *mezuzah* and affix it to a doorpost in their house. Teach the passage from Torah that is put into a *mezuzah.*

- **"When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow - in order that *Adonai* your God may bless you in all your undertakings....Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment." (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)**

An activity on *tzedakah:* Each family develops a *tzedakah* project. Ideally, encourage families to create a project that reflects the unique personalities, qualities, and talents of each particular family - i.e. a family that is artistic may want to make Shabbat cards and deliver them to a senior citizen home. We are not living in an agricultural society anymore, therefore, the "the sheaf of your field" translates into the "sheaf" of our talents and abilities shared in time and/or resources with those in need. Here are a couple of ideas for *tzedakah* projects, but it is preferable for families to conceive of their own creative *tzedakah* projects:

- volunteer at a local soup kitchen
- sort through your family's clothing and donate them to a local shelter
- start a canned food drive and donate the collection to a local food bank
- a family goes to visit patients in a hospital on Shabbat

- ***Na'aseh v'nishma*** - "We will fulfill and we will hear/understand"

Part I: *Na'aseh* - Paper bag dramatics

In order for the families to have a concrete understanding of *na'aseh v'nishma* this activity, which complements the order of the unit, will give them an opportunity to first DO a *mitzvah* and then UNDERSTAND the *mitzvah* from the experience of doing. Each family will be given a paper bag with a number of random objects which will be used in a brief creative skit to act out one of the following six themes that have been covered:

(1) the two categories of ethical and ritual *mitzvot*
(2) *tefillin*
(3) mezuzah
(4) *tallit*
(5) leaving a sheaf of one's field for the poor
(6) compassion towards the stranger

Part II: *Nishma* - Creating a family *Na'aseh V'nishma* Statement

Each family will develop their own statement which describes how they will integrate some or all of the *mitzvot* learned here in a meaningful and relevant way into their lives based on the concept of "understanding through experience". In the statement the families will also express how these *mitzvot* have enriched their understanding of the Exodus event.

Adult:

- What makes a Jewish home?
  The *mezuzah* is an outward symbol of a Jewish home. When the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt, God commanded the people to mark their homes so that others would know - *here stands a Jewish home.* How do our children know we have a Jewish home? Have the adults come up with a list of things that make a home Jewish (i.e. books, art, food, Judaica, music, rituals, etc.) Are their areas in your home that are *"mezuzah* - lite" (i.e. areas that need a Jewish makeover)? Ask the adults to brainstorm ways they can add more Judaism to their homes and have them incorporate one new piece of Judaism into their home (i.e. *making challah, reading a Jewish bedtime story, playing Jewish music, creating Shabbat, etc.*)

- Leaving the four corners of YOUR personal field.
  Engage the adults in a discussion of what are the "sheafs" or "four corners" of their own fields that they can leave for someone in need. As a group, list the organizations and/or causes that are a priority in their lives. Examine the list.
  Are the causes local, national, Israel, global?
  What is the balance in terms of my contribution to local, national, Israel, and global causes?
  Are the causes Jewish or universal?
  As a Jew am I obligated to prioritize Jewish causes over universal ones?
  How much time and/or money can I personally give?
  Have each adult make their own list of four causes/organizations that they want to contribute to. Do my choices fulfill the commandment of overlooking the sheaf or leaving the four corners of my field?

Children:

- Why God chose the *mezuzah?*
  Teach the children the main *mezuzah* facts: the piece of parchment is the *klaf,* which contains the *Shema;* the encasing of the *mezuzah* is to protect the parchment and add to the beauty of *mitzvah;* we place the on the doorpost of a house as well as the entrance to a room in one's house.
  With that information - ask the children why God chose a *mezuzah* over a special door knocker, wind chime, or other object that could be a sign of a Jewish home. The children can then create a story and illustrate it as to why God chose the *mezuzah.* (i.e. a door knocker couldn't hold the *klaf,* etc...)

- *"Shema says...."* (similar to Simon says....)
  The children learn the main facts about *tallit, mezuzah, tefillin* (mainly the What? When? and How? of each object). Since all of these *mitzvot* are found in the *Shema,* the *Shema* tells us to interact with each of these objects. The game has the same rules as Simon says. Here are some sample commands:
  Shema says, "Kiss your *tzitzit.*"
  Shema says, "Walk through the door and kiss the *mezuzah.*"

Shema says, "Point to the *bayit shel yad* or *bayit shel rosh.*"
When the students become familiar with the objects, have a student give the commands.

Family, Adult, Children:

- **"You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)**

An activity on compassion. Two Parts: 1) within families, and 2) between peers - The activity is divided into two parts because the interaction and dynamics between members of a family and peers are very different. Part of the exercise is to explore the difference in the learner's reaction and response within one's family and among one's peers. The learners can explore whether or not it is easier to act compassionately towards one's family members and why.

Part I: Each **family** will be given two scenarios, which have been created by the teacher: one regarding a child and one regarding a parent. One child of the family will choose a word and action of the feeling expressed in the scenario. An example may be when a child is angry because he/she has just been disciplined by a parent. Once the child comes up with his/her word and action- i.e.. "ANGER" represented by "clenched fists" he/she will teach the word and action to his/her family. Together the family will repeat the child's word and action exactly as he/she has done it. The same process is done for the parent scenario.

Part II: Scenarios for **children with children and adults with adults**. An example may be when you go to the DMV to renew your driver's license and they can't find your name in the computer - i.e. "FRUSTRATION" represented by "pulling your hair out." Follow the same process as above.

Bring all the families back to one group to discuss the activity:
1. What were some of the words and actions which came up in both parts of the activity? (List them on the board)
2. For the person who choose the word and action how does it feel to see others acting out your feelings?
3. For the person acting out the word and action how does it feel to act out another's feelings?
4. The Torah thinks having compassion is a primary Jewish concern: "You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9) After doing this exercise what do you think are the steps involve in being compassionate? *for example: listening, understanding, and reenacting*

Resources for Unit II

Abraham, Michelle Shapiro. "*And Makes Us Holy...*" *An Exploration of Mitzvot.*
(This is an HUC Curriculum guide on *mitzvot.* She has some wonderful learning activities in the Unit on Tallit. Other units will also be useful when we learn about Shabbat. She also talks about the concept of *mitzvot* as building a bridge between us and God.)

Kadden, Barbara and Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values, and Activities.*
Colorado: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc. 1988.
(This is a great resource for alternative activities for all children of all ages as well as additional information on each of the *mitzvot* we are learning in this curriculum. See Chapters 11, 12, 21, 34)
Other Chapters in this book will be relevant in later units as well.

Stern, Chaim ed. *On the Doorposts of Your House.* New York: CCAR Press.1994.
There is a section for the consecration of a house (*chanukat ha'bayit)* in which the ceremony is centered around affixing the *mezuzah* to the door. See pages 138-142.(This book is a liturgical reference for the home and includes prayers for all types of life cycle events.)

UNIT III - Daily: Prayer

Objectives: At the end of this unit families will be able to:

- Define the terms *keva* and *kavannah* as related to Jewish prayer
- Discuss prayer as a verbal expression of the remembrance of *yitziat mitzrayim* (as opposed to *mitzvot* which are physical actions which remind us of *yitziat mitzrayim)*
- Identify the prayers which are directly connected to *yitziat mitzrayim - Shema* and her blessings (i.e. where the prayers are located in the structure of the service and the main concepts of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption)
- Place the *Shema* and her blessings in their structural and conceptual context: redemption leads to liberation

Key Concepts

I. Jewish prayer

A. *Keva and Kavannah*

1. *Keva* - the fixed structure of the prayer service - laws of how to pray, when to pray, what to pray
2. *Kavannah* - a person's own intent, inner devotion, an outpouring of the soul (see A.J. Heschel's article, "The Polarity of Prayer")

We are commanded to pray a fixed set *(keva)* of prayers daily. We have not fulfilled this obligation, though, if we do not pray with meaning and intent *(kavannah)* from our hearts.

> *Rabbi Eliezer said: "One who makes prayer a fixed thing (keva), his/her prayer is not an act of humility."*
>
> -Mishnah Berachot 4:4

Heschel asks the question, "How are we to maintain the reciprocity of tradition and freedom; how to retain both *keva* and *kavannah*, regularity and spontaneity, without upsetting the one or stifling the other?".....Heschel's answer.... "Tradition gives us the text, we create the *kavannah."*

We are commanded to *zachor yitziat mitzrayim* - remember the Exodus from Egypt. Collectively, we fulfill this obligation when we recite the *Shema* and her blessings. In order to make the remembrance meaningful and not just a *"fixed thing (keva)"*, each time we recite these blessings we must create *kavannah* - a personal, relevant remembrance of *yitziat mitzrayim.*

***Keva* - remembering the Exodus from Egypt**
Our tradition obligates us to actively remember the Exodus from Egypt through prayer, *mitzvot,* celebration of Shabbat, and the *Shalosh Regalim.* These obligations are fixed commandments, prayers, and rituals of Jewish life.

Kavannah* - personal, relevant remembrance of *yitziat mitzrayim
Through our studies and practice of these commandments, prayers, and rituals we develop our own personal expressions of our *yitziat mitzrayim*, our own personal remembrance of our Exodus experience.

II. *Shema* and her blessings
[Although this unit specifically focuses on the *Shema*, it is valuable for the teacher to have an understanding of where the *Shema* fits in structurally and thematically to the rest of the prayer service.]

A. Structure of the morning (*Shachrit)* service

*1. Birkhot Hashachar (*Morning Blessings) - A series of daily blessings to celebrate the new day. The daily blessings were originally said at home upon awakening. They were added into the synagogue worship service as a warm-up to the main body of the service.
P'sukei D'zimrah (Verses of Song) - This collection of psalms are songs of praise which prepare us for the core of the prayer service.

2. Shema and her blessings - communal statement of what Jews have traditionally affirmed about God, the cosmos and our human relationship to God and to history.

3. Amidah - THE prayer *(haTefillah)* - consists of blessings of praise, petition, and thanks. Individually and communally we step into God's sanctuary to praise, request, and thank God for the people and things which surround us.
(on Shabbat and festivals the petitions of the *Amidah* are excluded, as Shabbat is felt to be a day of sacred time and holiness distinct from the rest of the week and so petitioning is unnecessary)

4. Torah service (on Mondays, Thursdays, Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and festivals) - Torah reading is an interactive recollection of the revelation of Torah at Mt. Sinai and an opportunity to engage, question, struggle, and interpret the words of Torah for ourselves.

5. Conclusion (*Aleinu* and *Kaddish*)- the final prayers look ahead to the coming of God's ultimate reign of justice.

The structure of the service is very deliberate. Each section a "set induction" to the next. We begin our prayers by thanking God for the most simple yet complex workings of our

own bodies. As we continue to build up to the climax of the service we praise God for both the universal components of life and those particular to Judaism. At the peak, we enter into God's inner sanctuary to converse with God. We study the words of Torah to participate in the historical tradition of learning and teaching. Finally, we look towards the future when there will be a time of peace.

B. Creation, Revelation, and Redemption

1. The *Shema* consists of three main parts which reflect the three themes: Creation, Revelation, and Redemption.

[Official Announcement inviting us to pray: *Bar'chu*]

Creation: *Yotzer Or* - God is the Creator of the universe and everything within it, and creation, instead of being just a one-time event, is an ongoing process in which God's creative role is maintained. By acknowledging "the daily renewal of creation," we affirm God's continued role in the creation.

Revelation: *Ahavah Rabbah* - God is Parent and Teacher who, by giving us Torah, established a special relationship with us. God's choice of Israel for this role was an act of pure and everlasting love. The theme of pure love runs through the entire blessing: God's love for the world, and God's special love for Israel, reciprocated by Israel's love for God and the Torah.

Shema: The longest version of the *Shema* consists of three biblical paragraphs woven together. The three paragraphs each declare central principles of Judaism.

The verse which begins with *Shema* is our Declaration of faith to One God. (Deut. 6:4)
When do we say Shema? When we wake up and before going to sleep (as stated in the *V'ahavta* - "And these words which I command you this day... talk of them... when you lie down and when you rise up.") The Shema also appears when the Torah is taken out of the Ark. The *Shema* is the last thing people say before they die.

V'ahavta: The first paragraph (Deut. 6:5-9)
This consists of three elements: an affirmation of the belief of God's sovereignty over the world; a deep, abiding, and unconditional love of God; and the study of God's teachings. This paragraph emphasizes several religious duties: 1) to love God; 2) to teach Torah to our children; 3) to talk of Torah on every possible occasion; 4) to put *tefillin* on our arms and heads; and 5) to place *mezzuzot* on the doorposts of our home.

V'haya: The second paragraph (Deut. 11:13-31)
This paragraph emphasizes the observance of Torah. The beginning of the paragraph deals with the principle of reward and punishment. If we follow God's commandments we will be blessed. If we ignore God's commandments we will

be cast out of The Land. The second half of the paragraph reiterates the commandments concerning *tefillin, mezuzah*, and the study of Torah.
[I put this paragraph in for the teacher's information. The second and most of the third paragraphs are not a part of the *Shema/V'ahavta* in the Reform liturgy. It is included here to give the teacher a complete picture of the *Shema,* however, it is not part of the learning activity for the families]

Vayomer: The third paragraph (Num. 15:37-41)
This passage concerns the wearing of *tzitzit* (fringes) on one's garment in order to remember all of God's commandments. The Torah says that the *tzitzit* are for us "to look upon." At night, however, we are unable to see our *tzitzit* (by natural light) so we are not commanded to where *tzitzit/tallit* at night. Consequently, the Talmud asks why we say this paragraph as part of the evening (as well as morning) *Shema*. The explanation for why we say it at night is because this paragraph also makes reference to the Exodus from Egypt. We are commanded to recall the Exodus twice daily, by night as well as by day.

Redemption: *Geulah* - We acknowledge God's deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and the wonders God made when they crossed the Sea of Reeds.

Possible learning activities

Family:

- **A Journey Through the *Shema and her blessings***

This activity is to help the families become familiar with the order of the *Shema* and its blessings as well as each blessing's main conceptual theme (the themes are found above in Part B: Creation, Revelation, Redemption section of the key concepts). The families will be led through each of the stations by Moses - as if he is leading them through the desert, culminating with the *Geulah* "Redemption" prayer. After being "redeemed" from Egypt the families are only able to enter into *Amidah*-land if they can correctly put in order the *Shema* and its blessings which they just learned.

All of the families will go through the stations in the same order at the same time. This signifies the collective as well as individual journey through the wilderness and through prayer.

At the beginning of many of the stations Moses will give the family or each member of the family an object which symbolizes the prayer thematically. Each family will need a bag to carry all of their objects and projects with them from station to station.

STATION 1: *Bar'chu*

Each person is given a **key** to signify the official announcement that we are about to enter into the *Shema.* At this station each person will write down the key that opens him/her to prayer. What helps you prepare for prayer?

STATION 2: *Yotzer Or*

We recognize God as Creator and thank God for all of the creative wonders around us. Each family will be given a **blank postcard**. The family will write a postcard to God describing a special place in nature significant to the family. Perhaps it is a place near their home where they have picnics or a place they went to on a family vacation.

STATION 3: *Ahavah Rabbah*

God gave us the Torah and *mitzvot* out of God's love for us.

Part 1: The children will think of something that their parents have given them out of love. At the same time, the parents will think of something that they would still like to teach to their children. The children and parents will write down their answers and share them with each other.

Part 2: To emphasize the line in the blessing "cause our hearts to cling to Your commandments" each person will choose a *mitzvah* from a **list of ten *mitzvot*** (listed below) that he/she wishes to cling to his/her heart (a *mitzvah* that each person wants to take on as a way of showing love for God). Each *mitzvah* will be written on a small piece of paper which the person can then tape, pin, velcro close to his/her heart.

MITZVOT:
- To honor mother and father
- 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
- To study Torah

STATION 4: *V'ahavta and Tzitzit*

[I chose not to incorporate the second paragraph of the *Shema* because it is a paragraph that is controversial and needs to be considered in a different setting.]

Part 1: *V'ahavta*

Each family will be given the **text of the first paragraph - *V'ahavta* (Deut. 6:5-9) in Hebrew and English** and a **mini-Torah scroll.** The scroll will have written in it *Shema and V'ahavta* at the top and then four spaces to place the four main elements of the *Shema and V'ahavta*: 1) to love God; 2) to teach Torah to

our children; 3) to put *tefillin* on our hands and heads; and 4) to place *mezzuzot* on the doorposts of our home. The families will read the text of the *V'ahavta* and identify the four main elements and list them in their mini-Torah scroll in the correct order of how they appear in the text. Each of the four elements will be represented by a symbol to place in their mini-Torah scroll: 1. **heart** (love God); 2. the things from the *Ahavah Rabbah* station which the parents and children wrote to each other (teach Torah to our children); 3. **picture of *tefillin***; 4. **picture of a *mezuzah.***

Part 2: *Tzitzit*

We read the *tzitzit* paragraph for two reasons: 1) to remind us of all of God's commandments (613 *mitzvot*) and; 2) to recall the Exodus from Egypt.

First, the families will be given a ***tallit* and a chart which explains how each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value**. The families will add up the letters in the word *tzitzit* (600). Count the number of strands on one *tzitzit* (8), and count the number of knots on one *tzitzit* (5). Add the three numbers together to get 613 - the number of *mitzvot* God gave to us. This demonstrates how by looking at our *tzitzit* we are reminded of all of God's *mitzvot.*

Second, in order to recall the Exodus from Egypt each family will write their own journal entry of what their family experienced as they left Egypt in great haste after the Pharaoh finally let them go.

STATION 5: *Geulah*

The families will participate in a sensory reenactment of crossing the Reed Sea to experience the wonder of God's miracles. Be creative!!

Seeing: The people will watch Moses part the Reed Sea. (Have someone play the role of Moses as he parts two sheets of blue paper or something that looks like water.)

Feeling: As the people cross through the Reed Sea they will feel the mist of the walls of water they are walking through. (Create a path between two walls of water and use spray bottles to sprinkle the learners with the mist of the Sea.)

Hearing: As they reach the other side of the Sea they will hear the rejoicing and singing of *Mi Chamocha.*

Tasting and Smelling: The families will each have to describe what freedom tastes and smells like to them.

STATION 6: Entrance to *Amidah*-land

Each family will encounter guards at the entrance of *Amidah*-land. The guard will give each family two tasks: 1) place the blessings that they just learned in the correct order and 2) prove that they just experienced *Geulah* "Redemption" by telling the guard what they have seen, heard, felt, etc. Everyone will then enter into *Amidah*-land to as redeemed, free families.

Adult:

- Debate over fixed prayer *(keva)* versus spontaneous prayer *(kavannah)* - see *Bechol Levavcha: With all your heart* (pp. 4-6) as well as Heschel's article, "Polarity of Prayer". Can we have one without the other? Is one more important than the other?

- Remembering the Exodus from Egypt is only one the many purposes for prayer as we are recalling a certain relationship with God - God as Redeemer. In the section of the Shema and her blessings examine the other main aspects of God - Creator and Revealer. Have the adults try and come up with these aspects by reading through the prayers of this section. Discuss why these three concepts of Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer are important to this section. What are some ways in our own lives that God is Creator, Revealer, and Redeemer?

Children:

- *Keva and Kavannah*
  Discuss: What is the difference between saying something and really meaning it? Sometimes we are told to say "I'm sorry" to someone when we don't mean it. How can you tell the difference between when you really mean it and when you don't? Do you feel differently about the person you are saying "I'm sorry" to? Do you feel differently about yourself?

  When we pray we are told to say certain words *(keva)*:
  [The learners can look at these three blessings and try to come up with what these prayers tell us to say.]
  At the *Bar'chu* we say, "I am ready to pray."
  At the *Shema/V'ahavta* we say, "I love you."
  At the *Geulah* we say, "I am free."
  When we pray we want to do more than just say these words. We want to mean what we say *(kavannah)*. How do we make these words meaningful for us? What type of experience would help us mean the words of these prayers? If we just experienced leaving Egypt, being freed from slavery would these words have special meaning for us? Are there similar experiences (in monumental events and/or in everyday events) in our own personal lives that would help us find special meaning in these words? The learners can write about an experience that helps them connect to the words of these prayers. Have each student connect the different parts of their experience to the different prayers.

Resources for Unit III

Donin, Hayim Halevy. *To Pray As A Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service.* USA: BasicBooks. 1980.
(This chapter breaks down all of the blessings in this unit and discusses the traditional themes and principles for each of the blessings.)

Fields, Harvey. *Bechol Levavcha: With all your heart.* USA: UAHC Press. 1976.
(This book has some good commentaries on the Shema and its blessings. It also examines prayer in general and discusses *keva* and *kavannah*.)

Hoffman, Rabbi Lawrence, ed. *The Sh'ma And Its Blessings: Vol. 1.* Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing. 1997.
(This book examines the blessings from the perspective of ancient Rabbis and modern theologians, as well as feminist, halachic, biblical, and historical perspectives. It is a wonderful resource for an in depth look at each of the blessings in this unit.)

Stern, Chaim, ed. *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays: A Gender Sensitive Prayerbook.* New York: CCAR, 1994.

UNIT IV - Weekly: Shabbat

Objectives: At the end of this unit families will be able to:

- Distinguish between the two versions of why we are commanded to keep Shabbat.
- Identify the rituals of Shabbat as signs of freedom from the bondage of the week.
- Define Shabbat as a metaphor of our freedom from Egypt.
- Place in order of their usage the rituals of Shabbat.
- Adopt one new Shabbat ritual

<u>Key Concepts</u>

I. "Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy..."

A. The two versions of the fourth commandment

1. Exodus 20: 8-11 - **Remember** (*zachor*) the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Adonai your God; you shall not do any work - you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore Adonai blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

2. Deut. 5: 12-15 - **Observe** (*shamor*) the sabbath day and keep it holy, as Adonai your God has commanded you. Six days shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Adonai your God: you shall not do any work - you, you son or your daughter, your male or female slave, you ox or ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and Adonai your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore Adonai your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

B. The rituals of Shabbat

Six days a week we humans use time. We value it as a means to an end. Time "well spent" for us is time that helps us acquire something.

Yet to have more does not mean to be more. Indeed, there is a realm of time where the goal is not to have, but to be, not to own, but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue, but to be in accord. Life goes wrong when the control of space, the acquisition of things, becomes our sole concern,

The seventh day rights our balance and restores our perspective. It is like a palace in time with kingdom for all. It is not a date, but an atmosphere.

On the seventh day we celebrate time rather than space. Six days we live under the tyranny of space and things; on the seventh day we try to become attuned to holiness in time.

It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time. To turn from the results of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

adapted from <u>*The Sabbath*</u>, *A.J. Heschel*

This reading by Heschel captures the essence of Shabbat. This excerpt contains both versions of the fourth commandment. We "rest" on Shabbat to be free from the tyranny of space and things which rule over us the other six days of the week. The Torah makes a direct link between the observance of Shabbat and our redemption from Egypt. Our liberation from Egypt gave us the freedom to live under the guidance of God through our acceptance of Torah and the *mitzvot.* We free ourselves on Shabbat to bring us closer to the Source of our freedom. Shabbat is a weekly reminder of our freedom not only from the obligations of our work week, but also a celebration of our freedom to live as Jews. By resting and letting others rest, we recognize the true Creator of that freedom. We also turn "from the world of creation to the creation of the world."

Resting on Shabbat is not passive. Not only are we stopping weekday activities in order to leave behind our weekday mind-set. Shabbat is means to the end of "refreshing" ourselves. We make the day an occasion for freeing ourselves from weekday restraints in order to become the fully human persons we want to be. The rituals of Shabbat are our tools to help us enter into a time of freedom - freedom from the things that bind us to our week. (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 26)

The rituals:

<u>Friday night - Erev Shabbat</u>

1. Shabbat candles

Kindling the lights of Shabbat ushers in the day of rest. In the Jewish tradition, light is a symbol of our existence, our uniqueness, our freedom. All of our holy days are made distinct from ordinary days by the kindling of light.

We have a minimum of two lights for Shabbat. These two lights correspond to the two different words (*zachor*/"remember" and *shamor*/"observe") that begin the Shabbat commandment in the two versions of the Ten commandments (see above).

2. *Shalom Aleichem*

Literally *shalom aleichem* is "a song of peace." We ask the angels to come, bless, and depart in peace. Inviting the angels into our homes on Shabbat helps to release ourselves from the binds of our work week and enter into a time a peace and rest.

This song became a customary home song because of its connection with the talmudic legend that two angels accompany a Jew on the way home from synagogue on Friday evening. If the home has been prepared to honor Shabbat, the good angel says, "So may it be next Shabbat," and the evil angel reluctantly says, "Amen." If the home is not ready for Shabbat, the evil angel can say, "So may it be next Shabbat," and the good angel must respond, "Amen." (*Talmud* Shabbat 119a)

3. *Birkat HaMishpacha* - The Family Blessing
This is a wonderful ritual which signifies the continuity of Jewish life within our families. Right before Jacob's death, he blessed his two grandsons Ephraim and Menasheh (Genesis 48:20) so that they may continue the covenant of their grandfather. As we bless our children we pass on the traditions and rituals of our heritage like Jacob as well as fulfill the commandment in the story of the Exodus to teach our children so that they, too, may remember and do.

The family blessing also is an opportunity, as are the other rituals of Shabbat, to heighten our awareness of the blessings which surround us everyday. During the week we do not take the time to acknowledge those blessings, especially our children. Shabbat gives us the freedom to count our blessings.

4. *Kiddush*
The word *Kiddush* meaning "sanctification", comes from the same Hebrew root as the word *kadosh*, which means "holy" or "set apart." *Kiddush* is the prayer with which we sanctify Shabbat. This is derived from the fourth commandment to "Remember/Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy."

The *Kiddush* refers to Shabbat as both the Creation of the world and the Exodus from Egypt because both events are the historic underpinnings for Shabbat (as seen in the two different versions of the fourth commandment). The Exodus from Egypt is mentioned because "...Shabbat calls to mind the experience of liberation. It returns every seven days to help Jews liberate themselves personally from the burdens of the week." (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 26)

5. *Al Netilat Yadayim* - the lifting up of our hands
The custom of washing hands before *Motzi* was developed by talmudic rabbis because of their belief that the family table was as holy as the altar in the Jerusalem Temple where the priests conducted ancient Jewish worship. Just as the priests ritually cleasned their hands before beginning their duties, the rabbis maintained that we ought to wash our hands symbolically before our meals. (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 28-29)

The ritual of washing our hands elevates ourselves to a different state of being. We all become like the priests of the Temple. As slaves, whether in Egypt or during the week, our routine, jobs, obligations did/do not permit us to reach a

state of priesthood - a state of holiness. As we wash and raise our hands we symbolically enter into a time and space different from the rest of the week. (the blessing is said over the lifting of the hands after they have been washed)

6. *HaMotzi*
The word "challah" originally referred to the dough offering set aside for the priests during the time of the Jerusalem Temple. After the destruction of the Temple, Jews continued setting aside part of their dough when they baked Shabbat and holiday breads. Eventually, the term "challah" was also applied to these loaves themselves. (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 28)

It is customary to use two loaves to represent the double share of *manna* which, according to the Torah (Exodus 16:22), fell each Friday in order to feed our ancestors on their journey from Egypt to Canaan. Collecting the double portion of *manna* on Friday meant that the Israelites did not have to collect food when Shabbat arrived (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 28). Even while the Israelites were wandering through the desert God enabled them to "rest" on Shabbat by providing an extra portion of food. This demonstrates to us that we must still observe Shabbat even if we are suffering from hardships or can't prepare properly - somehow, we should make a separation from the rest of the week.

7. Shabbat meal/*Zemirot*
Eating well on Shabbat became an important way of honoring Shabbat. The Friday evening meal, along with the two meals during the rest of Shabbat, were each known as *seudat mitzvah* (a festive meal accompanying the performance of certain commandments). In the proper context of blessings and ceremonies, then, eating for Jews became a religious obligation. The Friday evening Shabbat dinner, in particular, became a central component of observing Shabbat. In talmudic time, for example, Shabbat was distinguished from the other days of the week (when only two meals were eaten) by the addition of a third meal. (*Gates of Shabbat*, p. 30)

During the week, families have hectic schedules and usually are not able to sit down to a meal together. Shabbat frees us once a week to have a meal with our families. The Talmud even discusses how our conversation at the table should be different than what is discussed at the table during the rest of the week as a way of reflecting the holiness of Shabbat. Talk about the things that are fundamental to us, the things we cannot live without, the things we take for granted the rest of the week - our health, the wonders of nature, our friends and family, etc.

Zemirot/Songs are another tradition for making Shabbat a festive celebration. On Shabbat we bring joy into our homes through food, friends and family, and song.

8. *Birkat HaMazon* - The Blessing after the meal
Deut. 8:10 states, "You shall eat, be satisfied, and bless Adonai your God for the good land given to you." The rabbis considered this verse to be the rationale for *Birkat HaMazon*. This is the only table prayer that explicitly mentions a messianic vision (in *Gates of Shabbat*, see "Asking for Peace" and "Maker of Peace" on p. 37). Since Shabbat is often described as a foretaste of the perfected future, *Birkat HaMazon* is important because it actively expresses that hope for a compassionate and peaceful world *(Gates of Shabbat*, p. 37).

As we are about to eat, it is easy to thank God for providing us with everything we see in front of us. Saying a blessing afterwards, we have to take an extra moment to remind ourselves of what we just ate and say thank you. Not only are we thanking God for the food but we also recognize the God who brings us peace. The peace of Shabbat, the peace of freedom are things we cannot take for granted.

Shabbat Day
1. Torah study
An important aspect of Shabbat is study. On Shabbat, we read from the Torah during the morning service. It is common to encounter a Torah-oriented sermon (*d'var Torah*) or discussion during the evening or morning service. Study is a fundamental element of Jewish life. Study empowers us to question, struggle, and engage with the central texts of Judaism. Shabbat is a time to learn and develop our own identities as Jews. Learning is also a luxury. When we are students all of our time is devoted to learning. Once we join the work force, we no longer have the time or freedom to learn for the sake of learning. Shabbat creates the time to study the texts of our people.

2. Rest
Defining rest for oneself and one's family is at the heart of Shabbat observance. Resting on Shabbat doesn't involve merely taking the day off or sleeping late. The absence of activity alone does not create Shabbat. On the contrary, Shabbat is very much associated with involvement in friendship, community, prayer, and study. The day brings "rest" and peace is potentially full of stimulation.

Jewish tradition says very little about the nature of that rest. Instead, it emphasizes the opposite - it specifies in detail what activities are not appropriate for Shabbat. Apparently, the sages who first grappled with the meaning of Shabbat rest decided that their primary task was to create some open space in the week in order to let rest take place. Like foresters who want to clear an opening in the forest, the sages took the Torah's injunction against work on Shabbat and used it to build a fence that held back anything resembling weekday occupations and diversions. Shabbat became the protected clearing within the week when whatever was not work could blossom.

When deciding on what a Shabbat observance will be each individual and/or family needs to respond to the thrust in Judaism that prohibits "work." We must ask ourselves which weekday activities traditionally prohibited on Shabbat we will avoid. We must all consider the things we will do to fill the space created by the abstentions that we make. (adapted from *Gates of Shabbat*, pp. 49-50)

Here, it is important to return to the fourth commandment which states that not only are we to rest from our labors but we must also let our "slaves" and animals rest as well. This reminds us to actively be compassionate towards those that work for us, those who may be less fortunate, and those who are in need of help.

3. *Havdalah*
Just as we usher in Shabbat with light and wine, we also send out Shabbat with these same two symbols. The logic of Havdalah is explained by the rabbinic interpretation of the fourth commandment, "Remember the sabbath day and 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 and as it departed. We need a gentle transition back into the hectic nature of the work week. Havdalah is a beautiful ritual which helps us soothe into the rest of the week.

There are three symbols which make up the Havdalah service:
a. Wine - The wine serves basically the same purpose it serves on Friday night. We use it to distinguish between two different times - in this case, the movement from the holy time of Shabbat back into the regular weekdays.

b. Spices - One rabbinic explanation for the use of spices is that as a result of the peace and quiet of Shabbat, every Jew receives an additional soul (*neshama yeteirah)*. 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.

c. Light - 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 the knowledge to strike two stones together and create fire. We remember the discovery of fire with the blessing of light at Havdalah. We use a braided candle because the blessing literally refers to God as "Creator of the lights of fire." Therefore, the rabbis taught that the Havdalah candle should have at least two wicks.
(adapted from *Gates of Shabbat,* pp. 68-69)

Possible learning activities

Family:

- Have each family examine the two different versions of the fourth commandment in Hebrew and in English. Ask them to list all of the similarities and differences they can find. Why do they think there are two different versions? (refer to the excerpt from *Learning Torah* by Joel Grishaver in the resource section). Emphasize the concept of "observe" and "remember" as related to the units on *mitzvot* and prayer. We "remember" the Exodus from Egypt by recalling the event through both actions (*mitzvot*) and words (prayer). The rituals of Shabbat like prayer and *mitzvot* fulfill the commandment of remembering the Exodus from Egypt both through words (saying the blessings) and action.

- Shabbat as a weekly reminder of our liberation from Egypt
  Distribute all of the rituals of Shabbat among the families. Have the families come up with their own reasons for how the ritual is connected to our liberation from Egypt AND/OR our liberation from the work week.

- Simulate a complete Shabbat experience (in order for them to experience Shabbat from beginning to end it will have to take place during class time, hence a mock Shabbat experience) - beginning with lighting of the Shabbat candles and ending with Havdalah. Assign each family a ritual. Prepare a brief explanation of the ritual and the appropriate blessing(s) if needed for each family. In the appropriate order of the Shabbat rituals, each family will then teach their ritual through simulation. Encourage the families to be creative with their simulation. Remind them to focus on the concept of liberation from the work week.

- Each family can make their own *kiddush* cup. (Perhaps buy plain ceramic *kiddush* cups that can be painted and fired). The *kiddush* is the blessing which sanctifies Shabbat and explicitly mentions the Exodus from Egypt. Study the *kiddush* prayer and examine its connection to the Exodus from Egypt.
  How does the remembering the Exodus from Egypt help us to prepare for Shabbat? Do we appreciate our freedom more on Shabbat than during the week? Why?

  The *kiddush* is also used both at the beginning and end of Shabbat. A *kiddush* cup is a wonderful heirloom that can be passed down to future generations.

- Share a Shabbat dinner together as a class. Assign each family a ritual that they will be responsible for at the dinner. At the Shabbat dinner, have each family (children and parents can write separate things) share something they "finished" in the past week and feel liberated from as they enter into this Shabbat. They can also share a way that they plan on making their Shabbat holy.

Adult:

- Explore the connection between Shabbat and the liberation from Egypt through a series of Shabbat readings which reflect on how Shabbat allows us to be free. How do the readings express the meaning of Shabbat? What does freedom feel like according to these readings? What are we free from on Shabbat?

  After a discussion on the readings. Ask each adult to think of a couple of things which they want to be free from on Shabbat. Each adult should also come up with a practical of way of freeing themselves from the things they chose. The following Shabbat, each person can try to actually implement the thing they have chosen and then reflect (in a journal) on how it made their Shabbat feel; if they really did feel "free". This can be the beginning of a journal about their Shabbat experiences.

Children:

- Each child will reenact (stations, pantomime, role play, etc.) a typical day during the week: getting ready for school, carpool, learning in school, after-school activities (sports, music lessons, dance, etc.), homework, taking care of a sibling, watching TV, bedtime, etc. Go through the motions of the typical day a couple of times.

  Then, each child will choose a couple of activities which they do only on Shabbat. If they already have things they do they can use those or they can pick from some activities created by the teacher: going for a picnic with family, going on a hike or to a park, writing a letter to a friend, going to Saturday morning services, going to a relative's house for Shabbat lunch, etc.

  Compare the typical week day and Shabbat. How are the two days different? Do you feel different as you act out the two different days? Is it important to have both kinds of days? On Shabbat we are suppose to feel a sense of freedom from the work week, what does it mean for you to be free on Shabbat? What do you want to be free from?

Resources for Unit IV

Donin, Hayim Halevy. *To Be A Jew: A Guide to Jewish Observance in Contemporary Life.* USA: BasicBooks. 1972.
(Chapter 5 - "The Sabbath: An Island in Time" explains all of the rituals connected with Shabbat. It is written from an orthodox perspective. I will include in the appendix an excerpt from this Chapter called, "The Sabbath as a Memorial to the Exodus from Egypt" which is a good explanation of the connection between Shabbat and the Exodus from Egypt.)

Kadden, Barbara and Bruce. *Teaching Mitzvot: Concepts, Values, and Activities.* Colorado: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc. 1988.
(See Unit I: Observing and Remembering Shabbat in the resource section)

Klein, Isaac. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice.* New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America. 1979.
(This book is a comprehensive guide to Jewish practice for home and synagogue written from the perspective of the Conservative movement. Chapters 4 and 5 are related to Shabbat liturgy and the prohibition against work. It is a good resource to have around when questions arise.)

Shapiro, Mark Dov. *The Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat.* New York: CCAR Press. 1991.
(This is an excellent resource for both the teacher and the families. It goes through each of the rituals of Shabbat and provides the historic/rabbinic origins of the rituals. All of the blessings are included in Hebrew, transliteration, and English. The book also provides a Reform perspective on the rituals' meanings for us as modern Jews and discusses Shabbat observance from this perspective as well.)

UNIT V - Yearly: Pesach, Shavuot, & Sukkot

Objectives: At the end of this unit families will be able to:

- Identify the *shalosh regalim* (the three pilgrimage festivals) as the yearly cycle of reenacting *yitziat mitzrayim.*
- Define each festival as a different stage in the journey of liberation: *Pesach* - the event of liberation; *Shavuot* - as the moment when the one-time event transforms to a transgenerational process of ritualized remembrance; and *Sukkot* - celebration of the trek with God as our Shield.
- Identify one ritual from each festival as expressions of liberation (*z'man cheiroteinu)*, study (*z'man matan torateinu*), and celebration (*z'man simchateinu*).

Key Concepts

Exodus is an "orienting event" - an event that sets in motion and guides the Jewish way (and, ultimately, humanity's way) toward the Promised Land - an earth set free and perfected. (Greenberg, p. 25)

As we enter into this unit we now turn to the festivals which celebrate the central theme of this curriculum guide. Exodus as the "master story". In the yearly remembrances of our Exodus from Egypt we are participants in a journey. A journey that begins with our liberation from Egypt. We are free from the bonds of slavery, but how do we exist as a free people? The time between our liberation and revelation at Sinai we are wandering through the desert without any vision. We quickly forget the miracles we witnessed at the shores of the Sea of Reeds. We keep looking back towards Egypt because that is all we know. Slavery. To look ahead, is to have faith; to trust in something that we can't see or feel. At Sinai we see and feel the power of the God who redeemed us from Egypt. At Sinai, we are ready to receive and accept the guidelines which make our liberation the "master story" of the Jewish people. The Torah is our tool which guides our remembrance of *yitziat mitzrayim.* It is our map on this journey. Shavuot is the festival which transforms our liberation from a one-time, historical event into a process. A process which engages every generation in studying, living, and teaching our covenant with God. As we make our way through this process, through the desert, we build *sukkot.* These booths protect us from the harsh conditions of the desert, but also make us vulnerable as we step out of our secure and stable routines. We again trust in God for our livelihood. We experience the insecurity of freedom by accepting limits and a discipline to guide our lives.

The *shalosh regalim - Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot* - define *yitziat mitzrayim* as an on-going process that links us to the generations which came before us and the generation who will come after us. These three festivals are demarcations in the year which

actualize our remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt by reenacting this journey from liberation to the Promised Land. Torah is our map to guide us in this process. With each new generation, we get little bit closer to a time when the earth is complete and perfected. As we explore these three festivals we will examine a central ritual in each festival which expresses this notion of an intergenerational process striving for ultimate liberation.

I. *Pesach*

A. *Mitzvot* of Passover

Passover is the ultimate attempt to involve people in the experience of Exodus. **(Greenberg, p. 39)**

Passover, mainly the Passover Seder, is not just an attempt to be involved in the historical event of the Exodus. God commanded us to make this event an institution for all time. *"In every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as though we were redeemed from Egypt."* But our redemption from Egypt is not only historical but spiritual and ethical as well. As we reenact the story we are experiencing this transformation from bondage to liberation and, in doing so, examine our own treatment of others. It forces us to look at the values we are passing on to the next generation. The Seder involves us in this experience by engaging us in an interactive, intergenerational mode of learning in order that we may REMEMBER the Exodus.

The three commandments which help us work towards this sense of "liberation" are:
1. To tell the story of the Exodus. As the Torah states: "Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how Adonai freed you from it with a mighty hand..." (Exodus. 13:3).
2. To eat *matzah* - unleavened bread. As the Torah states: "At evening, you shall eat unleavened bread" (Exodus 12:18).
3. To refrain from eating or owning *chametz* - leavened bread. As the Torah states: "On the very first day, you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15).

These three *mitzvot* are ritualized in the Passover Seder. The Seder is our curriculum of liberation - *z'man cheiroteinu.*

B. *Pesach Seder*

1. The seder as a family education curriculum on liberation
"The seder challenges each family to narrate its own version of the Greatest Story Ever Told with each member actively involved." (Greenberg, p. 50).

a. The Haggadah's dialogue and question-and-answer format is the central expression of our liberation. Slaves are unable to question authority and to even question their existence. Freedom enables us to ask WHY? The Haggadah's driving force is having people ask questions throughout the seder. Here are a couple of examples:

1. **The Maggid** (literally "the telling" which comes from the same Hebrew root as in the word Haggadah) - "The formal narrative of the redemption of Israel from Egypt now begins. The story is embellished, using the imagination and the learning of those present; the significance of the event then and now is dramatized. The commandment to tell of the Exodus is considered to be truly fulfilled only when the story is passed from parent to child in a meaningful manner so that is comes alive for both.
Since the involvement of the child is crucial to learning, the storytelling begins with four questions, traditionally asked by the youngest one present. The child's curiosity has been aroused. In effect, the question is: Why are you acting so strangely tonight? Why do Jews act differently? The answer that unfolds is: Something extraordinary has happened. The lives of the Jewish people and of all the people in the world will never be the same. Exodus is the sounding of hope for eternity.
As the story unfolds, the past becomes present, so that old and young relive it together and are united in the experience. Jewish religion grows out of a shared memory; if grandparents or other older persons are at the seder, they tell of their past, the suffering they have experienced, the redemption they have lived through." (Greenberg, pp. 52-53).

See pp. 94-96 in the resource section from Strassfeld's book for an outline and explanation of the sections of the Maggid.

2. **Symbols of the Seder plate** - At the end of the Maggid section we **ask:** "Why these three?" Why the Pesach lamb, *matzah*, and *maror*?

a. *Maror* - captures the bitterness of the enslavement
b. The *Pesach* lamb - represented today by the roasted bone (*zeroah*), recalls the blood on the doorposts and the terror and anticipation of the night of the plague of the first born
c. *Matzah* - stands for the following morning, when Israel was rushed out of Egypt with not time to let their dough rise

"The *maror* serves as a reprise of the earlier enslavement theme. The tradition wants to summon up - once more, in a state of freedom - the bitter, wrenching taste of slavery, for there is always real danger that those who have gone forth into freedom will turn their backs on those still in slavery. The *maror* and *matzah* remind participants that though this family may be at ease, it dare not forget that many others - Jews and non-Jews alike - still live in need." (Greenberg, p. 54).

Each of these symbols are put on the seder plate so that we may ask not only how they help us remember the Exodus from Egypt, but also what do these symbols mean for us today and what can they mean for future generations? In order for the symbols to be meaningful to us we must ask how they signify liberation in our own lives today.

II. *Shavuot*

"On Passover, God committed to the covenant by an act of redemption. On Shavuot, standing at Sinai, the Jewish people responded by accepting the Torah. The teaching that guides the way of the Jews, the Torah, became the constitution of the ongoing relationship of God and the Jewish people." (Greenberg, p. 68).

A. *Shavuot* as *Z'man Matan Torateinu* (the season of the giving of the Torah)

1. "On Shavuot, the Jewish people celebrate their covenantal relationship with God and reaffirm their commitment to a Jewish life of study and practice. The significance of the events at Sinai derives not only from the receiving of *mitzvot* but also from their acceptance as is illustrated in Israel's response, *Na'aseh v'nishma* (We will fulfill and we will hear/understand). Sinai represents a constant effort to confront life and history in light of this covenantal relationship." *(Gates of the Seasons,* p. 76.) At this moment, the liberation from Egypt becomes an intergenerational experience in which each person in every generation, through study, learning, and living Judaism, expresses the ultimate form of liberation and freedom; the choice of commandedness, the acceptance of a discipline to guide our lives.

2. The reenactment of Sinai starts forty-nine days before the event. The countdown begins on the first night after the Exodus. We observe *Shavuot* seven weeks after Passover, on the 6th of Sivan, as it is said: "From the day which you bring the sheaf of wave offering, the day after the Sabbath [understood by the Rabbis to mean the first day of Passover], you will count seven weeks. They must be completed, and you must count until the day after the seventh week - fifty days...On that same day you shall hold a celebration. It will be a holy day for you." (Leviticus 23:15-16, 21).

The *Omer (*counting) is counted every night from one to forty-nine, by days and by weeks. According to Maimonides' interpretation, as soon as the Israelites were out of Egypt, they looked forward to receiving the Torah. Maimonides views *Sefirat Ha'Omer* (the counting of the *Omer*) as the outcome of the extraordinary anticipation that Jews felt for the moment of Revelation.

a. We count seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot. The word *Shavuot* means "weeks" referring to the seven weeks of counting. Seven is

the number/symbol of perfection in biblical language: Shabbat is the seventh day, the slave goes free in the seventh year, etc.

B. *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*

1. There is a custom to stay awake the entire night of Shavuot in preparation for the Revelation. The preparation is the study of Torah, preparing a Jew for what he or she is about to receive. The *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* (liturgy of the night of Shavuot) is an anthology that symbolically represents the complete Torah, written and oral. The all-night study is culminated on the morning of Shavuot when the entire congregation gathers to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments.

2. In order for *Shavuot* to be the festival which transforms the Exodus from a one-time event to an on-going process of this covenantal relationship we must be awake and prepared to receive and accept the Torah. We have a responsibility to carry on the partnership which began with the generations who came before us and will continue on with future generations. This all night study is an opportunity for us to participate in the covenantal community by engaging in study and standing before Sinai every year on the morning of Shavuot.

III. *Sukkot*

"Sukkot celebrates the *way* of liberation - the march across a barren desert to freedom and the Promised Land....The liberated person is the one who learns to accept the daily challenges of existence as the expression of self-fulfillment and responsibility. Sukkot commemorates the maturation of the Israelites, achieved not in crossing the Sea of Reeds but in walking the long way to freedom." (Greenberg, pp. 96-97).

A. *Mitzvot* of *Sukkot*

1. Living in the *Sukkah* (discussed below)

2. Gathering together the *arbah minim* (four species) - *lulav* (palm), *etrog* (citron), *hadas* (myrtle), and *aravah* (willow). The identification of the four species is based on the Rabbinic interpretation of Leviticus 23:40, "On the first day you shall take the product of the *hadar* trees, branches of palm tress, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook."
The *etrog* has maintained a separate identity. Two willow branches and three myrtle branches are bound together around one palm branch and are called the *lulav*.
The four species are tangible reminders of our connection and dependency to the land. As we wandered throughout the desert, not only did we depend on God but we also depended on the resources of the land to survive the journey through the

desert. Our liberation from Egypt subjected us to the realities of freedom: survival and the fragility of life.

3. Rejoicing during the festival - As the Torah teaches, "You shall rejoice on your festival...for Adonai your God will bless all your crops and all your undertakings, you shall have nothing but joy" (Deuteronomy 16:14,15). While rejoicing is a *mitzvah* on all of the *shalosh regalim*, it is characteristic of the observance of *Sukkot*. So much so that the tradition has designated it as ***Z'man Simchateinu***, "the season of our rejoicing."

B. The *Sukkah*

1. It is a *mitzvah* to celebrate in the *sukkah*. The Torah says, "You shall live in *sukkot* (booths) seven days; all citizens of Israel shall live in *sukkot*, in order that the future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in *sukkot* when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 23:42-43)

2. "The *sukkah* (booth) is the central symbol of the ancient Israelites' trust and hope for forty years in the desert. The Hebrews left the protection of man-made thick walls to place themselves under the protection of God...Their act of faith remains a source of merit for the people of Israel and a continuing support for the covenantal commitment. By eating, learning, and sleeping in the booth so that the *sukkah* becomes one's home for a week, we reenact their original act of faith." (Greenberg, p. 99).

3. The *sukkah* must be a temporary structure, not a permanent one. This is to remind us of the portability of the huts in the desert as the Israelites wandered from place to place for forty years. It also stresses one of the themes of the holiday - the impermanence of our lives. We recognize our fragility and vulnerability as we dwell in the *sukkah* and how God is the source of our protection.

Possible learning activities

Family:

- A Passover skit: This can be done in the context of a Passover Seder or as a separate activity to get families in the spirit of Passover. Role-playing is a wonderful way to involve people in the story of the Exodus and the act of "storytelling" (i.e. Maggid). It is something the families can incorporate into their own Passover seders as well. A role-play - unlike a play - involves no costumes or set script, however, costumes and props can only enhance a skit.

  See Chapter 7: Storytelling - Maggid from *The Leader's Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night* for a detailed role-play.

- Build a counting machine for *Sefirat Ha'Omer:* Have each family create an actual counter for the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot. Why do we count the days between Passover and Shavuot? We countdown to events that are important in our lives (birthdays, going on a vacation, the first day of school, etc.) in anticipation of the event. What are we counting towards?

  On Shavuot: On Shavuot, we receive God's Teaching - the Torah. We can recreate the Revelation by passing a teaching onto our own children. Have the parents find a Torah teaching that they want to pass on to their children (i.e. a story from the Torah, the Ten commandments, etc.). On the day of Shavuot, the parents will share their Teaching with their children. Encourage families to make this a tradition in their family. Each year, the parents can pass on a new Teaching to their children.

- As a class, help build the synagogue's *sukkah* or the class can build their own *sukkah* in someone's backyard. To emphasize *Sukkot* as *Z'man Simchateinu* "a season of rejoicing" have each of the families create decorations for the *sukkah* which represent the *simchas* "festive occasions" they have celebrated in their own families. As a way to record a family's *simchas*, each family can create a photo album/scrapbook of the *simchas* they have had in the last year. Each year they can add all of the celebrations from the past year to their album. Once the *sukkah* is complete share a meal together in the *sukkah*. Give each person the opportunity to say the blessing and shake the *lulav*.

- *Sukkot* Sensory Experience: *Z'man Simchateinu*, is a holistic sensory experience. We do not just visualize a time of rejoicing, we also taste, feel, hear, and smell it. *Sukkot* gives us the tools to fully rejoice in the festival. Give families the opportunity to experience each of the elements of *Sukkot* at different sensory stations, which contain one or more of the following activities:

  Feel: shaking the *lulav*, building a *sukkah*
  Taste: sharing a meal together in the *sukkah*
  Hear: the blessings recited for dwelling in the *sukkah* and shaking the *lulav*
  Smell: the *etrog*
  See: all of the rituals and symbols of *Sukkot*

- If the families wrote a story of their own experience of the Exodus event. Have them continue their story (or they can begin a story from when they left Egypt and are now beginning their desert journey) in the desert. What are the trials and tribulations they face in the desert? Are they better off than they were in Egypt? Do they believe that God will carry them through the hardships of life in the desert? Will the *sukkot* be enough to protect them?

- Natural *Sukkah*: On *Sukkot* we acknowledge the fragility of our lives as we dwell in the *sukkah*. We again return to nature and recognize the Source of creation and protection around us. Spend a day in nature (park, forest, etc.). Find a spot a in nature that provides a natural *sukkah*, canopy of protection. Have a discussion about removing ourselves from our permanent shelters on *Sukkot* and returning to a more fragile environment. Does being out in nature make us feel more or less secure? Why? Does it bring us closer to God or further away? Why? When we are out in nature are we relying more on our faith in God as the Israelites did when they were in the desert? Why on *Sukkot* do we physically remove ourselves from the security of our homes to dwell in a temporary structure?

Children:

- Passover Journalists/Detectives: Assign the role of Journalists or Detectives to the children. Their assignment is to find out all about the characters and symbols in the Haggadah. Come up with people, places, things, etc. related to the elements of the Passover story AND the elements of their own personal Passover Seders. Have the children create a list of questions they want to ask:
  What is Moses like as a guy to just hang out with? Who built the pyramids?
  Where is Egypt?
  When were the pyramids built?
  Why do we tell the same story every year (if we know how it ends)?
  The children will then ask their parents these questions. This activity can be done in the setting of the class or at a Passover seder.

  This activity is appropriate for all three of the festivals. Each festival is full of symbols and characters which can be investigated by the Exodus Detectives.

Adult:

- "A Symposium About Slavery and Freedom" (from Chapter 10 of *The Leader's Guide to the Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night*). Each generation works towards a perfect world where no one will be a slave. The Haggadah declares that "we still are slaves now, though next year we will be free." How are we slaves today - politically, economically, psychologically, spiritually? Use the quotes from Chapter 10 for a discussion of this question. (See the directions from Chapter 10 to guide the discussion).

- *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*: Have an all-night or late-night study session for the parents. The study session can be Torah or other classical texts which the adults may be interested in. As a group, the adults can further explore the Exodus narrative through the allusions to the Exodus in the Torah (see Unit I for references to future allusions). Examine how the allusions shape the Israelite people's perceptions of God, their history, and their future as a nation and religion.

  In what context are the references used? How do the people respond to the allusion? How are the Israelites remembering the event in their own journey to the Promised Land?

Resources for Unit V

Greenberg, Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays.* New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster. 1988.
(This book is the basis for the entire unit and the major conceptual themes for the three festivals. I highly recommend reading *Part I: The Vision and the Way.* It provides the conceptual themes of each of the holidays as a reenactment of the cycle of the Exodus from Egypt. He also discusses the major rituals connected with each of the festivals from a traditional perspective.)

Knobel, Peter, ed. *Gates of the Seasons: A Guide to the Jewish Year.* New York: CCAR. 1983.
(This is the Reform movement's survey of the home-based and synagogue-based *mitzvot* for all of the festivals and sacred days throughout the Jewish year. The book provides the biblical references and key Hebrew words and phrases associated with the festivals and sacred days. Refer to the section on the Pilgrimage Festivals - *Shalosh Regalim.*)

Strassfeld, Michael. *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary.* New York: Harper and Row. 1985.
(This is an excellent, comprehensive resource for each of the Jewish holidays. He provides the biblical origins of the holidays, traditional, and contemporary customs and rituals for each of the festivals. Refer to the chapters on *Pesach,* The *Omer, Shavuot,* and *Sukkot.*)

Zion, Noam and Dishon, David. *The Leader's Guide to The Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night and The Family Participation Haggadah: A Different Night.* USA: The Shalom Hartman Institute. 1997.
(This is a wonderful Haggadah which provides a complete Haggadah as well as modern and traditional commentary, art, and numerous intergenerational activities to engage families in the Passover seder and the festival of Passover itself. Refer to Chapters 7, 10, and 12 in the Leader's Guide for activities.)

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

- Return to the Exodus narrative. Each family will reread the story together.
  Discuss, first, within individual families and then as a group:
  What parts of the story are significant for your family based on what you have learned over the course of this curriculum?
  Examine the narrative through the eyes of the concepts covered in the curriculum - Are our Jewish actions an accurate rememberance of the narrative? How do our actions stray from the narrative? Are we leaving out signficant pieces of the story through the practices and rituals we observe?
  Throughout history, the Exodus narrative continues to be the Master Story of our tradition what are the pieces of the story which make it timeless? What rituals, *mitzvot*, and celebrations (or what combination) are the most holistic tools for remembering the Exodus for your family and as individuals?
  What new rituals (daily, weekly, monthly, and/or yearly) could be created to remember the Exodus narrative?

  Now that journey through the wilderness has ended, each family will create a description of their "entrance into the Promised Land". What does each family's Promised Land look like? Meaning, how will they create Jewish space, Jewish actions for their family? What will the observance of rituals, the fulfillment of *mitzvot*, the significance of prayer, the celebration of Shabbat be for them based on their experiences so far? This activity is not a complete and definite representation of their Jewish practices for all time, but is the beginning of a continual process of learning, engaging, doing, and understanding. Just as Judaism continues to change from generation to generation our personal and family expressions of Jewish life will also grow from generation to generation.

- Have the families create their own "master story". A story that describes an event that forms their identity as a family. (Can be told through art, song, a video, an heirloom, etc.) Then describe a way in which the story will become ritualized in their lives and how it will be passed on to future generations.

Resource Section

Resource Table of Contents

From Fields, A Torah Commentary for Our Times

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SPARKS, FRAGMENTS, MEANINGS
A Reader-Friendly Introduction

What is the "Torah"?

The Torah is more than the treasure of the Jewish people, more even than the sacred scroll that bonds Jews to one another and to all the generations who have praised it with the words: "It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and whoever holds on to it is happy; its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17–18)

The Torah is a vast and diverse library. It contains ancient stories, science, histories, ritual practices, philosophy, and ethical standards. Its pages are filled with powerful prose and poetry about the clash of individuals and nations. Within its five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we encounter the unique way in which the Jewish people views the universe, humanity, and God. No subject is excluded: birth and death, rivalries between children and parents, battles for power, lust, cheating, charity, sexual discrimination, greed, community building, responsibility for the homeless and hungry, taxation, real estate, ecology, business and medical ethics, marriage and divorce. First-century C.E. teacher Ben Bag Bag captured the truth when he told his students: "Turn the Torah, and turn it again, for everything you want to know is found within it." (*Avot* 5:25)

How can we understand the Torah?

Ben Bag Bag may have been correct, but, for many of us, reading and understanding the Torah is not easy. Often we find the language confusing and the stories or flow from one subject to another puzzling. We want to "turn it" and be enriched, even inspired by it, but we end up frustrated and bewildered. "What," we ask, "can the ancient Torah teach us today? What meaning can it have in our lives?"

A Torah Commentary for Our Times has been written with the conviction that there is not only much that we can learn from the Torah but also that studying and sharing its insights can be both inspiring and enjoyable. Our purpose is to present each *parashah,* or "weekly Torah portion," so that it is easy to understand and so that its themes are relevant and accessible.

With each *parashah* we will ask two basic questions: "What is this Torah portion about?" and "What meaning can this Torah portion have for us?"

For clarification, we will identify the most important themes of each *parashah* and then present the varying, and often clashing, opinions of Jewish interpreters throughout the ages. At times we will advocate a particular point of view, but most often we will leave final conclusions to the reader.

The art of "interpreting" Torah

While the organization and presentation of our material may be new, the method we are employing has been tested by Jews over thousands of years. We are not the first to find the contents

From Joel Grishaver's Being Torah

FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

It is easy to imagine that many of the Torah's stories were first told around a campfire. The Torah is filled with exciting images that a listener needs to picture in his or her mind. We are taken on a stormy ride on a boat filled with animals, and then shown a peaceful rainbow. We look up a ladder ascending into the heavens and then wrestle a stranger in the dark. We are given a coat of many colors, thrown in pit, and then emerge to hear more dreams. The Torah has an oral impact. It haunts the listener with images, introduces him or her to significant role models, and evolves the first layer of a moral fabric. Like our ancestors, most children first encounter the oral dynamic of Torah, hearing its stories long before they study its texts. They are told or read stories which become the basis for crafts, drama, discussion, and other extensions of imagination.

The Torah, however, is more than a collection of bedtime stories. Its stories are precisely crafted texts that need careful closereading. Much of the Torah's depth comes from the way its stories are told. When we do look closely, we find stories written in specific patterns, with words being reused specific numbers of times, with significant insight being communicated through subtle word changes, and with word-symbols being evolved through a series of usages. We are taught to be "keepers," first of a garden, then of our brother, and finally of a covenant. We are made to feel like "strangers" in Canaan, "strangers" in Egypt, and then are taught to protect and help the "stranger in our midst." Moving through the mythic fabric of the Torah's tales is the concise evolution of a significant vocabulary of Jewish existence. The Jewish people's relationship with Torah is indeed rooted in an oral experience, but its foundation lies in the close reading of its text.

Quotes on Torah:

It is a tree of life to all who grasp it, and whoever holds on to it is happy; its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.

Proverbs 3:18

Turn the Torah, and turn it again, for everything you want to know is found within it.

Pirke Avot 5:22

Rabbi Tarfon and the other rabbis were once saying....in Lydda when the question was raised before them: "Is study greater or practice?" Rabbi Tarfon said, "Practice is greater." Rabbi Akiva said, "Study is greater." Then they all answered and said, "Study is greater for it leads to deeds."

Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 40b

Every Jew is required to study Torah, whether poor or rich, healthy or ailing, young or old and feeble. Even a man so poor that he is maintained by charity or goes begging from door to door, as also a man with a wife and children to support, is under the obligation to set aside a definite period during the day and night for the study of the Torah....Until what period is one obligated to study Torah? Until the day of one's death.

Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah,* "Laws of Torah Study," 1:8,10

If you truly wish your children to study Torah, study it yourself in their presence. They will follow your example. Otherwise, they will not themselves study Torah but will simply instruct their children to do so.

Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Kotzk

On why the mitzvah of studying Torah outweighs all of the other mitzvot....
These are the deeds which yield immediate dividends and continue to yield fruit in time to come: honoring parents, doing deeds of kindness, attending the house of study punctually, morning and evening... But the study of Torah is equal to them all [because it leads to them all.]

Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 127a

Don't just say the words of Torah, BE Torah

Rabbi Dov, The Magid

Bibliodrama:

Theory and Practice for Beginners

■ *by Peter Pitzele* *(adapted by Noam Zion)*

Introduction

Peter Pitzele, a master of improvised role playing on Biblical themes, lays out the rudiments of his approach. The leader of the seder or a participant with drama or family therapy background can readily utilize the tools described below to personalize the Exodus in surprising ways. The interpretation of the Biblical story in drama is an analogue to the Rabbinic midrash that is at the center of the Haggadah.*

Bibliodrama and Midrash

Bibliodrama is a form of improvisational role-playing in which the roles played are taken from Biblical texts. The roles may be those of characters who appear in the Bible or parts may be further expanded to include certain objects or images in the Bible which may be embodied in voice and action (the serpent in the garden or the staff of Moses). I call my work **Bibliodrama**, with a capital B. (By capitalizing the word I meant Bibliodrama to refer explicitly to the Bible as the source for dramatic exploration).

Bibliodrama is a creative and expressive mode of Biblical interpretation; it is a form of midrashic play. Midrash is an immensely long tradition of commentary, storytelling, and imaginative interpretation of the Bible which sought to fill in the gaps in narrative, address textual contradictions and inconsistencies, and weave in applications to contemporary life. Though at times a deeply scholarly enterprise, there is also something folkloric about midrash. It belongs to an oral tradition, holy and still evolving, which continues to respond to the Bible in fresh ways. The country of midrash is vast, anonymous, democratic, and inexhaustible. Profound readers with glittering eyes have been there before me: many of their achievements are in the record books of Rabbinic Midrash, but the field of play welcomes new players. Each generation can go there for fresh discoveries. My Bibliodrama seeks to join this conversation with the Bible that has been going on for thousands of years.

**Dr. Peter Pitzele, author of* Digging Our Fathers' Wells: A Personal Encounter with the Myths of Genesis, *combined a literature and psychotherapy background to create a center for Bibliodrama. This selection comes from his forthcoming* Scripture Windows.

The Midrashic Space

Bibliodrama begins with acts of reading. One reads the words on the page, and one reads into the spaces between the words on the page. There is a traditional commentary that talks about the Bible as having been written in black letters and white letters. The black letters are those that form the words; the white letters are those made up of the negative spaces the black letters create. The black letters are fixed for all time; the white letters are perpetually new. Bibliodrama is a game played in the open spaces of the text for which the black letters are the boundaries.

To role play with creativity and depth one must develop a midrashic imagination; one must get a sense of how great interpretive imaginations find and fill the white spaces. **The purpose of this training is not only to learn from the masters, it is to liberate your own imagination, to give yourself permission to embroider and to embellish the text, to invent new midrash and to inspire others to do the same.**

Midrash permitted me my own creative response to the biblical narrative. One did not need to be a learned scholar or a sophisticated literary critic. Midrash had the quality of folklore. Midrash was really a way of asking and answering questions, and even a child could do that, sometimes more piercingly than adults. For all the time I had put in as a sometime professor of literature, I had never been invited to create with the creator. I could tell you a lot about Hamlet, but no one ever suggested that a legitimate form of Shakespearean commentary might be to write my own soliloquy. Yet here was the Bible, a text more sacred than Shakespeare, and there existed a tradition of interpretation that sanctioned a **participatory creativity**.

What actually occurs when one begins to read midrashically is that one reads very slowly in order to see each verb and predicate as a cinematographer might see them. One becomes aware of the ways one is unconsciously filling in detail the narrative itself does not specify. One learns to imagine various different ways that filling in might be done. And one learns then to ask questions about these negative spaces, so that one can become aware of the interpretive possibilities they provide.

[*Editor:* For example in Exodus 2:5-6 we read that Pharaoh's

Hebrew children." Reading slowly we identify interpretive gaps: Did Pharaoh's daughter get down on her knees to see the baby? Did she open the basket slowly and suspiciously or excitedly like a little girl receiving a surprise gift? What passed through her mind as she acknowledged this baby to be one of the Hebrews her father had ordered drowned?]

Bibliodrama: The Tools

The essence of Bibliodrama is the act of voicing and playing a biblical character. One can do this singly or in a group with others. No props or devices are needed to accomplish this. When the warm-up is sound, the invitation made safe and appealing, the scene and characters clearly defined, then the act of voicing and playing is as easy as a somersault.

However, for the would-be director there are a number of tools that can support and extend this bibliodramatic move. Casting a scene and interviewing the characters is first. Another tool involves the use of **empty chairs** to block a scene, or to symbolize an internal state. Another is **echoing**, the use of your voice in a kind of elaboration of what the players say that helps them sustain and deepen their role playing.

A fourth tool is **doubling**, which refers to the method by which more than one person can develop a biblical character in a kind of midrashic tag-team match. A fifth technique involves animating objects, turning Moses' staff, for example, into a **talking object**. Finally there is **dramatic dialogue**, the encounter of powerful biblical characters who are encouraged to speak to one another openly, even though in the story they may not have been able to express themselves frankly.

1. Casting a Scene and Interviewing the Characters

[*Editor:* You might introduce a bibliodramatic exercise in the following way: I have always been intrigued by Exodus 5, Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh after receiving his commission at the burning bush. Let's read it slowly and then I'd like to invite you to do something a little different. Let's make a list of all the possible characters who might appear — even if unnamed — in this episode (Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, the Egyptian advisors, Miriam, Pharaoh's daughter, the Jewish leaders or an Egyptian priest).]

like to get your perspective on what happened today. Raise your hand when you know who you are. You can pass if you don't feel like doing midrash in this way. Hands go up. Not all. Not all need to play, and I need to make sure people feel free to watch. People warm-up differently to this kind of work; there are always fast-starters, usually enough to get things moving. But it's a good idea as well as good teaching to check in at various points to see if any of the people who were quiet at the beginning would like to ask a question if not take a part as things are moving along. The ability to include the less willing, if only as interested auditors who with you are learning all sorts of things, comes with practice.

I play **the role of the interviewer**, asking questions as if I had a microphone in my hand. Though I know the story, I pretend to a certain naiveté. That naiveté keeps me fresh and open to the surprising things I might hear. The better I can imagine myself there in the scene, the more lively and curious I become as interviewer. I may have heard certain rumors for which I am trying to get confirmation. Questions, questions, questions: these are the means by which the bibliodramatic facilitator gets people involved in the play.

Using this simple technique, both the group and the facilitator have a chance to experience this form of midrash-making. These 'short-takes' are to Bibliodrama what snorkeling is to scuba diving. Many lovers of the coral never strap on tanks to dive the outer reefs. In time and with a growing confidence and curiosity, the careful swimmer may attempt those challenges. But there is always plenty to see close to shore. The drama moves forward increment by increment by means of the questions asked. Questions, like prompts, send the participant off in certain directions (emotion? information? thoughts? playful invention? external detail? relationship?).

2. Using Empty Chairs

It is best to take the process in stages. In the first stage people are asked to think of a biblical character in the Exodus (like Pharaoh, the midwives, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh's daughter) that interests them, or one that pops into mind and seems to intrigue them. Then in the second stage, people are asked to introduce themselves to the group as that character. You might say something like this: "Having selected a character

that interests you, now step into the shoes of that character, and introduce yourself to us. If you don't feel like trying this out, just say 'I pass' when your turn comes."

[*Editor:* For example, in Exodus 5, Moses and his brother Aaron confront Pharaoh in God's name. Pharaoh then pressures the Hebrews who then blame Moses who in turn blames God.]

You can place an **empty chair** in the center of the room and tell the players that this chair represents God, and that they are to stand as near or as far from that chair as they feel represents their closeness or distance from God. Characters may then be questioned about their feelings, relationship, history with God). Once these tableaux are created, the facilitator's task is to interview the participants in role and to help them tell the group a little about themselves. Often other characters will take part in asking characters questions.

Often it will be helpful to ask people once they have chosen the character and become it, to locate that character in time and space. "You tell me you are Miriam? So at what point in your story are you coming before us?" Sometimes the participant may answer immediately and with certainty. "I am Miriam; I have just seen my brother's wife Zipporah." Other times when the character draws a blank you may need to present some of the options: "Are you Miriam as a young girl, as the leader crossing the Red Sea, as the dancer, as the prophetess, as the woman who challenges her brother, as the stricken Miriam, as Miriam dying?"

Note: Focussing the player in on the part, on the particulars, deepens the imaginative connection. Deepening in Bibliodrama always involves tapping into the players' unconscious, for the imagination is a function of our spontaneity, and spontaneity draws its energy from the unreflective, prompt expression of our unconscious minds. Work with characters of the sort I am describing here has its deep-water perils for the novice facilitator; often the unconscious connection, the reasons why one person chooses a certain character, can open up deep places in our souls. It is best when doing this kind of work not to question or probe too far. Help the player to tell a little story in role. Even though you may sense that more could be told, even though you sense the unexpressed feelings (anguish, anger, fear, loss), let the story stand as presented. It will be enough. It will demonstrate the vitality and richness of this method; it will give some brilliant midrash. Bibliodrama can be fully alive without necessarily getting "deep."

As the director, you face the group. Let's sat that as part of your warm-up with them, you want to explain what midrash is. You set out two empty chairs, placing one behind the other. "The first chair," you explain, "represents the words on the page. We can all see them; we all agree on what they are. This second chair," now pointing to the chair concealed behind the first, "is all these words can mean and allude to, all the things that these words open up and invite us to imagine or speculate about. This second chair is midrash."

Or as the director you want to develop two opposing sides of a single biblical character. [*Editor:* Let's say the group is exploring Moses' ambivalence about the killing of the Egyptian. The Bible says Moses "looked this way and that way" as he hesitated before the fateful act. Put two chairs back to back representing Moses' weighing the decision to act or not to act. Ask the group to offer thoughts and feelings for each opposing side. You may want a vocal interpreter to sit in one of Moses' chairs and continue the role play.]

The empty chair serves both to concretize a dimension of the character and provide a staging point for its expression. Using the chair also cleanly demarcates the playing space from the group space, the stage from the audience. To reach the chair one moves from audience to participant, from self to role; and then returning to one's seat, one steps out of the role and back into the place of observation.

Empty chairs may be used to sculpt a scene before one actually has people play the parts. You may place chairs side by side, or three chairs together with one off alone – you and the group may play with the relationships between the characters. Once the chairs are arranged, their positions – opposition, alliance, isolation – help the players warm up to the parts. The chairs give some form and control to the interpretive direction of a scene. The chairs support the players and move them in a certain direction. Rearrange the chairs, and new bibliodramatic interpretations present themselves.

3. Doubling

As the director, I am concerned to diversify our sense of Moses. How many Moshes can we get dancing on the pinhead of this verse? I do not move the Bibliodrama either in the

direction of various interactions among characters nor of the development of a single coherent characterization. When the goal is to compound versions of the same character at the same moment, doubling becomes the method. Doubling allows you to hatch multiple dramatic possibilities from a single dramatic moment.

Its great virtue is in allowing observers to become participants in the action if only for a single line. Observers may leap in with a phrase or a brief soliloquy and step out again without feeling stage-fright or the burden of having to stand in for a fuller development of their characterization. Doubling serves to keep the Bibliodrama open to fresh insight and to the movement of group members from the periphery to the center.

As the director I prepare the moment for group doubling in the following way: "What I'd like to do at this point is see how many different possible Moshes we might be able to give voice to in this moment of his exile. In Bibliodrama this is called doubling and it can amount to a piling up or a piling on of interpretations which can be quite inconsistent with one another. "So," I continue, "Moshe, what is this moment like for you, this moment when you are standing at the burning bush (Exodus 3) and confronting God's command and commission to return to your long lost family and to confront Pharaoh from whose wrath you fled?"

This wonderful welter of interpretive possibilities is made possible by my invitation to the group to double Moshe. In doing this we suspend the forward momentum of our reading to open up a series of snapshots of Moshe in different moods and poses at this particular moment in his "life."

4. Echoing

Very often in the course of a bibliodramatic exercise, the participants, at least at first, are shy and slow to warm-up. In answer to your questions, their responses are often brief and tentative. Sometimes they fall out of role, and you, as the director, can almost hear the hiss of the energy escaping through the cracks in their partial participation. The technique of echoing can help you to help your players enter more fully into their parts.

Echoing is part of the art of listening. To echo well is to listen well. One listens not just to what is being said, but also what is being implied in a player's voicing of a part. I think of echoing as **creative repetition**. If I were to use empty chairs to demonstrate ~~sing~~ echoing I would place two chairs in line, one behind the other. In the first chair are the words I hear from the participant; in the second chair are the feelings and thoughts I imagine might lie behind those words. In echoing I give voice to the participant's second chair. It is my midrash on their midrash. Echoing often makes use of a prompt word or an incomplete sentence which the participant then fills.

Let's say we have been reading the story (Exodus 3:1-10) of the birth and adoption of Moses. Using a variety of **indirect methods**, we may be looking at the social condition of slavery, thinking about repressive regimes, discussing the role women play in the opening chapters of the book, noticing literary motifs, studying the Hebrew, talking about our own experiences of feeling trapped, threatened, exiled. All these are part of the repertoire of methods of Bible study. But then, as the director, I might invite the group to zoom in on Moses' sister, **Miriam**. We might wonder what it was like for her to see a baby brother born in the time of the edict. Such speculation is still indirect (we are talking about her), until a moment comes when I say, *"I wonder what Miriam would say to us if she could tell us about this time in her life."* I say this in almost a musing manner, and I let the silence hang a bit, see whether a head comes up or whether anyone takes the cue. Then making my question fully direct: *"Would anyone like to speak for a moment as Miriam? Tell us, Miriam, what is this time like for you?"* Here in slight shifts I move from the indirect (I wonder what Miriam would say . . .) to the direct (Tell us, Miriam, what this time is like for you).

Worst case (I have never seen it happen, but it is our fear): no one speaks.

Then you as the director might wish to offer your own speculation as *Miriam.* You might begin saying, "Well, I think Miriam might say the following if she were here to tell us her story:

'This is a cruel time for me. I am caught between impossible choices. On the one hand, I cherish this little baby. On the other hand, his every cry threatens my life and those of my brother and mother and father.'"

Then you might say, "I wonder if there is another Miriam here who might have something else, or something different, to tell us?" You hope that your words have primed the pump. But let's say that, again, no one picks up on it. The silence that greets you may be the silence of resistance, but it also may be a silence

which is suddenly filling with the enormity of that family's life. With no one else willing to play at that moment, you let go the game, perhaps with some words like "Well, it was just a thought to talk to Miriam, to imagine her words; it's a kind of midrash. Maybe we will try it again some time." And you go on with the study session. You have planted a seed.

More likely, someone does respond to your invitation, or does offer a variant Miriam to the one you proposed. "I think Miriam would be scared," someone offers.

Hearing this, you notice that the phrasing is still indirect (Miriam would be afraid instead of I, as Miriam, am afraid). Your task here is to shift it into direct speech: "So, you are Miriam, and you are scared," you say gently, moving the participant into the role.

"Well, yes," perhaps with a slight shrug or a nervous laugh. Where is this going? This is different.

"And why are you scared?" you ask, persisting, but in a tone that is caring rather than confrontational. Students, adults perhaps more than young people, are so used to thinking there is a right answer, that even in a method so evidently open and imaginative as this one, students may still feel cornered by any interrogation. You take the role of the concerned friend rather than probing director.

"Well, she's scared be . . . ."

"I'm scared because . . . ," insisting gently that the role be played.

"All right, I'm scared because this little baby could get us all in trouble. In big trouble."

"Yes," I say, and echoing "My parents broke the law, and we are living in whispers. Is that right?" referring back to the participant.

"Yes, I mean, what if he were discovered? What if it were found out that we were hiding him?"

"What could happen?"

"We could get into big trouble."

"Ah hah. Like . . . ?"

"I don't know. I don't want to think about it. All I know is that we have to be very secret, very quiet. Like you said 'whispers.'"

"It's hard," I say.

"Yes, it's very hard. Any day they could come and search our house; they could find us out."

"Thank you," I say to this participant. "So, perhaps th[illegible]one of the things Miriam might tell us if she could speak to us today." And I see how the class wishes to move from this point.

"You know, I never thought of Anne Frank before, but in some ways this Miriam, or maybe it's the baby Moses, reminds me of her."

"In what way?" I ask.

"You know, hidden, hiding, scared." And we smoothly resume our other ways of talking about the story.

5. *Bibliodrama with Talking Objects*

Certain schools of modern dream interpretation suggest that the best way to understand a dream is to imagine that we are every part of it, not just the dream-self or dream-protagonist. We are all the other characters as well, and we are also the dream's images, objects, plots, and relationships. It makes perfect sense, of course, since it is our mind that spins out the dream web in all its detail. I find this perspective useful in freeing me to think of objects as having consciousness, and in this regard it is not hard for me to think of the Bible as God's dream within which everything has meaning and a charge of life. I often use these analogies as a way of warming-up a class or a group to a bibliodramatic exercise in which we find a voice for objects in the Bible and have them speak to us.

Here, for example, is a warm-up that I have used with moderate sized groups (under twelve) when I want to hear from — or at least open up the possibility of hearing from — everyone in the group. I offer my words in italics to show what it is I might actually say:

> *The Bible is full of objects: stones, swords, wells, mountains, staffs, arks of different kind. You get the idea. Think of an object in the Exodus story that interests you, or perhaps one that just pops into your head for no good reason that you can see. Raise your hand when you have such a object in mind. (I proceed in this fashion so that people make a commitment to an object without having to think about having to speak for it.) Now imagine you are that object. Introduce yourself to us in the following way: "I am Moses' staff." If you are not comfortable with this exercise, please feel free just to watch and listen.*

with a certain playfulness — introduce themselves in this manner.

"I am the staff God gives to Moses."

"I am the frog on Pharaoh's bed."

"I am the whip of the Egyptian taskmaster."

"I am the little reed ark that carried Moses down the Nile."

"I am the burning bush."

"I am the angel of death in the 10th Plague."

The exercise gains momentum and energy as it proceeds. We feel that these objects have stories to tell. And part of the virtue of choosing an object rather than a character for this exercise is that the object's story is often more focused in a particular narrative moment. The task of the facilitator, depending on the time available, is to elicit some of these stories.

So as a next step one might ask: "Do any of you wish to tell us anything about yourself?" Here is an example of what I heard a woman say in an adult Torah group:

"I am the reed ark that carried Moses down the Nile."

"Tell me more about yourself."

"Well, what do you want to know?"

"Who made you."

"I don't know." (This response is not at all unusual and represents an important and challenging moment for the facilitator. The participant is, for a moment, caught in a dilemma. It is not yet clear whether she can give full rein to her imagination, making up a story out of whole cloth, or whether she has to adhere to the information — or lack thereof — in the Bible. The task of the facilitator at this point is to encourage imagination to invent the story).

"Well, someone must have made you, and though your story is not told in the Bible, perhaps you can let us in on some of your secrets." Or, "I know we do not know in a factual way anything about you, but in this exercise you are free to make up a story. I'll ask you a few questions, and you can just see what answers come to mind." Or, "Sure you know. Maybe you're afraid you'll get them into trouble, that the Egyptian authorities will trace your story and arrest those who arranged for Moses' escape. Don't

to encourage the role-player to let her imagination respond.

"OK. Moses' father made it."

"Made me," I say, gently correcting the speaker back into role.

"OK. Made me."

"Did he talk to you while he was making you?"

"Not actually aloud."

"But you could read his thoughts?"

"Not his thoughts, his feelings."

"Ah hah. And what were those feelings?"

"He was sad, and he was angry."

"I see. And did you know what you were being made for?"

"Yes."

"And that was?"

"To carry the little infant down the Nile."

"How did you feel about this assignment?"

"It was a huge responsibility. I wanted Moses' father to be very careful. To weave me well and to caulk me well. I did not want to leak, or tilt over."

"And did he build you well?"

"Yes, very well."

"Yes. I want you to know what it felt like to carry him down the river. It was like being his mother."

"Ah hah. If I understand you, you are saying . . ." (and here I echo) "I was like a second mother to Moses."

"Yes, a second womb. I held him safe and warm. I rocked him gently. I whispered to him. And I was the one who gave him his name."

"And that name is . . . ?"

"Moshe . . . it means 'the one who is drawn out.'"

"Out of . . . ?"

"Out of me."

"How important you were."

"Yes. And I was sad to let him go, but I had done what I was

made to do, and I was glad. But then I was empty."

"Well, thank you for sharing your story."

Another way of working with objects, is to arrange the objects in various ways, for example, the frogs and the staff have a conversation. Objects may then share a story or sense their relationship with other objects. Interesting juxtapositions open up surprising interpretations; conversations between objects are full of insight, humor, and pathos. In the course of the exercise participants discover how connected they are to these objects; through them they are able to question, quarrel, comment on the story in which they are embedded.

6. The Encounter: Dramatic Dialogue

The encounter — eye to eye, hand to hand — is the heart of the western dramatic imagination. Encounters are not necessarily hostile; but they are charged, layered, and human, the point and counterpoint of differing voices, the meeting face to face of differing perspectives. The biblical imagination is also drawn to such scenes of encounter; we find them everywhere, like Moses and Pharaoh, yet we can imagine dramatic dialogues that are never actually repeated in the Bible. For example, ask two people to role-play Moses' biological mother and Pharaoh's daughter — his adoptive mother.

7. Posting

Posting (with its embedded Latin preposition post meaning after) refers to everything that happens from the end of the action phase through the closure of the bibliodramatic event. In and during posting no one should speak any further in role; to do so would be by definition to go back into action.

Always one wants to leave time at the end for posting. Participants and observers need a chance to comment on the process, to share what the experience has been like, what they learned. It may be surprising how much excitement this simple, safe exercise generates.

In the closure to the class where the woman played the reed ark, she expressed her surprise at how vivid the scene had become for her. "I really see Moses' father bending over in candlelight and weaving the basket. It was amazing, and as the basket I had feelings, too. It was harder to say Goodbye to the baby than I said."

Another group member, speaking to her, said, "I never thought about the ark before as a kind of second mother, a womb. I mean I guess it's obvious, but it made me realize how many times Moses was mothered and passed on. The l[illegible] ark is like a metaphor for how transient his childhood must have felt for him."

Though these comments have a degree of adult sophistication, this exercise lends itself well to young kids, to families, and particularly intergenerational groups. Kids may not have the same ability to comment on the objects as adults, but they are far less inhibited in representing them in the first place. I'll never forget the kid who, playing Joseph's coat, said, "It was scary when the brothers tore me into pieces and splashed blood on me. They were so mad. Like wolves."

A rabbi once said of this work that it created "a level playing field." What he meant was that this method does not privilege knowledge or book-learning. As a result it is possible for men and women, boys and girls, of all ages and familiarities with the Bible to enter into a midrashic community together in which what is valued is imagination, empathy, and certain expressive abilities.

[*Editor:* To identify with the biblical story and to retell it dramatically is a survival skill for Jewish continuity.]

"(1) Have I exhausted the available constitutional methods of bringing about the desired change? (2) Do the people I urge to join me sincerely seek to improve the society or do they wish to excite passions that would destroy society itself? (3) What is likely to be the effect of the resistance on me, on others, and on the community? (4) Are my own motives and objectives clear to myself and to others; is my aim genuine social change or mere self-gratification? (5) Given that I oppose specific laws, am I prepared, out of my deep respect for law itself, to suffer the consequences of my disobedience." (New York Times Magazine, *November 26, 1967*)

Peli

Civil disobedience and liberation

We may understand how Hebrew women would muster the courage to disobey the king's orders and refuse to kill Hebrew children. But consider the significance of their deed if Shiphrah and Puah were valiant Egyptian women who rebuffed the great pharaoh. They did not say, "My country, right or wrong. . . ." The case of the Hebrew midwives is proof that dissenting individuals can resist evil and thus start a whole process of liberation. (*Pinchas Peli,* Torah Today, *B'nai B'rith Books, Washington, D.C., 1987, p. 58*)

The midwives bravely said no to Pharaoh's command that they kill every male Jewish baby. They refused to follow their national leader because they considered his order to be immoral. Instead of making excuses that they were "only following orders" or that "good citizens uphold the law even if they believe it is unjust," Shiphrah and Puah refused to carry out Pharaoh's demand. Forced into making a difficult decision, one that risked their safety, they chose the higher principle of saving life over carrying out Pharaoh's command. Their conviction that each human being is created "in the image of God" led them to disobey Pharaoh's order to murder Jewish babies.

PEREK GIMEL: *Moses: Fear, Courage, Self-Doubt, or Humility?*

When Moses is called by God to return to Egypt to lead the Jewish people to freedom, his first response is a question: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?" When God tells him, "I will be with you," Moses is unsatisfied and asks for proof. After God tells him what to say to the Israelites, Moses still has his doubts. "What if they do not believe me and do not listen to me?" he asks. Even after God shows him signs and gives him a staff with which to perform magical wonders, Moses continues to hesitate. He offers excuses. "I have never been a man of words," he says, hoping that God will choose someone else to lead the Israelites to freedom.

Why didn't Moses happily and quickly accept God's call to leadership? Why does he offer excuses? Is he afraid? Has he no courage? Is it his way of showing humility?

Zugot

What should a person do?

Rabbi Hillel taught: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But, if I am only for myself, what am I? And, if not now, when?
(Avot *1:14*)

Rabbi Judah taught: "Which is the right path to choose? One that is honorable in itself and also wins honor from others."
(Avot *2:1*)

Rabbi Hillel said: "In a place where people are without courage, act bravely!"
(Avot *2:6*)

Interpreters throughout the ages have wondered about Moses' reaction and response to God. For example, the rabbis who wrote the Midrash speculate that it took God an entire week to convince Moses to return to Egypt to work for the liberation of his people. Some of the rabbis explain that he hesitated because he did not want to hurt or anger his older brother, Aaron. Aaron had led the people in Egypt for eighty years. Moses felt that he could not suddenly return and announce that he was replacing him.

Others argue that Moses was truly humble. He feared that he did not possess the political or spiritual skills to liberate his people, especially the talent of public speaking. So he pleaded with God to choose someone else for the task. (*Exodus Rabbah* 3:14,15)

Rabbi Nehori, who lived in Israel during the second century C.E., claimed that Moses weighed the situation and decided that what God was asking him to do was impossible. The rabbi imagines Moses arguing with God: "How do You expect me to take care of this whole community? How shall I shelter them from the heat of the summer sun or the cold of winter? Where shall I find food and drink for them once I have taken them out of Egypt? Who will care for the newborn babies and all the pregnant women?" For Rabbi Nehori, Moses was a realist asking hard questions and concluding that he was being asked to take on an impossible mission. (*Exodus Rabbah* 3:4)

RASHBAM

Rashbam, the grandson of Rashi, also believes that Moses hesitated to accept God's call to liberate the Jewish people because he was a realist and saw no chance for success. Seeking to understand Moses' logic, Rashbam explains that Moses must have asked himself: "Is Pharaoh such a fool as to listen to me and send his slaves away to freedom?" Filled with such doubts, Moses, says Rashbam, concluded that his mission to free the Israelites would end in failure. (On Exodus 3:11)

Shadal provides another excuse for Moses' hesitation. He says that by the time God called Moses to return to liberate his people, Moses was an old man. He was weak and felt infirm from many years of shepherding from early in the morning until late at night. Since he had spent most of his time in silence, he could not imagine himself standing before Pharaoh and arguing for the freedom of his people. So, argues Shadal, Moses made excuses to God and asked that someone else be sent to free the Jewish people. (On Exodus 4:10)

Modern writer Elie Wiesel speculates that Moses had another reason for refusing God's request that he return to Egypt. Wiesel writes that "Moses was disappointed in his Jews." When he had defended a Jew being beaten by an Egyptian, no Israelite came forward to help him. Instead, two Jews criticized him the next day for what he had done. Nor had any Israelites offered help to him when Pharaoh put out a warrant for his arrest. "Clearly," Wiesel comments, "Moses had no wish to return to his brothers, no wish to reopen a wound that had still not healed." (*Messengers of God,* Random House, New York, 1976, pp. 188–190)

Jewish tradition and humility

No crown carries such royalty as that of humility. (*Rabbi Eleazar ben Judah*)

The summit of intelligence is humility. (*Ibn Gabirol*)

The test of humility is your attitude to those who are working for you. (Orhot Tzadikim *12c, ch. 2*)

Humility for the sake of approval is the worst arrogance. (*Nachman of Bratzlav*)

In contrast to Wiesel's explanation of Moses' reluctance to return to Egypt, Rabbi Daniel Silver suggests that Moses' response to God was very typical of Middle Eastern behavior at the time. It was a matter of good manners to plead that you were unworthy of taking on major responsibilities. To say "I am not capable" or "I do not possess the right talents" or "let others more able than I do the job" was considered not only correct behavior but also a demonstration of strength of

character. Bragging about yourself or singing your own praises was unacceptable. It was a sign of weakness and false pride. So Moses demonstrated his fitness for leadership through his hesitation to accept God's command to free his people. His humility was proof that he was truly the right person for the job.

Prophetic reluctance

When Amos was questioned about being a prophet, he told Amaziah, the priest of Bethel: "I am not a prophet, and I am not the son of a prophet. I am a cattle breeder and a tender of sycamore figs. But the Lord took me away from following the flock. . . ." (Amos 7:14–15)

It is reported that, when Isaiah was chosen by God to become a prophet, he responded by saying: "Woe is me; I am lost! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips. . . ." His lips were then touched with burning coals, and he was sent on his way to speak to the people of Israel. (Isaiah 6:5–6,9)

After Jeremiah was appointed by God to become a prophet he responded: "Ah, Lord God! I don't know how to speak, for I am still a boy." And God answered him: "I will put My words into your mouth." (Jeremiah 1:6,9)

Moses' hesitation to take on the task of leading his people is very similar to the reluctance later expressed by the great prophets Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. They also doubted their abilities and asked God to find other messengers. Like Moses, they feared that they were incapable of doing what God wanted of them. Their hesitation arose out of genuine modesty, a feeling that they were unworthy of the burden of leadership. Judging from their accomplishments, however, their humility was proof of their real strengths and of their loyalty to God.

Moses, too, has serious doubts about his ability to rescue his people. He knows that the challenge is enormous and that the dangers are great. Pharaoh is the most powerful ruler in the world. The Israelites are weakened by years of slavery, beaten into submission. Moses' fears and hesitations are understandable. There is realism and wisdom in his modesty. He knows that the liberation of his people depends upon his ability to inspire their confidence, courage, and hope. He wonders if he will ever be able to convince them that God is calling them to march out of Egypt into freedom.

Great leaders are not blind to the difficulties they face. They realize the difficulties of the challenges before them. At times they feel unworthy and filled with doubts about themselves and those they lead. Sometimes they want to run away and hide rather than face the hard decisions that need to be made.

Perhaps that is how Moses felt when God called him to return to Egypt. He may have hesitated out of fear that he was incapable of doing what God asked or out of a sense that he could do nothing about a hopeless situation. In the end, however, he had the strength and faith to take on the task. He returned to Egypt and worked for liberation of his people.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Author Israel Zangwill has commented: "If there were not Jews, they would have to be invented [as a] guaranteed cause for all evils." Did Pharaoh need a scapegoat, or was it out of fear that he oppressed the Israelites? Would you agree that those who assimilate or abandon Jewish tradition may cause anti-Semitism?
2. Shiphrah and Puah refused to carry out Pharaoh's orders to kill Jewish babies. Under what other conditions is civil disobedience necessary and justified?
3. Moses expresses doubts about his ability to lead his people out of Egyptian oppression. How do you interpret his motives? Was his "humility" a demonstration of weakness or strength, of fear or leadership?

That evening, the camp is covered with quail to eat; in the morning, manna, a flaky substance like coriander seed, white in color and tasting like honeyed wafers, rains down upon the people. Moses orders the people to collect an *omer*'s measure, approximately a hand full, for each person and a double amount on the sixth day for the Sabbath.

Nonetheless, some people go out to gather manna on the Sabbath. They find nothing, and God declares to Moses: "How long will this people refuse to obey My commandments and My Teachings? . . . Let the people remain where they are and observe the Sabbath."

·3·

From the wilderness of Sin, Moses leads the Israelites to Rephidim. Finding no water to drink, the people complain once again. "Why did you bring us from Egypt to die of thirst?" Frustrated, Moses cries out to God, "What shall I do with this people?" God tells Moses: "I will be standing before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock [with your rod] and water will come forth from it." Moses does this, and the people are given enough to drink. The place is named Massah, which means "trial," and Meribah, which means "quarrel."

·4·

While camping at Rephidim, the Israelites are attacked by the forces of Amalek, a group of tribes that live in the Sinai desert. Moses orders Joshua to organize a response to the attack. Joshua successfully overwhelms the enemy, and Moses builds an altar and names it Adonai-nissi, meaning "God is my banner." He declares that "God will be at war with Amalek throughout the generations."

THEMES

Parashat Beshalach contains three important themes:

1. The "miracle" of the Israelites' escape from Egypt.
2. The Israelites' "complaints" in the desert.
3. Amalek's attack upon the Israelites.

PEREK ALEF: *Was Israel's Escape from Egypt a "Miracle"?*

The Torah's report of Israel's departure from Egypt makes it clear that the liberation was not only a human effort. We are told that the people were led by an angel of God and by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. When they arrived at the Sea of Reeds and saw the Egyptian army advancing upon them, God split the waters of the sea so that they could walk safely on dry land to the other side. Then, God rolled back the waters upon the Egyptians, drowning all of them together with their horses and chariots. Upon seeing the "miracle" that God had performed for them, the Israelites sang out: "I will sing to the Lord, for God has triumphed gloriously;/Horse and driver God has hurled into the sea./ . . . You made Your wind blow, the sea covered them;/They sank like lead in the majestic waters." (Exodus 15:1,10)

Is that really what happened? Can we believe that God sent angels to lead the Israelites, split the sea for them, and destroyed the Egyptians by drowning them? Did Moses play any role in the victory? Did the Israelites do anything to save themselves? Is the Torah story an exaggeration beyond belief?

> ***If I told you what the teacher told us . . .***
> *We are told about the ten-year-old whose father was driving him home from religious school. "What did you learn about today?" his father asked. The child responded: "The teacher told us about the Israelites' escape from Egypt. They came to the Sea of Reeds and built pontoons and drove across the water. As soon as the Egyptians and their tanks were on the pontoons, the Israelites sent in their air force and bombed them."*
>
> *The father looked with surprise at his child. "Is that really what the teacher told you?" "Not*

really," answered the child, "but, if I told you what the teacher told us, you would never believe it!"

It was a miracle

There are always those who will deny the existence of miracles. They claim that the works of ha-Shem (*God*) *are simply natural phenomena. This was the attitude that many nonbelievers assumed in regard to the splitting of the Red Sea. It was caused by an earthquake, they might claim; it was just a freak accident of nature.*

To forestall any such beliefs, ha-Shem *magnified the miracle of the Red Sea. He split not only the Red Sea but also all the waters in the world. Even water that was in a cup gravitated to two separate sides! Because of this no one could deny that the splitting of the Red Sea was a true miracle. . . . (Rabbi Mordechai Katz,* Lilmod Ul'lamade: From the Teachings of Our Sages, *Jewish Education Program Publications, New York, 1978, p. 75)*

According to the author of the *Zohar,* God created one miracle after another to liberate the Israelites. Plagues were sent to convince Pharaoh to free the people. When they reached the Red Sea, God caused the waters to split and harden so that the Israelites could walk safely from one shore to the other on dry land. As soon as Pharaoh and his army entered the sea, God allowed the waters to crash in upon them, destroying the entire army.

Many commentators ask: How can God allow such miracles? Would the world not be destroyed if the laws of nature, like gravity that causes the Red Sea to flow, were suspended even for a second?

The *Zohar* provides an answer. Quoting Rabbi Isaac (perhaps second century C.E.), we are told that, when the Israelites approached the Red Sea, God called upon the great angel who had been appointed to rule over it. "At the time I created the world," God said to the angel, "I appointed you angel over this sea, and I made an agreement with you that, later when the Israelites would need to pass through your waters, you would divide them. Now they have arrived at the sea; open it and allow them to pass through safely." (*Zohar, Beshalach,* 48a–49a)

Clearly, the early rabbis were troubled by the Torah's claim that God had made a miracle at the Red Sea. Rabbi Isaac's explanation seems to overcome the problem by saying that the splitting of the sea had already been fixed or preordained at the time God created the world. In other words, God anticipated the need for dividing the Red Sea and "programmed" the event. Therefore, according to Rabbi Isaac, it was not a matter of a miraculous suspension of the laws of nature. Instead, the splitting of the Red Sea occurred exactly as God had preplanned it!

Other interpreters agree, but their explanations of what happened at the Red Sea are different. Some say that the splitting of the sea occurred in a natural way.

Hertz

Rabbi J. H. Hertz speculates that "a strong east wind, blowing all night and acting with the ebbing tide, may have laid bare the neck of the water joining the Bitter Lakes to the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to cross in safety." Rabbi Hertz also explains that "a sudden cessation of the wind . . . would . . . convert the low flat sandbanks first into a quicksand and then into a mass of waters" which would have drowned the pursuing Egyptians. (*The Pentateuch and Haftorahs,* Soncino Press, London, 1966, pp. 268–269)

Rambam (Maimonides)

Use of miracles

A miracle cannot prove what is impossible; it is useful only to confirm what is possible. (Moses Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed *3:24)*

Believing in miracles

In short, I do not believe in miracles. Not if the word be interpreted in its usual sense as exceptions to the laws of nature. I believe in miracles

only as occurrences and events that are far too marvelous for me fully to comprehend but that are entirely consistent with nature's accustomed patterns. . . . Do you know any word more descriptive than miracle for the fact that within the tiny, submicroscopic cell each of us was at the moment of conception were already contained the seeds of all the physical traits, all the mental characteristics, all the emotional proclivities, all the creative possibilities of the adults we are today? Compared to that, a sea splitting in two . . . is simple child's play. There are more miracles without magic in this universe than the wisest of us could ever identify. The trouble is that most of the time we're looking for them in the wrong places. (*Roland B. Gittelsohn,* Man's Best Hope, *Random House, New York, 1961, pp. 114–118*)

Modern Bible scholar Umberto Cassuto claims that what happened at the Red Sea "is a common occurrence in the region of the Suez." He explains that "at high tide, the waters of the Red Sea penetrate the sand, from under the surface, and suddenly the water begins to ooze up out of the sand, which has been dry. Within a short time the sand turns to mud, but the water continues to rise and ultimately a deep layer of water is formed above the sand, the whole area becoming flooded. . . . Against this natural background the biblical account can easily be understood."

Cassuto, however, does not reject the notion that a "miracle" occurred at the Red Sea. "The miracle," he says, "consisted in the fact that at the very moment when it was necessary, in just the manner conducive to the achievement of the desired goal, and on a scale that was abnormal, there occurred, in accordance with the Lord's will, phenomena that brought about Israel's salvation." (*A Commentary on the Book of Exodus,* Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1951, pp. 167–168)

Philosopher Martin Buber seems to agree with Cassuto, but from a different point of view. Buber argues that the details of what happened at the Red Sea are not important. "What is decisive . . . ," he writes, "is that the children of Israel understood this as an act of their God, as a 'miracle.' " Buber explains that from a historical point of view a miracle is "an abiding astonishment," a feeling of surprise and awe that people sense in especially significant moments. That is what happened at the Red Sea—and afterwards. The Israelites saw Pharaoh's advancing army drowned and destroyed. They were astonished by the events that saved them. At that moment, as Buber comments, "the people saw in whatever it was they saw 'the great hand of God.' " Afterwards, generations of Jews who retold the story continued to find in it traces of wonder that they identified as the miraculous work of God. (*Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant,* Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., New York, 1958, pp. 75, 77)

Whatever happened at the Red Sea, it is clear that the Egyptians were defeated and the Israelites went forth to freedom. The victory was surprising, a critical turning point in Jewish history. For those who were there, and for those who would tell the tale afterwards, something momentous and "astonishing" happened. God split the sea, saved the Israelites, and assured their liberation. All of this seemed more than the work of ordinary people. Something wonderful occurred, something awesome beyond human comprehension. So they called their victory "a miracle."

PEREK BET: *Why All the Complaints against Moses and God?*

As astonishing as their victory over Pharaoh's army and their Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites are not portrayed as particularly grateful to God or to Moses. Our Torah portion, in fact, is filled with their complaints, angry questions, and discontent. On four occasions the people turn on Moses and attack him with harsh accusations.

The first time occurs just as they are escaping from Egypt. When the people see Pharaoh's army pursuing them, they ask Moses, "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness'?" (14:10–12)

The second time occurs just after their "miraculous" victory at the Red Sea. They travel for three days and camp at Marah, meaning "bitter," located

Moses as the God of the Patriarchs, and the phrase "the Israelite people" appears for the first time.[18] The opening verses of the book list the original seventy pioneers who migrated to Egypt, and the passage clearly derives from Genesis 46:8–27. God's commissioning of Moses at the scene of the Burning Bush directs him: "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said, 'I have taken note of you [Heb. *paqod paqad'ti*] and of what is being done to you in Egypt. . . .' "[19] This is a studied echo of Joseph's dying words, "God will surely take notice of you [Heb. *paqod yiphqod*] and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."[20] Indeed, Joseph's authorship of this phrase is explicitly cited in Exodus 13:19. The threefold reference to Joseph in the initial verses of Exodus is calculated to forge a close and obvious link with the concluding section of Genesis, and to effect the transition from one to the other. It is taken for granted that the reader is aware of who Joseph was and knows the reason for the migration of Jacob and his family to Egypt.

Structure and content

The structure and content of the book are somewhat complicated. On the one hand, the material is presented as one long, continuous, and sequential account, and even legal and ritual matters find expression within a narrative framework. On the other hand, clearly no attempt is made to be comprehensive; only such individual episodes are highlighted as are deemed to be of major significance. This discriminating selectivity is undoubtedly conditioned by didactic considerations.

The work does not easily lend itself to separation into clear-cut major divisions, though a rough arrangement broadly partitions the book into the following sections:

1. Chapters 1–15:21, the story of Israel in Egypt, the oppression, the struggle for freedom, and the final liberation;
2. Chapter 15:22 to Chapter 18, the account of the journey from the Reed Sea to Sinai;
3. Chapters 19–24, the covenant at Sinai and prescriptions of the law;

4. Chapters 25–40, the command to erect the Tabernacle, a[illegible]ts implementation.

The historical background

A vexing question is how to place all these events within the framework of recorded and datable history. In the present state of our knowledge, this cannot be done with any assurance of certainty. This uncertainty flows as much from the problems inherent in the biblical record itself as from the absence of satisfying, direct evidence from extrabiblical sources. One difficulty arises from the fact that the slavery and the liberation are perceived as events of profound religious significance. The emphasis is on the theological interpretation, not on historical detail. The biblical narratives are essentially documents of faith, not records of the past; that is to say, the verities of faith are communicated through the forms of history, but these latter are not presented for their own sake. They are employed only insofar as they serve the purposes of the former. No wonder, then, that solid historical data are so sparse. To cite a case in point: the reigning monarchs with whom Moses contends are simply and uniformly designated "Pharaoh" without any personal identification. All Egyptian kings are so termed, at least from the advent of the New Kingdom in the sixteenth century B.C.E. Another lacuna is the period of time that elapsed between the death of Joseph and the onset of the oppression. After all, it would surely have required the passing of several generations for a mere seventy souls, the stated totality of Jacob's issue that migrated to Egypt, to multiply and increase to the extent that it might be said even hyperbolically that "the land was filled with them."[21]

Another complicating factor is that the meager chronological data that are supplied do not seem to represent a single, uniform, system of reckoning. Exodus 12:40–41 tells us that the time that the Israelites stayed in Egypt was four hundred thirty years.[22] Genesis 15:13 had predetermined a period of four hundred years for the slavery and the oppression, but this is coordinated with no more than four "generations" in verse 16. It is true that a study of the Hebrew word *dor*, usually rendered "generation," and its Semitic cognates, shows that it more accurately means simply "a cycle of time, a life time,"[23] and it is quite

indeterminate, so that four generations need not necessarily be incompatible with four hundred years. But the fact of the matter is that Moses is only the great-grandson of Levi who went down to Egypt;[24] also, Jair, great-grandson of Joseph, together with his sons, participated in the wars of conquest and in the settlement of the land.[25] Nahshon, who was a tribal prince at the time of the Exodus, is a fifth-generation descendant of Judah,[26] while Achan, a contemporary of Joshua, Moses' successor, is the fifth generation after Jacob.[27] In other words, no more than a century or a century and a half seems to have elapsed between Jacob's migration to Egypt and the Exodus, a figure that would seem to be incompatible with the four hundred years cited in the text. One biblical text does yield a synchronism. According to 1 Kings 6:1, Solomon built the Temple at Jerusalem in the fourth year of his reign, which is said to have coincided with the four hundred eightieth year after the Exodus.[28] Since this king came to the throne ca. 960 B.C.E., the notice of 1 Kings 6:1 would date the departure from Egypt to around the middle of the fifteenth century B.C.E. This, however, would bring us to the period of the XVIIIth Egyptian Dynasty (ca. 1552–1306 B.C.E.), to the reigns of the powerful kings Thutmosis III (ca. 1490–1436 B.C.E.) and Amenhotep II (= Amenophis; ca. 1438–1412 B.C.E.), both of whom campaigned heavily in Syria and Palestine and asserted strong control over these lands. Thutmosis III extended the empire to the Upper Euphrates. It would have been most unlikely for the Israelite departure from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan to have taken place at this time. The books of Joshua and Judges, in fact, make no mention of Egypt as a factor in the wars of conquest. Apart from this objection, the figure of four hundred eighty years has every appearance of representing schematized chronology, that is, the featuring of neatly balanced segments of time as a way of expressing the idea that what occurs is not happenstance but comes about by divine design.[29] This device is well illustrated in Genesis through, for example, the ten generations between Adam and Noah and between Noah and Abraham, as well as in the number harmony present in the chronologies of the Patriarchs. Thus Abraham lived seventy-five years in the home of his father and seventy-five years in the lifetime of his son. He was one hundred years old at the birth of Isaac and he lived one hundred years in Canaan. Jacob lived seventeen years with Joseph in Canaan and a like number with him in Egypt.

To return to the number 480: it so happens that the sum of the years from the fourth year of Solomon, when he built the Temple, to the last year of the last king in Jerusalem is, according to the biblical sources, exactly 430. If the fifty years of exile are added, the resultant 480 brings us to the Cyrus declaration of 538 B.C.E., which allowed the Jews to return to Zion and to rebuild the Temple. In other words, by having Solomon's Temple building occur in the four hundred eightieth year after the Exodus, the biblical historiosopher may be making that event the central point in the history of biblical Israel. It should also be noted that 480 is the product of 12 × 40, both factors being conventional or symbolic numbers in the Bible and the ancient Near East. The number 40, in particular, designates a fairly long period of time in terms of human experience.[30] All in all, it is highly unlikely that the notice in 1 Kings 6:1 is intended to be an exact, historical time-marker, but is rather a rhetorical statement. As will be seen, to place the Exodus in the fifteenth century B.C.E. is to compound the historical problems.

It is clear that the present state of our knowledge does not permit a definitive solution to the problem. Not until archeological research fortuitously provides us with direct and incontrovertible proof for a specific date will this be possible. In the meantime, by utilizing a few items of indirect evidence we may conclude that the cumulative effect of several lines of approach favors a thirteenth-century B.C.E. dating for the Exodus.

The first item concerns the biblical texts that relate to the area of Israelite settlement in Egypt, all of which point to the eastern part of the Nile Delta. These Scriptural references treat of two different periods: that of Joseph's time, and that of the oppression and Exodus. The message that Joseph sent his father by way of his brothers reads as follows:

> God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me without delay. You will dwell in the region of Goshen, where you will be near me. . . .[31]

This means that the royal administration at that time was located nearby. When Jacob traveled to Egypt from Canaan he arrived in Goshen, to which place Joseph rode out in his chariot to meet him, and soon introduced his newly arrived family to the pharaoh. This indicates once again that the palace was within easy access of Goshen,

where the king gave them permission to settle.[32] The location of the capital in the northeastern Delta of the Nile in Joseph's day unmistakably indicates the period of the Hyksos invaders, who maintained their royal residence in this region (ca. 1780–1570 B.C.E.). We shall have more to say about them later on.

The second series of texts leads to the same geographic area. According to the story told in Exodus 2:1–10, the daughter of the pharaoh found the baby Moses at a site on the Nile not far from the palace. From here, Moses' sister, Miriam, was easily able to run home and to fetch her mother. In another incident, the pharaoh of the Exodus was able to summon Moses and Aaron to his palace in the middle of the night, which indicates that their domiciles were not too far away.[33]

The Israelites, under the oppression, were conscripted to build the cities of "Pithom and Raamses," and it was from the latter site that the people started their march of liberation out of Egypt.[34] It is known that in the course of the two hundred odd years that elapsed between the collapse of the Hyksos rule over Egypt and the XIXth Dynasty (ca. 1306–1200 B.C.E.), the eastern Delta had been neglected.[35] It was Pharaoh Rameses II (ca. 1290–1224 B.C.E.) who set up his capital here in his newly built city that he named for himself. It is highly significant that Genesis 47:11 equates the area of Israelite settlement with "the region of Rameses," which description is a reflex of a genuine historic reality even though in context it is anachronistic.[36] Finally, Psalm 78:12, 43 locates the Israelites in Egypt in the "plain of Zoan." Now Zoan is none other than Tanis, the modern site of either Ṣan el-Ḥagar or Qantir in the northeastern Nile Delta.[37] The conclusion seems to be inescapable that the oppression, or at least the final and most severe stage of it, took place during the reign of Rameses II. His prodigious building activities, of which more will be said later, provide a convincing backdrop for the biblical narrative. The thirteenth century B.C.E. emerges, therefore, as a very likely candidate for the events described in the Book of Exodus.

This deduction is reinforced by what is known of the political situation in the Near East between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries B.C.E. Following the ten-year rule of Merneptah, immediate successor to Rameses II, Egypt was plunged into two decades of anarchy. Even when Rameses III (1194–1164 B.C.E.) finally secured the throne and established order,

he was forced to spend the first eleven years of his reign fighting on the Libyans and "Sea Peoples" who attacked Egypt from the west.[38] After his death, Egyptian rule in Canaan came to an end.

In other words, this period provided an ideal setting for the Israelite conquest of the Promised Land. There were no great powers in the east to interfere, and several other small entities in the area also took advantage of the situation to establish new states, such as the Arameans in Syria, the peoples of Transjordan, and the Phoenician port cities.

There is one document from Egypt that also seems to lend weight to the case for a mid-thirteenth-century B.C.E. date for the Exodus. This is the famous "Stele of Merneptah," often referred to as the "Israel Stele." It consists of a huge inscribed slab of black granite, originally installed by Pharaoh Amenhotep (Amenophis) III in his mortuary temple in western Thebes, on which was carved an account of that king's building activities. Merneptah (ca. 1224–1211 B.C.E.), the successor to Rameses II, had it removed to his own funerary temple that he built to the northwest of the other, and had recorded on its reverse side a lyrical recitation of his great victory over a coalition of Libyans and "Sea Peoples" that invaded Egypt in the fifth year of his reign (ca. 1220 B.C.E.). This battle proved to be the most serious and most threatening situation that Merneptah faced in the course of his years on the throne.

The special interest of this document for students of the Bible lies in its concluding poem that is attached to the main text. This celebrates the pharaoh's role as the protector of Egypt, as evidenced by a successful military expedition into Palestine. It reads as follows:

> The princes are prostrate, saying: "Mercy!"
> Not one raises his head among the Nine Bows.
> Desolation is for Tehenu; Hatti is pacified;
> Plundered is the Canaan with every evil;
> Carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer;
> Yanoam is made as that which does not exist;
> Israel is laid waste, his seed is not;
> Hurru is become a widow for Egypt!
> All lands together, they are pacified;
> Everyone who was restless, he has been bound
> by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. . . .[39]

A few explanatory comments on the text are in order before we analyze the inscription and assess its significance:

The term for "Mercy" is the Canaanite word *shalam*, which is the Hebrew *shalom*; the "Nine Bows" are the traditionally hostile neighbors of Egypt; the Tehenu are one of the Libyan peoples; Hatti is the land of the Hittites, now Asiatic Turkey; Ashkelon and Gezer are two southerly Canaanite towns; Yanoam is a town in the north of the country; Hurru, the land of the Hurrians, who are the biblical Horites, is an Egyptian term for Palestine and Syria.

The historic reality behind this triumphal poem has been questioned, primarily because of the conventional phrasing and because of the omission of any details about the battles, contrary to the usual style of pharaonic campaign inscriptions.[40] Yet it is not unreasonable to assume that the Canaanite city kingdoms took advantage of the massive Libyan invasion, and of Merneptah's preoccupation with the western border of Egypt, in order to revolt, and it is probable that following his victory the king would make a show of force in Canaan. In fact, independent evidence for some military action by this pharaoh inside Canaan comes from an important inscription found in the temple at Amada in Nubia, present-day Sudan. Engraved at the entrance doorway, it celebrates Merneptah's defeat of the invasion of Egypt from Libya in his fourth year, and it accords him the title "Reducer of Gezer."[41] That city is in Canaan, and the epithet proves that this pharaoh did campaign in that land.

The fascination that the "Stele of Merneptah" holds is due to the fact that it features the first mention of the people of Israel to be found in any extrabiblical source, and the only one, so far, to occur in any Egyptian text. It is ironic and instructive that this should be an obituary notice: "Israel is laid waste, his seed is not!" Curiously, the second mention of Israel in any extrabiblical source—that in the triumphal inscription of Mesha, king of Moab—is of a similar character. It pronounces the verdict, in the ninth century B.C.E., that "Israel has perished for ever!"[42]

Be that as it may, the reference has a bearing on the issue at hand. The name "Israel" in the stele is marked with the hieroglyphic determinative or special sign that indicates the class of meanings to which the term so marked belongs—in the present case, that of a people. The other names in the poem bear the determinatives for city or land. It

can be safely assumed that no Egyptian scribe would have mentioned such a politically insignificant entity as Israel then was, let alone have placed it in Canaan, unless it reflected reality. Moreover, there are four names listed between the synonymous terms Canaan and Hurru, three of which represent the traditional city-state system characteristic of the country. The cities of Ashkelon and Gezer form a pair, both being situated in the south. Yanoam and Israel are similarly paired, the former lying in the north. Hence, "Israel" must also be in the north, or at least in the central highlands. Accordingly, it may be concluded that ca. 1220 B.C.E. the people of Israel was located in Canaan, but had not yet settled down within definable borders. Its presence there was of recent origin, so that the Exodus would have taken place in the course of the thirteenth century B.C.E.

There is one other line of approach that needs to be considered in attempting to ascertain the most likely date for the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. Clearly, the Israelite conquest and settlement of Canaan have a direct bearing on this subject since only forty years intervened between the departure from Goshen and the beginning of Joshua's campaigns in the land itself. The archeological evidence is by no means either conclusive or consistent, but it, too, does seem to favor a thirteenth-century B.C.E. dating.[43]

Excavations have shown that by the end of the Late Bronze Age, which is generally agreed to cover the period ca. 1550 to ca. 1200 B.C.E., the land of Canaan was in an advanced state of decay. Riven by political fragmentation and chronic disunity, debilitated by economic instability, with their military strength greatly weakened by the successive forays of Egyptian kings, the fortified city-states that made up the country were in a parlous condition. Canaanite culture came to an abrupt end in the course of the second half of the thirteenth century. A significant number of city-states, among them Lachish, Bethel, and Hazor, ceased to exist. All the evidence points to violent destruction caused by human agency.

The old Canaanite culture was replaced by a totally different civilization, no longer based on the city-state system, and giving every appearance of being the work of semi-nomads who were in the early stages of sedenterization. The great city of Hazor exemplifies the process. Excavations there leave no doubt that it was suddenly destroyed by a gigantic conflagration sometime in the thirteenth century. By the year

1230 B.C.E. at the latest, new settlers had begun to inhabit part of the mound. The pottery type used thereafter differs radically from that uncovered in the earlier strata of the city.

In the course of the same century at least a dozen Late Bronze Age cities all over Canaan met similar violent destruction and were succeeded by more primitive and poorer villages on the ruined sites. No extrabiblical evidence has so far turned up to identify the invaders and new settlers with Joshua's armies. But the picture reconstructed by archeological research generally fits biblical accounts of the wars of conquest, and there is no convincing reason not to correlate the one with the other.

To sum up: several diverse and variegated lines of evidence converge to make a very good case for placing the events of the Exodus within the thirteenth century B.C.E.

On Memory

A painful paradox of our age is that all the advances we have made in retention and retrieval of information have not advanced human identity over oblivion. People do not feel more confident of remembrance than they did one hundred or one thousand years ago. We can preserve on tape, on film, on microchip; we call upon scores of names and details and lineage; we have catapulted past the imperfections of human memory. And still we fear forgetting, and being forgotten.

Stanza 7

Remember [*zachor*] Your word to Your servant [verse 49].

According to Abraham Joshua Heschel, "the pious person lives always under the canopy of remembrance." And Nachman of Bratzlav, who taught a simple faith and emphasized the importance of prayer and music, said: "Forgetfulness is exile. Remembrance is redemption." Remembrance has always been central to our identity as a people and to the development of trust in God:

The riches of a soul are stored up in its memory. This is the test of character—not whether a man follows the daily fashion, but whether the past is alive in his present. When we want to understand ourselves, to find out what is most precious in our lives, we search our memory. Memory is the soul's witness to the capricious mind.

Only those who are spiritually imitators, only people who are afraid to be grateful and too weak to be loyal, have nothing but the present moment. To a noble person it is a holy joy to remember, an overwhelming thrill to be grateful; while to a person whose character is neither rich nor strong, gratitude is a most painful sensation. The secret of wisdom is never to get lost in a momentary mood or passion, never to forget friendship because of a momentary grievance, never to lose sight of the lasting values because of a transitory episode. The things which sweep through our daily life should be valued according to whether or not they enrich the inner cistern. That only is valuable in our experience which is worth remembering. Remembrance is the touchstone of all actions.

Memory is a source of faith. To have faith is to remember. Jewish faith is a recollection of that which happened to Israel in the past. The events in which the spirit of God became a reality stand before our eyes painted in colors that never fade. Much of what the Bible demands can be comprised in one word: *Remember*. "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; make them known unto thy children and thy children's children" (Deuteronomy 4:9).

Jews have not preserved the ancient monuments, they have retained the ancient moments.

Memory can inspirit us when we must pass through trials. It can serve as a warrant for future hope and can validate our chosen identity. But memory is fraught with pitfalls. The Hebrew Scriptures demonstrate the dangerous aspect of memory as well. The story of Lot's wife tells us about memory and about freezing up when we look back. Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt to symbolize her grief and tears when she cannot go beyond her past. "The way through the past involves the danger that some people never reach the goal because they get lost somewhere."[5] We do have to reclaim the past—the joyous as well as the painful—but we must do it in a way that will not paralyze us. Until we can take on the pain, we cannot take on the rest of our lives. We all know people who do not seem quite three-dimensional: those who cannot claim their past lose a dimension of self.

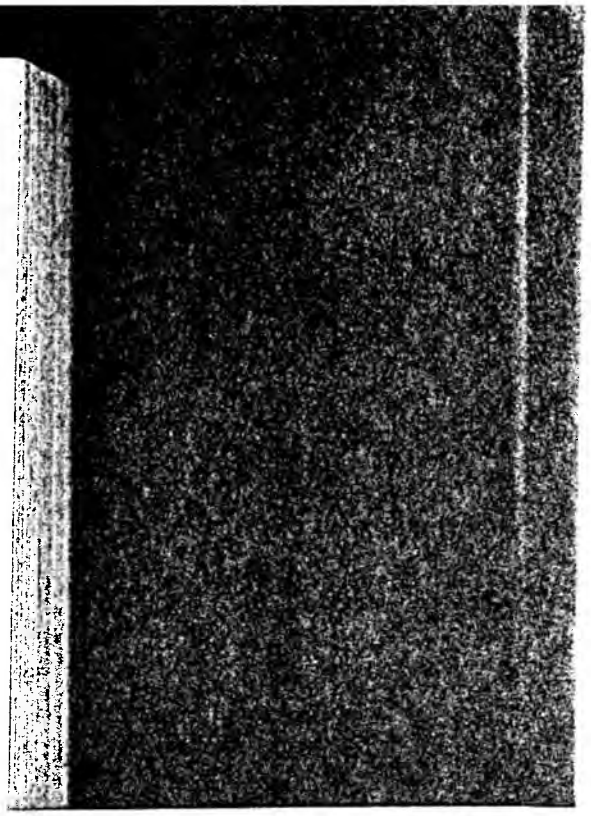
Not all loss of the past results from an inability to assimilate the pain. Sometimes, in aging, the memory cells are damaged. Is someone whose memory cells are destroyed still the same person? What is the relationship of memory to identity? An elderly victim of Alzheimer's disease is someone whose continuity has been broken, and if that is the person who held our experiences together, our own identity feels threatened. In infancy our self cannot hold its own experiences, so our parents hold them in trust until we can claim them. But we cannot hold the aged person's experiences. However close the resemblance between caring for the infirmed elderly and caring for an infant, there are important differences. Infants will grow into their experiences, but the elderly will not regain their memories. Infancy and Alzheimer's lead us onto two different paths: one to integration and effectiveness, the other to deeper and deeper dissociation, ending in death. Looking at people with Alzheimer's shows us how important a role memory plays in identity.

> You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all. . . . Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it, we are nothing. . . . (I can only wait for the final amnesia, the one that can erase an entire life, as it did my mother's.)[6]

Israel Baal Shem Tov said that forgetfulness is exile, remembrance is redemption. Elie Wiesel brings home a similar point in relating the following parable:

> Wanting to punish his son, the king sends him into distant exile. Suffering from hunger and cold, the prince waits to be recalled. The years go by; he has lost the very strength to wait for the royal pardon. Then, one day, the king sends him an emissary with full powers to grant the prince's every desire and wish. His message delivered, the emissary waits for the prince's instructions. [The Prince] asks him for a piece of bread and a warm coat, nothing else. He has forgotten that he is prince and that he could return to his father's palace."[4]

If the Children of Israel could remember that God had been with them in Egypt and was with them now in the wilderness, then the wilderness would be redemption. Without that memory, the wilderness would be felt as an exile from the fleshpots of Egypt. The Israelites needed to remember not merely that they were delivered from Egypt, but that their redemption took place because of their relationship to God, which lay at the heart of their identity. The Children of Israel are, as we all are, children of God, and that memory would form their identity in the wilderness. How forgetfully and tragically we undername our lives. The Bible's task is to help us remember just who we are.



2

The Lost Mariner*

You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realise that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all . . . Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it, we are nothing . . . (I can only wait for the final amnesia, the one that can erase an entire life, as it did my mother's . . .)

—Luis Buñuel

excerpt from Oliver Sacks, The Man who Mistook His Wife For a Hat

Ritual Mitzvot

To recite the *Shema* each morning and evening. [Deut. 6:7]

To bind *tefillin* on the head and arm. [Deut. 6:8]

To study Torah and teach it to others. [Deut. 6:7]

To make *tzitzit* (fringes) for a garment. [Numbers 15:38]

To fix a *mezuzah* on the door of one's home. [Deut. 6:9]

To rejoice on the Festivals. [Deut. 16:14]

To rest on Shabbat. [Exodus 23:12]

To tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt on the night of the15th of Nisan. [Exodus 13:8]

To dwell in *sukkot* (booths) during the Sukkot festival. [Lev. 23:42]

To believe in God. [Exodus 20:2]

Do not imitate the ways of idolators or practice their customs. [Lev. 20:23]

Do not cook meat together with milk. [Exo. 23:19]

During Passover no leaven may be seen. [Exo. 13:7]

Ethical Mitzvot

To leave the four corners of your field for the poor. [Lev. 19:9]

To sound the *shofar* and set all Hebrew slaves free in the Jubilee year (i.e. 50th year). [Lev. 25:9]

To give half a shekel to the Temple annually. [Exodus 30:12-13]

To come to court to testify when aware of evidence. [Lev. 5:1]

To restore stolen property to its owner. [Lev. 5:23]

To revere your parents. [Lev. 19:3]

To build a fence around your roof and remove potential hazards from your home. [Deut.22:8]

Do not afflict the widow or the orphan. [Exodus 22:21]

Do not murder. [Exodus 20:13]

Do not refuse to help a person or an animal which is collapsing under its burden. [Exodus 23:5]

Do not deny charity to the poor. [Deut. 15:7]

A capital case cannot be decided by a majority of one. [Exodus 23:2]

Do not muzzle an animal working in a field to prevent it from eating. [Deut. 25:4]

A dead person must be brought to burial the same day. [Deut. 21:23]

From Kadden's Teaching Mitzvot

UNIT 12

Wearing Tallit and Tefillin

טַלִּית וּתְפִלִּין

OVERVIEW

Two of the most important symbols used during prayer are the *Tallit* and *Tefillin*. The wearing of a *Tallit* derives from the Mitzvah of putting fringes on the corners of one's garments. "The Lord said to Moses: Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments throughout the ages. Let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. That shall be your fringe. Look at it and recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God" (Numbers 15:37-40).

Putting *tzitzit* at the corners transforms any garment into a *Tallit*. Traditionally, a *Tallit* is worn by males, 13 years and older, during *Shacharit* (morning) and *Musaf* (additional) services every day. In some synagogues it is the custom that only married men wear a *Tallit*. It is also customary in some congregations for the leader of the *Minchah* (afternoon) service and the *Ma'ariv* (evening) service for Shabbat and festivals to wear a *Tallit*. It is also worn during the evening service on Yom Kippur.

While women are not required to wear a *Tallit* (because it is a positive, time-bound Mitzvah), neither are they prohibited from wearing one. In synagogues where women are called to the Torah, it is usual that they wear a *Tallit*. Some women wear a *Tallit* whenever the tradition prescribes its usage for men.

The *Tallit* is not worn in the evening, because in the passage from Numbers quoted above, one is supposed to "look at" the *tzitzit*. This has been interpreted to mean by the light of day.

During the reading of that passage, which is part of the third paragraph of the *Sh'ma*, it is traditional to gather the four *tzitzit* together and kiss them when the word *tzitzit* is read. Likewise, when called to the Torah, it is customary to touch the first word of the passage to be read with one *tzitzit*, which one then kisses before reciting the blessing.

Kohanim (descendants of the ancient priesthood) cover their heads with the *Tallit* during the *duchan* ritual — the priestly benediction recited over the congregation during the Shabbat morning *Amidah*.

A *Tallit* may be made of linen, wool, or silk. However, it may not contain both linen and wool. This is because of the prohibition against wearing a garment made of this mixture of materials (*sha'atnez*). The *tzitzit* must be of the same material as the *Tallit*. While a *Tallit* is usually of white material with black or blue stripes, it may be of any color, or combination of colors. The Torah commands that a thread of *techelet*, royal blue, be attached to each fringe. *Techelet* was an expensive blue dye extracted from the *hilazon* — a sea molusc found off the coast of Phoenicia. The use of this dye ceased during the Rabbinic period, either because of its scarcity and expense, or because the formula for obtaining the exact shade of blue was lost.

In addition to the *Tallit* being worn during prayer, it is a traditional practice for men to wear a *Tallit Katan*, a small *Tallit*, under their clothes at all times.

When putting on a *Tallit*, it is customary to recite Psalm 104:1-2: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord, my God, You are very great; You are clothed in glory and majesty, wrapped in a robe of light; You spread the heavens like a tent cloth." The following blessing is then recited:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בַּצִּיצִית.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has made us holy with Mitzvot and commanded us to wrap ourselves with fringes.

The *Tallit* is then touched to the eyes, kissed, and put on.

The purpose of the *tzitzit* is to remind us of the 613 commandments of Torah. The reminder is arrived at through *gematria*, numerology, in which each Hebrew letter has a numerical value. The letters in the word *tzitzit* add up to 600, plus the eight strands and five knots on each fringe, equal 613. Moreover, the pattern of wrapping the *tzitzit* at each corner is: double knot, seven coils, double knot, eight coils, double knot, eleven coils, double knot, 13 coils. Seven plus eight plus eleven equals 26, the value of the letters in the tetragrammaton —

God's name. Thirteen is the value of the word *echad*, which means "one." So the *tzitzit* also remind us of the last two words of the first line of the Sh'ma: "*Adonai* is One."

The tradition of wearing *Tefillin* is derived from four different verses in the Torah, each of which speaks of a "sign upon your hand and a symbol between your eyes" (Exodus 13:9, 13:16; Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18). The word *Tefillin* is usually translated by the Greek term phylacteries, which means amulets, but they are not amulets. Rather, they are small leather boxes containing the above cited verses and wrapped around one's arm and forehead before prayer.

Tefillin are worn during the *Shacharit* (morning) service on weekdays. They are not worn on Shabbat or the festivals lest one carry them, thus transgressing the sanctity of the day. Another interpretation: because they are referred to as being an *ot*, a sign, and since Shabbat is also a sign of the covenant between God and Israel, to wear *Tefillin* on that day would be superfluous. Traditionally, *Tefillin* are worn by males 13 and older. Before his thirteenth birthday, a boy begins to practice putting them on. Because it is a positive, time-bound Mitzvah women are exempt, but not forbidden, from wearing Tefillin.

The *Tefillin* — box (*bayit*/house) and strap (*retzuah*) — are made from the skin of a kosher animal. The *bayit shel yad*, which is worn on the arm, has one compartment. This contains a piece of parchment on which are written the four verses cited above. The *bayit shel rosh* worn on the forehead also contains the four verses, one in each of its four separate compartments. It also has the Hebrew letter *shin* inscribed on one side of the *bayit* and a four-branched *shin* on the opposite side.

The letter *shin* stands for *Shaddai*, one of the biblical names of God. When the *Tefillin* strap is wrapped around the arm and hand in the appropriate way, the letters in the word *Shaddai* are formed.

When both are worn, *Tefillin* are put on after the *Tallit*. The following blessing is recited:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהָנִיחַ תְּפִלִּין.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has made us holy with Mitzvot and commanded us to put on *Tefillin*.

Some recite this blessing twice, once for the arm and then again for the forehead. The *Tefillin shel yad* is put on one's "weaker" arm (left if one is right-handed, right if one is left-handed); the sleeve is rolled up and watch and ring removed so that nothing is between the *Tefillin* and the arm. The *bayit* is placed over the muscle of the upper arm and the strap is wound seven times around the forearm. This is to signify that our covenant with God is a daily matter. The *retzuah* is then wound three times around the hand and middle finger while the words of the prophet are recited: "And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; . . . in righteousness . . . in justice . . . in lovingkindness . . . in compassion . . . in faithfulness; And you shall know the Lord" (Hosea 2:21-22).

ACTIVITIES

Primary

1. To introduce students to the study of *Tallit* or *Tefillin*, place first one and then the other in a bag. Allow the students to place one hand in the bag and touch the ritual object. After everyone has had a chance to do this, ask students to describe what they felt. Ask them to guess what is in the bag. If no one can do so, ask them what they think the object looks like. Take the ritual object out of the bag, show it to the students and explain its significance.

2. Have someone put on *Tallit* and *Tefillin* before the class. This individual should then explain what they are wearing and why.

3. Extend activity #1 by having each student put on the *Tallit* and *Tefillin*. Take an instant photo of each child. The students can then write a poem reflecting how they felt wearing the *Tallit* and *Tefillin*.

4. Bring in a variety of *Tallitot* to show the students. You might also wish to ask students to bring in *Tallitot* belonging to parents or older siblings. Have them describe the similarities and differences they observe. They can then draw conclusions as to what is required and what is left up to the discretion of the creator of a *Tallit*.

5. Take a field trip to the studio of a weaver (preferably a person who weaves *Tallitot*). The

weaver should demonstrate how cloth is made or how a *Tallit* is woven.

6. Play "What Am I?" first with *Tallit*, then with *Tefillin*. Begin by saying to the students: "I am something Jewish." Students ask questions that are answered yes or no (as in "Twenty Questions") and then guess what the object is. Questions might include: Are you a person? Are you bigger than a car? Are you found in the synagogue? When students guess correctly, or if they are stumped, display the object and explain its use.

Intermediate

1. Give pairs of students a copy of the Torah in English and instruct them to find the following verses: Exodus 13:9 and 13:16. Have each pair compose a statement explaining how *Tefillin* fulfill literally the words in these passages. Have them include their thoughts on how these verses might have been interpreted differently.

2. Choose one or more of the following *Torah Umesorah* filmstrips to view and discuss with your students: *How Tefillin Are Made, How Tefillin Are Worn, Tzitzis — The Badge of Israel, The Story of Sha'atnez.*

3. Obtain several sets of *Tefillin* and, with the students, learn how to put them on. *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld contains a diagram and explanation for putting on *Tefillin*.

4. Tell students to imagine that each of them is a *Tallit* given to an almost thirteen-year old. Have them write a story about what they see and experience.

5. As a class create an illustrated dictionary about *Tallit* and *Tefillin*. This will require some research by the students. They may utilize the material from the Overview section above and other references listed in the Resources section below.

6. Discuss the following with your students: How is wearing *Tefillin* and/or *Tallit* like tying a string around your finger?

Secondary

1. Take the class to the sanctuary. Give each a *Tallit*. Direct them to follow the traditional custom of wrapping oneself with the *Tallit* for a quiet moment of meditation. Afterward, discuss whether this might enhance worship and help develop a deeper sense of *kavanah*.

2. As a follow-up discussion for activity #1, have students create original poems describing the feeling of isolation and meditation they experienced while beneath the *Tallit*.

3. Have your students learn the blessings recited when putting on the *Tallit* and *Tefillin*.

   References: *Hebrew Blessings Ditto Pak* by Frances Borovetz, pages 17-18.

4. As described in the Overview section above, numerical symbolism has been used to interpret the knots and coils of the *tzitzit*. Create a bulletin board display which illustrates this use of *gematria*.

   References: "A Closer Look at the *Tzitzis* We Wear," a spirit master stencil available from Torah Umesorah; *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld.

5. Invite a *sofer* (scribe) to visit your class and demonstrate how the scrolls are written for inclusion in the *Tefillin*.

6. Stage a debate on the following issue: Women may wear a *Tallit* (or Women should wear a *Tallit*). Bear in mind that the Torah does not specify gender regarding who wears a *Tallit*. The Talmud exempts women from time-bound Mitzvot so that they would be free for other responsibilities (child rearing and taking care of the home). Therefore, they are exempt from public worship and from wearing a *Tallit*. In many synagogues, however, women do wear a *Tallit*.

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Hold a *Tallit*-making workshop. Directions for tying the *tzitzit* (fringes) can be found in *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld. Judaica stores can provide you with packets of thread to be used. Encourage participants to be creative with their choice of fabrics. Each student may also want to make a special *atarah* (neckband) for the *Tallit*.

2. Begin a *Tallit* and *Tefillin* group at your synagogue which can meet on Sunday mornings. Participants should be encouraged to learn to put on *Tallit* and *Tefillin* and take part in the morning service.

3. Gather all the classes in a large room or, weather permitting, outdoors. Each class will need a large piece of fabric or a sheet under which all students can fit. Seat the classes in groups, with the groups forming one large circle. Each class or class representative reads an original statement, poem, or meditation which they have prepared about the significance of the *Tallit*. When the first class reads, their piece of fabric is spread out in the center of the circle. Each subsequent class joins its fabric to the others. Use extra large safety pins to attach one to another. Once all the classes have added their fabric pieces, attach large *tzitzit* to each corner. Together recite the blessings for putting on a *Tallit*. Gently lift up the giant "*Tallit*," a symbol of "*sukkat shalom*," a shelter of peace, and have everyone gather under it. Together sing "*Ufros Aleynu Sukkot Shelomecha*" under the giant *Tallit*.

RESOURCES

FOR THE TEACHERS

Donin, Rabbi Hayim Halevy. *To Pray As a Jew: A Guide to the Prayer Book and the Synagogue Service*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1980, pp. 24-37.

Jacobs, Louis. *The Book of Jewish Practice*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, Inc., 1987, pp. 31-40.

Siegel, Richard; Strassfeld, Michael; and Strassfeld, Sharon, eds. *The First Jewish Catalog*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, pp. 51-63.

Stern, Jay B. *Syllabus for the Teaching of Mitzvah*. New York: United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, 1986, pp. 183-187.

For the Students

Borovetz, Frances. *Hebrew Blessings Ditto Pak*. Denver: Alternatives in Religious Educations, Inc., 1980. (Grades 3-7)

"A Closer Look at the Tzitzis We Wear." (Stencil explaining the numerical significance of the *tzitzit*) New York: Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 4 and up)

"Do It Yourself Tzitzis Guide." (Stencil illustrating how to tie *tzitzit*) New York: Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 4 and up)

Talit Instant Lesson. Los Angeles: Torah Aura Publications, 1985. (Grades 6 and up)

Audiovisual

How Tefillin Are Made. A 49 frame filmstrip which describes how *Tefillin* are constructed. Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 3 and up)

How Tefillin Are Worn. In 51 frames, this filmstrip details the correct procedure for putting on *Tefillin*. Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 3 and up)

Tzitzis — The Badge of Israel. A 40 frame filmstrip which begins with the spinning of the thread and ends with the proper way of tying the *tzitzit* to the *Tallit*. Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 3 and up)

UNIT 11

Affixing the Mezuzah

לִקְבּוֹעַ מְזוּזָה

OVERVIEW

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart. . . . You shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The literal meaning of the word *Mezuzah* is "doorpost," but it has come to refer to the biblical passages and encasement which are affixed to the doorposts of Jewish houses. Some sources trace the origin of the *Mezuzah* to the time of the enslavement in Egypt, basing that practice on an Egyptian custom of placing a sacred document at the entrance to their houses.

It is thought that, originally, biblical verses were actually carved into the doorpost. Later, they were written on parchment which was then fastened to the doorpost. Eventually, the parchment was placed for protection in a hollow reed or other casing, as is the current custom.

The earliest evidence of a *Mezuzah* is from the Second Temple period. A *Mezuzah* parchment containing Deuteronomy 10:12-11:21 was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran.

The *Mezuzah* has been considered by some to be an amulet which protects the house. This view may be based upon the final verse of the *Mezuzah*: "So that your days and the days of your children will be multiplied upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 11:21). The Jewish mystics even added symbols and inscriptions to enhance its protective function.

Yet, Maimonides, among others, strongly objected to considering the *Mezuzah* an amulet. Rather, he explained that by the commandment of the *Mezuzah*, we are reminded, when entering or departing, of God's unity, and are stirred into love for God. We are "awakened from slumber and from worldly thoughts to the knowledge that nothing endures in eternity like knowledge of the 'Rock of the World.'" This contemplation, Maimonides goes on, brings us back to ourselves and leads us on to the right path. (*Yad Hazakah*, *Mezuzah*, 6:13)

Other explanations of the significance of the *Mezuzah* are: It identifies a home as the residence of Jews, it reminds us to make our home a place worthy of God's blessing, and it reminds us each time we leave the house of our responsibility to follow ethical practices in business and professional life.

The *Mezuzah* is a piece of parchment (made from the skin of a kosher animal) on which are written the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma*, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21. These passages are written in 22 lines by hand by a scribe called a *Sofer STaM* (one who qualifies to write a *Sefer Torah*, *Tefillin*, and *Mezuzah*). On the back of the parchment the letters *shin*, *daled*, and *yod* are written. As a word, they are pronounced *Shaddai*, one of the biblical names of God, usually translated "God Almighty." As an acronym, they stand for the phrase *Shomer Daltot Yisrael* (Guardian of the doors of Israel); some say *Shomer Dat Yisrael* (Guardian of the faith of Israel). Also on the reverse side of the parchment is an encoded phrase: "כוזו במוכסז כוזו." Each letter represents the previous letter in the Hebrew alphabet (for example, the *kaf* represents *yod*, the *vav* represents *hey*, etc.), forming the words "*Adonai Elohaynu Adonai*," meaning "The Eternal our God is Eternal."

The parchment is rolled with the text on the inside so that *Shaddai* can be seen through an opening in the case. If there is no opening, the word or its first letter *Shin* appears on the case itself.

One is required to affix a *Mezuzah* not only to the doorpost at one's entrance, but also to the doorpost of every room except a bathroom, storeroom, or kitchen. Although there is no requirement to affix a *Mezuzah* to the entrance of public buildings (unless used for residential purposes), it has become a common practice for synagogues and Jewish community buildings to put up a *Mezuzah*. The Mitzvah of affixing a *Mezuzah* applies only to permanent structures and not to temporary or casual places. Thus, no *Mezuzah* is affixed to a *sukkah* or to a camping tent.

The *Mezuzah* is affixed on the right-hand side of the doorpost as one enters, within the upper one-third of the doorpost, but at least one handbreadth from the top. The *Mezuzah* is placed diagonally, with the top toward the inside; it may be placed

vertically if the doorpost is too narrow. In either case, both the top and bottom must be fastened to the doorpost with nails. The tradition of affixing the *Mezuzah* at an angle may have been the result of a compromise in the Middle Ages between those who believed it should be vertical and those who believed it should be horizontal. As such, it symbolizes the spirit of compromise that should prevail in the home.

Before affixing a *Mezuzah*, one says these blessings:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לִקְבּוֹעַ מְזוּזָה.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has made us holy with Mitzvot and commanded us to affix a *Mezuzah*.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.

The *Mezuzah* is sometimes put up as part of a *Chanukat HaBayit* (dedication of the house) ceremony. Twice every seven years, the *Mezuzah* should be inspected by a scribe to be sure that the writing is still legible.

ACTIVITIES

Primary

1. Hold a "*Mezuzah* Hunt." Search the synagogue, school, and/or homes to see where *Mezuzot* have been placed. Also, identify those doorways which do not have *Mezuzot*. Ask students to draw conclusions about where *Mezuzot* should and should not be located,

2. Open the Torah scroll and find the *Sh'ma*. Ask the Rabbi or other resource person for help if necessary. Have the students memorize the first line of the *Sh'ma* in Hebrew. Explain that the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* are written on the parchment in the *Mezuzah*.

3. Discuss the following: If you pass by a house and see a *Mezuzah* on the doorpost, what does it tell you about the family that lives there?

4. Using an ordinary doll house, create a Jewish home in miniature. Make *mezuzot* on a small scale and affix them to the appropriate doorposts of the doll house. This might be an ongoing class project, using different Jewish symbols.

5. Read and discuss the book *Hear O Israel: First I Say the Shema* by Molly Cone. Ask the following questions: When do you say the *Sh'ma*? Where can you find the *Sh'ma*? Who says the *Sh'ma?* Why do you think the *Sh'ma* was chosen to be written on the *Mezuzah* parchment?

6. Create a *Mezuzah* finger puppet. You might name it "*Mezuzah* Man" or "Miriam *Mezuzah*." Begin by introducing students to your new friend. Let the character describe what it does. Allow students to ask questions. Directions for making a *Mezuzah* finger puppet:

   Materials: felt, needle, thread, glue, real scroll or small felt or paper facsimile.

   Procedure: Use a rectangle of felt (any color) measuring about 5" x 2" (long and wide enough to fit on your finger). Fold the felt lengthwise. Using a running stitch, sew up the long side. Glue felt eyes, nose, and mouth to form the character's face. Cut a small hole at the back of the *Mezuzah*. Use either a real scroll or a small felt or paper facsimile and glue it to the inside of the finger puppet.

Intermediate

1. Imagine that the *Mezuzah* on your doorpost could speak. Have each student conduct an interview with his/her *Mezuzah*. What would the *Mezuzah* have to say about Judaism and Jewish practice? About the family that affixed the *Mezuzah*? Remember, the *Mezuzah* contains the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21). Read these verses in preparation for the interviews.

2. View and discuss the filmstrip *The Story of the Mezuzah*. Consider the following questions: Can one use any type of parchment and ink to prepare a *Mezuzah* scroll? What prayers does the *Mezuzah* scroll contain? Describe the correct procedure for affixing a *Mezuzah*.

3. Discuss the following: Why is it important to you to place a *Mezuzah* on your doorpost?

4. The *Mezuzah* contains the *Sh'ma* and the

V'ahavtah. Listen to a variety of recordings of the *Sh'ma* and *V'ahavta* in Hebrew and English. How do the different melodies make you feel? Is the music fast or slow? Are there low notes or high notes?

References (sound recordings): *The Joy of Prayer* by Martin Kalmanoff; . . . *And the Youth Shall See Visions* by Debbie Friedman; *The Day of Rest* by Dr. Sholom Kalib; *Sacred Sabbath and the Gates of Prayer* by Cantor Ben Zion Kapov Kagan; *Sing Unto God* by Debbie Friedman.

5. To extend activity #4, provide sheets of butcher block paper and paints or markers with which students can create a design which reflects how each felt about each musical piece. Compare the different designs. Discuss what influenced the various artistic interpretations.

6. Have the students role play and discuss the following situation: A Jewish family moves into a new neighborhood and has put up a *Mezuzah*. As this family's eleven-year-old daughter brings home friends, each responds differently. Among the possible responses are: "What's that?" "You aren't Jewish, are you?" "My grandparents have one of those." Encourage students to generate additional responses.

7. Learn the blessing for affixing the *Mezuzah*. Utilize the ditto stencil on page 19 of *Hebrew Blessings Ditto Pak* by Frances Borovetz.

8. Have students make their own *Mezuzah* cases. There are many different ways to make the casing. They might also make their own scrolls.

   References for making *Mezuzah* cases: *Arts and Crafts the Year Round* by Ruth Sharon, vol. 2, pp. 96-103; *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, p. 14.

   Reference for making scrolls: *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, pp. 185-195, 206.

Secondary

Plan a *Chanukat Habayit* (dedication of the house) ceremony. Choose a location where the group will conduct the ceremony and affix a *Mezuzah*. Possible locations include: a Jewish home for the elderly, synagogue, religious school classrooms, home of one or more students, Jewish organizational office or building.

References: *Gates of the House*; *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld, p. 15.

2. As noted in the Overview section above, the Israelites may have borrowed the idea of placing a sacred document on their doorposts from the Egyptians who would place a sacred document at the entrance to their homes. Imagine you are one of the following people: An American patriot in 1776, a cave dweller from prehistoric times, a volunteer for the underground railroad which spirited slaves to free states prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, an astronaut. What sacred document or object would you place at your door? Why? What gives those documents or objects significance to these figures? Why do you think Jews gave special significance to the *Sh'ma*?

3. Research the requirements for the Mitzvah of *Mezuzah*.

   References: *Code of Jewish Law* by Solomon Ganzfried, vol. 1, pp. 34-39; *The Commandments* by Maimonides; *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* by Isaac Klein, pp. 49-51.

4. Explain to students that Jews in the Soviet Union are not free as we are to observe Jewish practices. Have each student imagine that he/she is a Jew living in the Soviet Union. Write a diary excerpt in which you describe your thoughts and feelings about your desire to affix a *Mezuzah* on your doorpost. Include the reaction(s) of other family members. Within the excerpt, state what you ultimately did.

5. Read the first two paragraphs of the *Sh'ma* in English (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21). Have the students design and draw their own filmstrip illustrating these Mitzvot. To obtain supplies for making filmstrips, contact The Film Makers, P.O. Box 592, Arcadia, CA 91006.

6. A recent Confirmand receives a *Mezuzah* as a gift. He decides to place it on the front doorpost. His parents are uncomfortable with this public display of Judaism. Role play this conflict

between the Confirmand and his parents. Create three possible resolutions of this conflict.

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Invite a *sofer* (Jewish scribe) to speak about his craft and to inspect *Mezuzot* brought in by the students. The *sofer* may make repairs on the *Mezuzot* and/or Torah scrolls.

2. After making *Mezuzot* (see Intermediate activity #8) or purchasing them, design a *Chanukat Habayit* ceremony and put a *Mezuzah* on each classroom doorpost.

   References: *Gates of the House*, pp. 103-107; *The First Jewish Catalog*, p. 15.

3. This assembly program can be held at the conclusion of a unit of study on the *Mezuzah* or as a one-shot program on the Mitzvah of *Mezuzah*.
   a. Opening remarks: Have a representative from each class report on one aspect of its study of *Mezuzah*. If this is to be a one-time only program, the Rabbi or Director of Education can present a brief five minute talk on *Mezuzah*.
   b. Torah reading: Have a post-Bar or Bat Mitzvah student read the *Sh'ma* and the *V'ahavta*, verses which are contained in the *Mezuzah*.
   c. Presentation: Each class receives a *Mezuzah* for the door of their classroom.
   d. Each class returns to its respective room and affixes the *Mezuzah*. All present recite the appropriate blessings. The Rabbi, Cantor, and/or Director of Education can go around to each room to help and to be a part of the ceremony.

RESOURCES

For the Teacher

Ganzfried, Rabbi Solomon. *Code of Jewish Law: Kitzur Shulhan Arukh*. New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1961, vol. 1, pp. 34-39.

Gates of the House: The New Union Prayerbook. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1977, pp. 103-107.

Klein, Isaac. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979, pp. 49-51.

"Mezuzah." In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem Ltd., 1972, vol. 11, cols. 1474-1477.

Sharon, Ruth. *Arts and Crafts the Year Round*. New York: United Synagogue of America, 1965, vol. 2, pp. 96-103.

Siegel, Richard; Strassfeld, Michael; and Strassfeld, Sharon, eds. *The First Jewish Catalog*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, pp. 12-15, 185-195, 206.

For the Students

Borovetz, Frances. *Hebrew Blessings Ditto Pak*. Denver: Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc., 1980, p. 19. (Grades 3 and up)

Cone, Molly. *Hear O Israel: First I Say the Sh'ma*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1971. (Grades K-3)

Goldstein, Andrew. *My Very Own Jewish Home*. Silver Springs, MD: Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., 1979. (Grades K-3)

Ray, Eric. *Sofer: The Story of a Torah Scroll*. Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 1986. (Grades K-6)

Weisser, Michael. *My Synagogue*. New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1984, pp. 2-3. (Grades K-3)

Zwerin, Raymond A., and Friedman, Audrey. *Our Synagogue*. New York: Behrman House, 1974, Series C, Topic 6. (Grades K-2)

Audiovisual

Friedman, Debbie. *Sing Unto God*. Sound recording containing melodies for the prayers of the Shabbat worship service. Tara Publications. (All grades)

_____ . . . . *And the Youth Shall See Visions*. Tara Publications. Sound recording of melodies and prayers of the Shabbat worship service. (All grades)

Kagan, Ben Zion Kapov. *Sacred Sabbath and the Gates of Prayer*. Helen Bloom Records. Sound recording featuring a variety of Shabbat melodies. (All grades)

Kalib, Sholom. *The Day of Rest*. Sound recording containing a variety of Shabbat melodies. Tara Publications. (All grades)

Kalmanoff, Martin. *The Joy of Prayer*. Sound recording with melodies for the prayers of the Shabbat service. Tara Publications. (All grades)

The Story of the Mezuzah. A 44 frame filmstrip showing how a *Mezuzah* is prepared and how it should be affixed to the doorpost. Torah Umesorah Publications. (Grades 3-6)

From Stern's On the Doorposts of Your House

Other Personal Occasions

Consecration of a House

❦ *For the ceremony of Consecration, a Mezuzah, a Bible, wine or grape juice, Challah, and salt are required. Members of the household and guests participate in the ritual.*

❦ *To affix a Mezuzah to a room (the house having already been consecrated) begin on page 141.*

In the spirit of our Jewish faith, we consecrate this house with prayers of thanksgiving and invoke upon it God's blessing.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יהוה אֶחָד!

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal One is our God,
the Eternal God alone!

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Blessed is God's glorious majesty for ever and ever!

❦ *Transliteration of the V'ahavta is on page 5.*

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ: וְהָיוּ
הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבֶךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ
וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ: וּקְשַׁרְתָּם
לְאוֹת עַל־יָדֶךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ
וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

You shall love your Eternal God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your being. Set these words, which I command you this day, upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your hand; let them be a symbol before your eyes; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָי וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יהוה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים.אֲנִי יהוה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Be mindful of all My Mitzvot, and do them: so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God. I am your Eternal God who led you out of Egypt to be your God; I am your Eternal God.

❦

Our homes have always been the dwelling place of the Jewish spirit. Our tables have been altars of faith and love. It is written: 'When words of Torah pass between us, the Divine Presence is in our midst.' Our doors have been open to the stranger and the needy. May this home we now consecrate keep alive the beauty of our heritage.

CHALLAH IS DIPPED IN SALT AND DISTRIBUTED

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
ha-mo-tzi leh-chem min ha-a-retz.	הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for You cause bread to come forth from the earth.

WINE OR GRAPE JUICE IS GIVEN TO EACH GUEST

❦ *Wine and grape juice are equally "fruit of the vine."*

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen.	בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

THE OPEN BIBLE IS RAISED

The Torah has been our life; it has taught us how to live. May this home be a place for learning and doing. May the hearts of all who dwell here be filled with a love of Torah and its teachings.

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
a-sher ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav	אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
v'tzi-va-nu la-a-sok b'di-v'rei To-rah.	וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to immerse ourselves in Your teachings.

❦

יהוה מִי־יָגוּר בְּאָהֳלֶךָ?
מִי־יִשְׁכֹּן בְּהַר קָדְשֶׁךָ?
הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים וּפֹעֵל צֶדֶק,
וְדֹבֵר אֱמֶת בִּלְבָבוֹ.
לֹא־רָגַל עַל־לְשֹׁנוֹ,
לֹא־עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה,
וְחֶרְפָּה לֹא־נָשָׂא עַל־קְרֹבוֹ.
נִשְׁבַּע לְהָרַע וְלֹא יָמִיר,
כַּסְפּוֹ לֹא־נָתַן בְּנֶשֶׁךְ,
וְשֹׁחַד עַל־נָקִי לֹא לָקָח.
עֹשֵׂה־אֵלֶּה לֹא יִמּוֹט לְעוֹלָם.

Eternal God:
Who may abide in Your house?
Who may dwell in Your holy mountain?
Those who are upright; who do justly,
all whose hearts are true.
Who do not slander others, nor wrong them,
nor bring shame upon their kin.
Who give their word and, come whay may, do not retract it.
Who do not exploit others, who never take bribes.
Those who live in this way shall never be shaken.
[From Psalm 15]

❦ *An additional Scriptural passage, such as First Kings 8:54–61, might be read here.*

❦

THE MEZUZAH IS RAISED

This ancient symbol speaks to us of our need to live by the words of the Eternal One. We affix the Mezuzah to the doorposts of this house with the hope that it will always remind us of our duties to one another as members of the Household of Israel. May the divine spirit fill this house—the spirit of love and kindness and consideration for all people.

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
a-sher ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav	אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
v'tzi-va-nu lik-bo-a m'zu-zah.	וְצִוָּנוּ לִקְבּוֹעַ מְזוּזָה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to affix the Mezuzah.

❦ *The Mezuzah, its top inclining inward, is affixed to the upper part of the doorpost on the right, as one enters the house. If desired, a Mezuzah may be affixed to the right doorpost of the principal rooms.*

Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
sheh-heh-cheh-ya-nu, v'ki-y'ma-nu,	שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ
v'higi-a-nu la-z'man ha-zeh.	וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

❦

אִם־יהוה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַיִת, שָׁוְא עָמְלוּ בוֹנָיו בּוֹ.

Unless the Eternal One builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.

[Psalm 127:1]

In this awareness we pray that our home be blessed by the sense of God's presence.

We offer thanksgiving for the promise of security and contentment this home represents, and express our resolve to make it a temple dedicated to godliness. Let it be filled with the beauty of holiness and the warmth of love. May the guest and stranger find within it welcome and friendship. So will it ever merit the praise: 'How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!'

For all who are assembled here, and for all who will enter these doors, we invoke God's blessing:

יהוה יִשְׁמָר־צֵאתְךָ וּבוֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם.

May the Eternal One guard your going out and your coming in, now and always. Amen.

[Psalm 121:7]

UNIT 34

Loving One's Neighbor

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ

OVERVIEW

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). According to Rabbi Akiba, this is the most important principle of the Torah (*Sifra* to Leviticus 19:18). When a heathen challenged Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot, Hillel replied: "What is hateful to yourself do not do to your neighbor. That is the entire Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it" (*Shabbat* 31a).

Yet, as simple and straightforward as this Mitzvah appears, its extentions and ramifications are both complex and controversial. In his *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides explains how this Mitzvah is the source of so many others: "It is a positive commandment of Rabbinic law to visit the sick, to console the mourner, to attend to the dead, to provide a dowry for the bride, to escort one's guest, and to perform all the rites of burial . . . to cheer the bride and groom and to afford them support in all their necessities . . . . Though all these commandments are a matter of Rabbinic law, they are nevertheless embraced in the verse 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (*Hilchot Avel* 14:1).

This verse is valued by the Christian faith as well. In the Gospels Jesus says that this commandment is second in importance only to the commandment to love God (*Mark* 12:28). Paraphrasing the Leviticus text, Jesus is quoted as saying, "All that you would wish that men should do unto you, do also unto them" (*Matthew* 7:12). This statement has become known to Western civilization as the Golden Rule.

Part of the controversy surrounding this Mitzvah stems from its different formulations. Is Jesus' proactive version significantly different from Hillel's version? Is Hillel being more realistic in asking only that we refrain from doing what we do not want done to ourselves? Are the differences more a matter of style or are they truly substantive? Another issue is whether or not it is possible to command someone to love someone else. Nachmanides, for instance, felt that this was not realistic. He interpreted the verse from Leviticus to mean that we should wish our neighbor the same well-being that we wish ourselves (Nachmanides to Leviticus 19:18).

Another difficulty concerns the interpretation of the word "neighbor." It might appear from the first part of the verse to refer to a fellow Jew; perhaps it was even taken for granted that one's neighbor was a Jew. However, another Mitzvah bids us to love the stranger, later interpreted to mean the proselyte (see Chapter 35 in this book), thus, the confusion as to whom the neighbor might really be.

This rather abstract value is addressed, though not entirely clarified, by various principles and stories found in Jewish sources.

The Talmud (*Baba Metzia* 62a) discusses the case of two men traveling in the desert. One of them has a jar with enough water to keep him alive until he reaches civilization. One sage, Ben Peruta, says that the water must be shared, so that both men will survive for a while, though both will eventually die. Rabbi Akiba, however, rules that the man holding the water is not obligated to share it. However, we read in the Talmud: "While one's own needs are to take precedence over those of one's neighbor, one should not insist on one's own needs always being met first" (*Baba Metzia* 33a). The issue of whether the man is permitted to share the water or to give it entirely to his companion is, unfortunately, not fully explored.

In another case, a man is faced with helping either an enemy struggling to load his animal or a friend struggling to unload his animal. While preference is normally given to unloading an animal (to relieve the animal's stress), in this case preference is given to the enemy because of the potential of turning an enemy into a friend.

As if to emphasize this point, we have the account of Rabbi Meir who, upset at some lawbreakers in his neighborhood, prayed that they should die. His wife, Beruria, challenged him: "Does the Psalm read 'Let sinners cease out of the earth' (Psalms 104:35)? Rather, read the verse: 'Let sins cease . . .'" In other words, Rabbi Meir should not have prayed that the men would die, but rather that they should repent of their sins and live.

In modern times the theologian Martin Buber built his philosophy of I-Thou around this Mitzvah, teaching that we should treat others not as things or objects, but as beings much like ourselves.

ACTIVITIES

Primary

1. W[illegible] the following on the blackboard and read it to the class: "What is hateful to yourself do not do to your neighbor" (Hillel). Ask the class what the quotation means to them. Then ask for examples of the kind of behavior about which Hillel was talking. Have students apply the Mitzvah of Loving One's Neighbor in creating behavior guidelines for your class. Copy the new rules on a large chart with Hillel's saying at the top.

2. Ask students to write or dictate a list of ways we show that we love our neighbors. Take the student work and fold it into an illustrated accordion-style booklet.

3. One of the ways that we learn to love our neighbors and care about each other is to share our private lives with those we know. Create a class videotape. With a video camera, visit each child in his/her home. Film the child and his/her family, asking a few interview-style questions. Have the child describe a special room or place in [illegible]her home or backyard or neighborhood. When all the filming is complete, have a film screening party.

4. Get to know your Jewish neighbors. If there is another synagogue in your community or one in a nearby town, investigate whether a class in their religious school would like to become pen pals with your class. (Choose a class with students the same age as yours.) If desired, have classes meet and share a holiday party or other outing.

The Bagel Baker of Mulliner Lane by Judith Hope Blau is a wonderful tale dealing with the theme "Love Your Neighbor." Share this story with the class and, as a follow-up, make bagels with the students to share with families and friends. Many Jewish cookbooks have a bagel recipe.

Unroll a long length of plain white paper providing enough space for each class member to have a 16" to 20" section. Make a mural with the theme "Love Your Neighbor." In large letters at the center of the mural, copy out the commandment. Then have each student paint his or her interpretation of this Mitzvah.

7. Read and discuss *My Special Friend* by Floreva G. Cohen. This tells the story of a friendship between two young boys, one of whom has Down's Syndrome. Questions to consider: What are some of the special things that Doron and Jonathan do together? Do you know anyone like Jonathan? How do you feel about being friends with someone like Jonathan? How does the boys' relationship reflect the Mitzvah of Loving One's Neighbor?

Intermediate

1. One aspect of the Mitzvah of Loving One's Neighbor is about turning an enemy into a friend. View the film *My Bodyguard*, which is about a student who, when he is being picked on, chooses the school bully to protect him. Discuss it in light of the Talmudic story about turning an enemy into a friend (see Overview above).

2. Have your students reenact the story of the heathen who challenges Shammai and Hillel to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. For the complete story, see *Shabbat* 31a. Perform the story for another class or the whole school.

3. Have each student or group of students write short stories using Hillel's maxim, "What is hateful to yourself do not do to your neighbor" as the title and theme.

4. Supply the class with a variety of recent newspapers, magazines, scissors, glue, and a large sheet of paper or poster board. Have the students look for examples of the Mitzvah to love one's neighbor and create a collage with their clippings.

5. This exercise will help students evaluate their personal attitudes and beliefs regarding the issues surrounding Loving One's Neighbor. Read each of the statements below to the class. In response to each one, students place themselves on a values continuum. The continuum may be drawn as a line on the chalkboard or made with masking tape on the floor. Label one end of the continuum "Strongly agree," and the other end

"Strongly disagree." Place a range of opinions in between, such as "Somewhat agree," "Undecided," and "Somewhat disagree." Statements for reactions:

a. Rich people are smarter than poor people.
b. Boys are better at sports than girls.
c. Able-bodied people feel uncomfortable around handicapped people.
d. If someone hits you, you should hit back.
e. Each racial group (Black, Hispanic, Asian, white, etc.) should live in its own separate neighborhood.

Discuss responses, asking students to defend their positions and to identify factors that might change these attitudes. Relate the discussion to the Mitzvah of *V'ahavta L'rayacha Kamocha.*

6. This activity, which uses unshelled walnuts as a metaphor for human beings, will demonstrate the unique qualities and special attributes of every individual.

Bring a bag of unshelled walnuts to class. Give one nut to each student. Be sure students do not in any way mark or label the walnuts. Have each examine a walnut, noting creases, wrinkles, cracks, and other distinguishing marks. Collect all the walnuts in a bowl and mix them up. Each student then tries to find his/her walnut.

Discussion questions: Do all the walnuts look alike? Why or why not? What are some examples of unique characteristics of walnuts? Of people? Has anyone in the class ever thought that people of a particular ethnic group all look alike or behave alike? Is this possible? Do non-Jews view Jews as all alike in some ways? Why? What can be done to help people see the uniqueness of every human being?

Secondary

1. Invite a Priest, a Minister, and a Rabbi to discuss the verse from Leviticus 19:18 — "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" and Jesus' paraphrase "All that you would wish that men should do unto you do also unto them" (*Matthew* 7:12). Utilize the questions raised in the Overview above as a basis for the discussion.

2. As mentioned in the Overview section, the Talmud recounts the case of two men traveling in the desert, only one of whom has a jar of water. Pair up members of the class, distributing a copy of the tale. Each pair will present its own ending to the situation. Once all the presentations have been made, write up the endings and create a class commentary to this Talmudic story.

3. Many community organizations are based on the principle of loving one's neighbor. A few examples are: The Salvation Army, a soup kitchen or shelter, Mazon, HIAS, The Joint Distribution Committee, the Red Cross, and the Magen David Adom, etc. Sometimes a secular or Jewish newspaper, the Chamber of Commerce, or a community ombudsman has access to a complete listing of these organizations. Have your students collect materials and information about these groups, then set up an information table at the synagogue for the benefit of members.

4. Give students an opportunity to fulfill the Mitzvah of Loving One's Neighbor by participating in a community service project. Brainstorm a variety of options from which to choose (e.g., working in a food pantry, tutoring younger children, doing chores for an elderly or handicapped individual, reading to a blind or visually impaired person).

5. Invite a group of students of a different racial, ethnic, or religious background to participate in an organized discussion on interpersonal issues.
   a. Pair students with a partner from the other group. Assign one student to be partner A and the other partner B. During a two or three minute conversation, the partners introduce themselves to each other, telling something about their interests and hobbies, where they were born, what school they attend, favorite friends, most interesting experience, etc. Then have each partner introduce the other to the group as a whole.
   b. Set up two concentric circles of chairs, each with the same number. Students seated in the inner circle face out and those in the outer circle face in. Direct the students from the synagogue to sit in the outer circle and the guests to sit in the inner circle. (If there are more students from one group, some of them should sit in the other group's circle. Have them switch periodically with others in their group. If there is an odd number of students, a teacher or aide can participate.)

c. The group leader announces an issue which [illegible]ch pair of students discusses. After discus-[illegible]n the group leader elicits comments to be shared with the whole group. Before announcing the next issue, the students in one of the circles move one chair to the left or right so that they have a new partner for the next issue. Repeat the process. Some suggested issues for discussion: Who are some of your heroes/heroines, and why? What are some areas of conflict between you and your parents(s)? People are poor because they are lazy. How do you feel when someone makes a slur against your racial, ethnic, or religious group? How do you feel when someone makes a slur against another group? One thing I do not like about being Jewish, Black, etc., is _____.

. View and discuss the film *Eye of the Storm*, which records a unique two-day experiment done by a third grade teacher in a midwestern community. During the experiment the teacher made an arbitrary division of her class into superior and inferior groups based solely on eye co[illegible] Attitudes, behavior, and classroom performance were seriously affected as the children were subjected to segregation and discrimination. Consider questions such as these: How did the teacher divide the students? How did each group react to its status? How would you have reacted if you had been a member of the group that was favored? Of the group that was discriminated against? Which group is more likely to practice the Mitzvah of Loving One's Neighbor?

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

.. Hold a photography show with the theme "Love Your Neighbor." Have cameras available for the students to check out and use. When the pictures are taken and developed, mount and display them, inviting the synagogue membership to the showing. Note: For young children simple Instamatics are the easiest to use.

'. Hold an all-school "sing down." The sing down works as follows: Divide the students into several groups of mixed ages. Each group in turn thinks u[illegible] song with a particular word in it, in this case the word love, or its Hebrew equivalent, *ahavah*. The group must sing the song until they come to this word. After each group has sung a song, the first group begins again. When a group is not able to come up with a song for its turn, it is eliminated. The last remaining group is declared the winner.

3. At an assembly for Grades K-6, show the film *The Toymaker*. In the film two hand puppets, one striped and one spotted, are friends until they discover that they are different. Break up into groups by class and discuss such questions as the following: Have you ever been friends with someone who was, in any way, different? Did their being different stop you from being friends? Has anyone stopped being friends with you when they realized you were Jewish? How do physical differences affect friendships?

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Cohen, Floreva G. *My Special Friend*. New York: Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, 1986. (Grades K-2)

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Getting Along with Your Friends*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1980. (Grades K-4)

Audiovisual

Behind the Mask. An 8 minute film which explores the uniqueness of each individual and the similarities that unite us. Anti-Defamation League. (Grades K-6)

Ben Adam L'chaveiro. A 15 minute film set in a Jewish summer camp about the relationships among campers. USC Film Library. (Grades 5-8)

The Courage To Care. A 30 minute video about non-Jews who helped protect and rescue Jews during the Holocaust. Anti-Defamation League. (Grades 7 and up)

Eye of the Storm. A 25 minute film which records a two-day experiment during which a teacher separated her class into "superior" and "inferior" groups, based solely on eye color. Anti-Defamation League. (Grades 5 and up)

My Bodyguard. A 96 minute film about a student who is being picked on and who chooses the school bully to protect him. Available on videotape at many video stores. (Grades 7 and up)

The Toymaker. A 15 minute film about two hand puppets, one striped and the other spotted, who are friends until they discover that they are different. Anti-Defamation League. (Grades K-6)

UNIT 21

Leaving the Gleanings

פֵּאָה, לֶקֶט, שִׁכִּיחָה

OVERVIEW

The Torah contains a number of Mitzvot designed to allow the poor to be the beneficiaries of the agricultural yield of landowners.

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger" (Leviticus 19:9-10).

Another passage states that one should not turn back to pick up a sheaf that has been forgotten. Rather, "it shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow — in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings" (Deuteronomy 24:19).

Maimonides derives nine separate Mitzvot from these verses — four positive and five negative. The first of these is known as *Peah*, meaning corner. [illegible] is to leave the four corners of one's fields unharvested. The second tractate of the *Mishnah* is entitled *Peah*, and includes the laws pertaining to this practice. According to the Rabbis, this should equal a minimum of one-sixtieth of the field. One should add to this amount based upon the size of the field, the number of the poor, and the yield of the harvest. Rabbi Simeon explains that the corners were chosen in order to assure that the owners were being honest, and so as not to waste the time of the poor. The poor were not allowed to use a scythe or spade, but rather had to pick the crop with their hands to prevent injuring each other.

A second provision, called *Leket*, requires that the gleanings — those crops which fall to the ground during the harvest — be left on the ground for those in need. An example of this procedure is found in Ruth, when Ruth gleans in the fields belonging to Boaz. While in ancient times it was common to leave sheaves in the field in order to placate the spirits, the Torah is careful to emphasize the ethical motivation of this precept.

A person is also enjoined from returning to pick up sheaves that were forgotten (*Shich'chah*) the first [illegible] The *Tosephta* points out that this is a Mitzvah that is observed not on purpose, but by forgetting.

Similarly, when harvesting grapes one is required to leave for the needy bunches of grapes that were misformed, as well as those grapes which fall to the ground.

The Rabbis interpreted that these laws apply outside of the Land of Israel, as well as within it. And although they apply specifically to the Jewish poor, in the interests of peace, they are extended to the poor and needy of all peoples.

According to *Sefer HaChinuch*, these laws are to keep us from becoming selfish. Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that they serve to remind the owner of the field that all the produce has been given him in trust, so that he should not believe that it is all his.

In some agricultural communities in the United States, groups have been allowed by the owners to glean the produce left by professional harvesting crews and machines. The gleanings are then distributed to the poor through food banks.

It is also informative to know that the side curls worn traditionally by Jewish men are known as *peah* (plural, *payot* or, in Ashkenazic pronunciation, *payos*). These sidelocks are grown because of the prohibition in the Torah that "You shall not round off the side-growth on your head" (Leviticus 19:27). While this prohibition represents the primary reason for leaving side locks, it is also possible that these *payos* are a reminder to leave unharvested a portion of what we have.

ACTIVITIES

Primary

1. Take your class on a field trip to a farm. If possible go at a time of year when the children can harvest some produce (apples and pumpkins in the fall, berries in the late spring, etc.). Have students prepare some food for themselves, and donate the leftover uncooked produce to a food bank. Discuss how the latter relates to the Mitzvah of Leaving the Gleanings.

2. Children like to know that their efforts are appreciated and, at this young age, a tangible

reward is very effective. To motivate your class to participate in a food drive for needy persons, each student will receive a "Sharing Our Harvest" cloth patch. These are available from Joycrest, Inc., P.O. Box 2245, Westminster, CA 92684 at a nominal cost. If you prefer, create paper certificates to distribute.

Suggest that students make posters to advertise the food drive and that they also place a notice in the synagogue bulletin. In all the publicity, have them include references to the Mitzvah of *Peah*. Set up a collection point in your classroom or in the synagogue's entry way as a reminder to the congregation. If possible, take your class to the food bank so they can see where their donations go. Ask the food bank director to discuss with the class the significance of sharing their harvest.

3. Read the story of Ruth to your class. Utilize a flannel board and make cut-outs from felt of Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, and the wheat field. In this way the students will be able to retell the story themselves, using the flannel board figures as prompters.

4. Read the class the story "Where Bread Comes From" in *What Do People Do All Day?* by Richard Scarry. This story will help students understand how wheat stalks become bread. Help the class to list the steps for making bread. Ask the students what the farmer would need to do in order to fulfill the Mitzvot of *Peah*, *Leket*, and *Shich'chah*.

5. The Mitzvot of *Peah*, *Leket*, and *Shich'chah* are important within the context of our agricultural heritage. To help the students understand the importance of seeds as a source for food, do the following activities:
   a. Place some seeds on a wet sponge to see how the seeds germinate. Use grass seed and make sure the sponge is sitting in a dish with shallow water.
   b. Study food packages to see how many items derive from seeds. Remember that flour comes from seeds, as do popcorn, nuts, beans, etc. Have the students create a display of these packages.

Reference: *Plants We Live On: The Story of Grains and Vegetables* by Carrol Lane Fenton and Hermine B. Kitchen.

6. Have students design a bumper sticker which states the need for sharing one's harvest with others.

Intermediate

1. With your class, grow a small garden and, when it is time to harvest, follow the Mitzvah of *Peah*, and the other Mitzvot in this unit. This long-term project will give the students an excellent chance to put these Mitzvot into practice.

2. Have the students create a Righteous Action Cube based on these Mitzvot. Paint or cover the outside of a cardboard box. On each side of the box glue, draw, or paint pictures and phrases appropriate to the theme of *Peah* and gleanings.

3. The following project can be done very simply, or it may be as elaborate as the students desire. The students will observe and record the amount of food wasted in their homes or in the school cafeteria. Students will have to position themselves near the trash cans at school to observe, or they may conduct interviews. At home, they may want to weigh and record the food items thrown out. Set a time frame for observation (three days, one week, etc.). Students then share the recorded data. Discuss the results. See if students have suggestions to remedy this wasteful situation. Ask: How can you apply the Mitzvot of *Peah*, *Leket*, and *Shich'chah* to this situation?

4. *Birkat HaMazon* (blessing after meals) contains the following: "Blessed are You, O Eternal, our God . . . You give food to all living things . . . You never let us lack for food . . . Blessed are You, O Eternal, Who feeds everyone." Discuss with the class: Are these statements true? Does God feed everyone? Why do we need the laws of *Peah*? How far does human responsibility go in feeding the world?

5. As a possible outgrowth of activity #4, the students might participate in the stocking of shelves at a local food pantry.

6. Have each student or pair of students write a personal statement about the need to feed the hungry. The students can share these statements with their families. Families can then be encouraged to help solve the dilemma of the

hungry in our nation of plenty. (See activity #1 under All-school Programs below.)

Secondary

1. Tell your students to imagine that they are farmers and that they allow gleaners in their land. Have them write an ethical will to their children encouraging them to continue this practice.

   References: *Ethical Wills: A Modern Jewish Treasury*, edited by Jack Riemer and Nathaniel Stampfer; *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, edited by Israel Abrahams.

2. The Jewish tradition ensured that farmers would provide sustenance for the hungry. This Mitzvah evolved in an agricultural society. Direct your students to create guidelines for other professions (physicians, attorneys, business owners) similar to those required by this Mitzvah. For example, a lawyer might be required to donate a certain number of hours of legal services for the poor each year.

3. There is a Jewish tradition of providing holiday packages for the needy. At Passover this is called *Maot Chittim*, at Chanukah and Purim, *Shalach Manot*. With your students choose a Jewish holiday for which to provide provisions. Ask the Rabbis or a Jewish social service agency to help distribute these packages.

4. Read together the book of Ruth. Then have a "Blackboard Press Conference." Draw a circle face of Ruth on the blackboard and introduce her to the class: "This is Ruth. You have read her story. Now what questions do you have for her?" Write on the board the questions suggested by the students. After five or six questions, ask for a volunteer (or volunteers) to speak for Ruth and answer the questions that have been raised. Be non-judgmental about the answers to the questions, but point out any incorrect facts later in the discussion.

   Reference: *Value Exploration through Role Playing* by Robert C. Hawley.

5. Have students write for information from local and national organizations which help feed the hungry. After receiving the information, create a display for the congregation on the theme of hunger. Some suggested national organizations are:

   American Jewish World Service
   729 Boylston St.
   Boston, MA 02116

   Jewish Fund for Justice
   1334 G St. N.W. #601
   Washington, DC 20005

   Mazon
   2940 Westwood Blvd., Suite 7
   Los Angeles, CA 90064

   Oxfam America
   P.O. Box 2176
   Boston, MA 02106

6. Produce a mini-documentary about Mitzvot related to *Peah*. One student can serve as a reporter and others role play the scenario. Scenes should include: leaving the corners of the fields, gleaning, and not returning to pick up the forgotten produce.

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Invite a guest speaker from the welfare system to learn how our government helps the needy. In a follow-up discussion, compare the Jewish tradition for feeding the hungry by means of the Mitzvot of *Peah*, *Leket*, and *Shich'chah* with governmental programs. Discuss: What types of programs might be developed that reflect these Mitzvot? (For example, large farms might be encouraged to give away excess produce to poor people.)

2. Mazon is a national Jewish organization which offers a Jewish response to hunger. It is suggested that three percent of the cost of the food at a *simcha* (B'nai Mitzvah, wedding, etc.) be donated to Mazon. This organization, in turn, distributes grants to a variety of organizations which fight hunger. Create an ongoing committee to distribute Mazon materials to individuals and families in the congregation who are celebrating *simchas*. (See Secondary activity #5 above for the address of Mazon.)

3. The following is an exercise in selfish versus unselfish behavior. This will also test the participants' ability to share resources. The organizers of this activity will need to create a menu of foods which the participants will be able to purchase. Each participant will be given printed

money or tokens. The "money" is distributed *unevenly*, so that some participants will be able to purchase a full meal, while others will be able to purchase only crackers and water. After distributing the money (making clear that some have much more than others), tell students they are free to purchase their meal. It is best to do this at a regular meal time, and indicate that this is all that they will get. Allow this to go on for at least 10 minutes. Then stop and discuss behavior attitudes, reactions, and feelings. What was it like having only enough for a little food, when others could afford a lot? Who shared? Who did not? Why not? Point out that the Mitzvah of *Peah* obligated a farmer to share his/her produce with the poor.

4. Research resources in the community that distribute meals or packaged foods to the poor. Choose one organization and become regular contributors to their program. For example, the school might make 100 sandwiches once a month to be distributed at a certain soup kitchen, or collect canned goods for a particular food bank.

RESOURCES

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For the Students

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Glosser, Joanne; Huppin, Beth; and Kunin, Bill. *Feed the World: Hazan Et Hakol*. New York: Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education, 1986. (Grades 7 and up)

Scarry, Richard. "Where Bread Comes From." In *What Do People Do All Day?* New York: Random House, 1979. (Grades 2-5)

Audiovisual

The Story of Ruth. A 30 frame filmstrip which tells the story of Ruth, including her gleaning in the fields. Kol R'ee Associates. (Grades 2-5)

The Polarity of Prayer A.J. Heschel

There is a specific difficulty of Jewish prayer. There are laws: how to pray, when to pray, what to pray. There are fixed times, fixed ways, fixed texts.[22] On the other hand, prayer is worship of the heart, the outpouring of the soul, a matter of *kavanah* (inner devotion). Thus, Jewish prayer is guided by two opposite principles: order and outburst, regularity and spontaneity, uniformity and individuality, law and freedom,[23] a duty and a prerogative, empathy and self-expression, insight and sensitivity, creed and faith, the word and that which is beyond words. These principles are the two poles about which Jewish prayer revolves. Since each of the two moves in the opposite direction, equilibrium can only be maintained if both are of equal force. However, the pole of regularity usually proves to be stronger than the pole of spontaneity, and, as a result, there is a perpetual danger of prayer becoming a mere habit, a mechanical performance, an exercise in repetitiousness. The fixed pattern and regularity of our services tends to stifle the spontaneity of devotion. Our great problem, therefore, is how not to let the principle of regularity impair the power of spontaneity (*kavanah*). It is a problem that concerns not only prayer but the whole sphere of Jewish observance. He who is not aware of this central difficulty is a simpleton; he who offers a simple solution is a quack.

It is a problem of universal significance. Polarity is an essential trait of all things in reality, and in Jewish faith the relationship between *halacha* (law) and *agada* (inwardness) is one of *polarity*. Taken abstractly they seem to be mutually exclusive, yet in actual living they involve each other. Jewish tradition maintains that there is no *halacha* without *agada* and no *agada* without *halacha;* that we must neither disparage the body nor sacrifice the spirit. The body is the discipline, the pattern, the law; the spirit is the inner devotion, spontaneity, freedom. The body without the spirit is a corpse; the spirit without the body is a ghost.

And yet the polarity exists and is a source of constant anxiety and occasional tension. How are we to maintain the reciprocity of tradition and freedom; how to retain both *keva* and *kavanah*, regularity and spontaneity, without upsetting the one or stifling the other?

At first sight, the relationship between *halacha* and *agada* in prayer appears to be simple. Tradition gives us the text, we create the *kavanah*. The text is given once and for all, the inner devotion comes into being every time anew. The text is the property of all ages, *kavanah* is the creation of a single moment. The text belongs to all men, *kavanah* is the private concern of every individual. And yet, the problem is far from being simple. The text comes out of a book, it is given; *kavanah* must come out of the heart. But is the heart always ready—three times a day—to bring forth devotion? And if it is, is its devotion in tune with what the [illegible]

[22] According to Rabbi Yose, "He who alters the form of benedictions fixed by the wise has failed to fulfil his obligations" (*Berachoth* 40b; *Yerushalmi Berachoth* VI, 2, 10b). Rabbi Meir declares it to be the duty of everyone to say one hundred benedictions daily (*Menahoth* 43a, see *Numbers Rabba*, III).

[23] The contrast between order and spontaneity is made clear through the term *keva*. Shammai said: "Make your *Torah* (in the sense of legal decisions made by the scholar) *keva* (a fixed thing)." Do not be lenient to yourself and severe to others, nor lenient to others and severe to yourself. See *Aboth* I, 15 and the explication in *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*, ed. Schechter, B version, Ch. 23, p. 47. In contrast Rabbi Shimeon said: "When you pray, do not make your prayer a fixed thing" (*keva*) (Aboth 2, 18). Rabbi Eliezer said: "He who makes his prayer a fixed thing (*keva*), his prayer is not an act of grace (*Mishnah Berachoth* 4, 4)."

From Fields' Bechol Levavcha

ARGUMENTS FOR FIXED PRAYER

1.

Ve are a congregation, and, in order for us to el a sense of unity with one another, we need o use the same words. The more we share, the loser we will feel.

2.

f we wait until we feel like composing a prayer, ve might never pray or we might lose the ability o pray. Prayer demands the discipline of regular ractice and the same words if we are to be successful at it.

3.

Not all of us are great poets or writers. It is illy not to make use of the outstanding poetry nd prayers of our tradition that have been ested by time and many generations. They can xpress our feelings better than we ourselves can.

4.

Whe e use prayers composed by Jews throughut our history, we identify ourselves with the raditions and generations of our people. When ve pray with the same prayers used by Jews hroughout the world, we feel at one with our eople no matter where they are. Fixed prayer nsures the unity of the Jewish people.

5.

Often when an individual composes a prayer, t is self-centered and expresses only his own elfish concerns. Fixed Jewish prayer is concerned vith the welfare of the community and has been arefully written so as to avoid selfish, fleeting eeds.

6.

The rabbis teach us that a person should not e hasty to utter a word before God. That temptation is eliminated by fixed prayer. Spontaneous rayer is often hastily and carelessly composed. Prayer ought to be written with concentration y individuals possessing great skill. Fixed prayer lfills this requirement.

Two Thoughts

Change not the fixed form in which the sages wrote the prayers.

(Talmud)

Be not rash with your mouth, and let your heart not be hasty to utter a word before God.

(Ecclesiastes 5:1)

7.

Spontaneous prayer causes confusion among the worshipers. The talmudic sage, Rabbi Zeira, once said: "Everytime I added new words to my prayers, I became confused and lost my place." Such confusion takes away from the beauty and meaning of the prayer experience. A fixed order of worship solves this problem.

8.

Beautiful prayers, like great poetry, never lose their meaning through repetition. The more we read them with open minds and hearts, the more meanings we can discover. The cure for dull prayer experiences is in us, not in the creation of new prayers.

ARGUMENTS FOR SPONTANEOUS PRAYER

1.

While the fixed prayers may be beautiful, after you have said them over and over again, they become dull, repetitive, and lose their meaning. The rabbis recognized this and, in the Mishnah, they tell us: "Do not let your prayers be a matter of fixed routine but rather heartfelt expressions."

2.

Spontaneous prayer allows us to express our feelings, hopes, and concerns. If we are bound by a fixed text, we are prevented from making our worship as personally meaningful as it should be. The Bratzlaver Rebbe, a leading teacher of Chasidism, once said to his students:

"You must feel your words of prayer in all your bones, in all your limbs, and in all your nerves." When we use our own prayers we feel deeply about that for which we are praying.

3.

We are not machines and we can't be programed to be in the same mood as everyone else at the same time. Spontaneous prayer allows us the freedom to express our true feelings in the moment we pray.

4.

We should not forget that the fixed prayers of tradition were once spontaneous expressions of individuals and their communities. Throughout Jewish history, Jews have been composing new prayers and adding them to the prayer book. We need to continue that creative process for it has helped keep Jewish prayer meaningful, and even added to the survival of Judaism.

5.

In every generation our people has faced new problems and challenges. These should be expressed in our prayers. Obviously, if we are bound to a fixed text or style of prayer, we cannot include contemporary issues or forms in our worship.

Rabbinic Opinions

Only that person's prayer is answered who lifts his hands with his heart in them.
(Taanit 8a)

Rabbi Eliezer said: If a person prays only according to the exact fixed prayer and adds nothing from his own mind, his prayer is not considered proper.
(Berachot 28a)

Rabbi Abahu would add a new prayer to his worship every day.
Rabbi Aha in the name of Rabbi Jose said: It is necessary to add new words to the fixed prayers each time they are recited.
(Berachot 4a)

Creating New Prayers

The controversy over fixed and spontaneous prayer continues in our own day. There are those who oppose any changes either in the order of Jewish worship or in any of the traditional prayers. Others favor innovation and the creation of new prayers and worship experiences. *Bechol Levavcha* is an attempt at a compromise between the two positions. It combines the order and prayers of our tradition with new prayers and offers us the opportunity to create our own expressions.

Throughout Bechol Levavcha you will find themes entitled "Creating with Kavanah". Kavanah (כַּוָּנָה) *means inner feeling, devotion, concentration. Within the box will be a list of the themes of the prayers in that section.*

You will also find the themes explained in the Commentary *passages. You may use those themes for the creation of your own prayers.*

You should first master the traditional prayer and its meaning. Then, use some of the other prayers in the section. Afterwards, with an understanding of the traditional prayer, you will be ready to create your own original expression.

At the time of congregational worship you can substitute the creative prayers for the traditional ones.

How Do We Create Our Own Prayers?

Just as no one has ever given a successful recipe for writing beautiful poetry, no one has ever produced an easy recipe for creating meaningful and beautiful prayer. The challenge of writing outstanding literature is both exciting and demanding. It requires thoughtful consideration, skill, patience, discipline, and an understanding of the themes and ideas we want to express.

While Jewish tradition does not provide us with a simple method of how to create our own prayers, it does offer us some very useful guidelines. These guidelines give us direction and can serve as a check and balance against which we judge and evaluate our creative prayers.

The Sh'ma and Its Blessings שמע וברכותיה

בָּרְכוּ אֶת־יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ!

Praise the One to whom praise is due!

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Praised be the One to whom praise is due, now and for ever!

CREATION יוצר

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ, עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת־הַכֹּל.
הַמֵּאִיר לָאָרֶץ וְלַדָּרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים,
וּבְטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל־יוֹם תָּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית.
מָה רַבּוּ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יְיָ! כֻּלָּם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ, מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶךָ.
תִּתְבָּרַךְ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל־שֶׁבַח מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ,
וְעַל־מְאוֹרֵי־אוֹר שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ: יְפָאֲרוּךָ. סֶלָה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת.

• Praised be our Eternal God, Ruler of the universe, whose mercy makes light to shine over the earth and all its inhabitants, and whose goodness renews day by day the work of creation.

How manifold are Your works, O God! In wisdom You have made them all. The heavens declare Your glory. The earth reveals Your creative power. You form light and darkness, bring harmony into nature, and peace to the human heart.

We praise You, Eternal One, Creator of light.

• The English is a paraphrase of the Hebrew.

REVELATION אהבה רבה

אַהֲבָה רַבָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חֶמְלָה גְדוֹלָה וִיתֵרָה חָמַלְתָּ עָלֵינוּ. אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ, בַּעֲבוּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבָּטְחוּ בְךָ וַתְּלַמְּדֵם חָקֵי חַיִּים, כֵּן תְּחָנֵּנוּ וּתְלַמְּדֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ, הָאָב הָרַחֲמָן, הַמְרַחֵם, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְתֵן בְּלִבֵּנוּ לְהָבִין וּלְהַשְׂכִּיל, לִשְׁמֹעַ לִלְמֹד וּלְלַמֵּד, לִשְׁמֹר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת וּלְקַיֵּם אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי תַלְמוּד תּוֹרָתֶךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.
וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ, וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וְיַחֵד לְבָבֵנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ. וְלֹא־נֵבוֹשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי בְשֵׁם קָדְשְׁךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא בָּטָחְנוּ. נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ, כִּי אֵל פּוֹעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת אָתָּה, וּבָנוּ בָחַרְתָּ וְקֵרַבְתָּנוּ לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל סֶלָה בֶּאֱמֶת, לְהוֹדוֹת לְךָ וּלְיַחֶדְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.

• Deep is Your love for us, abiding Your compassion. From of old we have put our trust in You, and You have taught us the laws of life. Be gracious now to us, that we may understand and fulfill the teachings of Your word.

Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah, that we may cling to Your Mitzvot. Unite our hearts to love and revere Your name.

We trust in You and rejoice in Your saving power, for You are the Source of our help. You have called us and drawn us near to You to serve You in faithfulness.

Joyfully we lift up our voices and proclaim Your unity, O God who in love have called us to Your service!

◆ ◆

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָי וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים
לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים. אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

L'ma-an tiz-k'ru va-a-si-tem et kol mitz-vo-tai, vi-h'yi-tem k'doh-shim lei-lo-hei-chem. Ani Adonai eh-lo-hei-chem a-sher ho-tzei-ti et-chem mei-eh-retz mitz-ra-yim li-h'yoht la-chem lei-lo-him. Ani Adonai eh-lo-hei-chem.

Be mindful of all My Mitzvot, and do them: so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God. I am your Eternal God who led you out of Egypt to be your God; I am your Eternal God.

גאולה REDEMPTION

אֱמֶת וְיַצִיב, וְאָהוּב וְחָבִיב, וְנוֹרָא וְאַדִּיר, וְטוֹב וְיָפֶה הַדָּבָר
הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
אֱמֶת, אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם מַלְכֵּנוּ, צוּר יַעֲקֹב מָגֵן יִשְׁעֵנוּ.
לְדֹר וָדֹר הוּא קַיָּם, וּשְׁמוֹ קַיָּם, וְכִסְאוֹ נָכוֹן,
וּמַלְכוּתוֹ וֶאֱמוּנָתוֹ לָעַד קַיֶּמֶת. וּדְבָרָיו חַיִּים וְקַיָּמִים,
נֶאֱמָנִים וְנֶחֱמָדִים, לָעַד וּלְעוֹלְמֵי עוֹלָמִים.
מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאַלְתָּנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ.
עַל־זֹאת שִׁבְּחוּ אֲהוּבִים וְרוֹמְמוּ אֵל, וְנָתְנוּ יְדִידִים זְמִירוֹת
שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבָּחוֹת, בְּרָכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת לַמֶּלֶךְ, אֵל חַי וְקַיָּם.
רָם וְנִשָּׂא, גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא, מַשְׁפִּיל גֵּאִים וּמַגְבִּיהַּ שְׁפָלִים,
מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים וּפוֹדֶה עֲנָוִים, וְעוֹזֵר דַּלִּים,
וְעוֹנֶה לְעַמּוֹ בְּעֵת שַׁוְּעָם אֵלָיו.
תְּהִלּוֹת לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן, בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבֹרָךְ. מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם וּבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְךָ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ כֻלָּם:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד׃
Sh'ma Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal One is our God,
the Eternal God alone!

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!
Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed!

Blessed is God's glorious majesty for ever and ever!

All are seated

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ:
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבֶךָ:
וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ
וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ: וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדֶךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין
עֵינֶיךָ: וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

V'a-hav-ta et Adonai eh-lo-heh-cha b'chol l'va-v'cha u-v'chol naf-sh'cha u-v'chol m'o-deh-cha. V'ha-yu ha-d'va-rim ha-ei-leh a-sher a-no-chi m'tza-v'cha ha-yom al l'va-veh-cha. V'shi-nan-tam l'va-neh-cha v'di-bar-ta bam b'shiv-t'cha b'vei-teh-cha u-v'lech-t'cha va-deh-rech u-v'shoch-b'cha u-v'ku-meh-cha. U-k'shar-tam l'oht al ya-deh-cha v'ha-yu l'toh-ta-foht bein ei-neh-cha; u-ch'tav-tam al m'zu-zoht bei-teh-cha u-vi-sh'a-reh-cha.

You shall love the Eternal One, your God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your being. Set these words, which I command you this day, upon your heart. Teach them faithfully to your children; speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your hand; let them be a symbol before your eyes; inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

• True and enduring are the words spoken by our prophets.

You are the living God;
Your word brings life and light to the soul.

You are the First and the Last:

besides You there is no redeemer or savior.

You are the strength of our life, the Power that saves us.

Your love and Your truth abide for ever.

You have been the help of our people in time of trouble;

You are our refuge in all generations.

Your power was manifest when we went free out of Egypt;

in every liberation from bondage we see it.

May Your law of freedom rule the hearts of all Your children, and Your law of justice unite them in friendship.

May the righteous of all nations rejoice in Your love and triumph by Your power.

O God, our refuge and our hope, we glorify Your name now as did our people in ancient days:

מִי־כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם, יְהוָה? מִי כָּמֹכָה, נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ,
נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת, עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא?
שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְּחוּ גְאוּלִים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל־שְׂפַת הַיָּם;
יַחַד כֻּלָּם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.

Mi cha-mo-cha ba-ei-lim, Adonai? Mi ka-mo-cha, ne-dar ba-ko-desh, no-ra t'hi-loht, o-sei feh-leh?

Shi-ra cha-da-sha shi-b'chu g'u-lim l'shi-m'cha al s'fat ha-yam; ya-chad ku-lam ho-du v'him-li-chu v'am'ru: Adonai Yim-loch l'o-lam va-ed!

Who is like You, Eternal One, among the gods that are worshipped? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?

A new song the redeemed sang to Your name. At the shore of the sea, saved from destruction, they proclaimed Your sovereign power: The Eternal One will reign for ever and ever!

צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוּמָה בְּעֶזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וּפְדֵה כִנְאֻמֶךָ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. גֹּאֲלֵנוּ יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ,
קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

O Rock of Israel, come to Israel's help. Fulfill Your promise of redemption for Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer is God on High, the Holy One of Israel. We praise You, Eternal One, Redeemer of Israel.

Numerical Values of Hebrew Letters

א׳	1	ו׳	6	י״א	11	ט״ו	15
ב׳	2	ז׳	7	↓	↓	ט״ז	16
ג׳	3	ח׳	8	י״ט	19		
ד׳	4	ט׳	9				
ה׳	5	י׳	10				

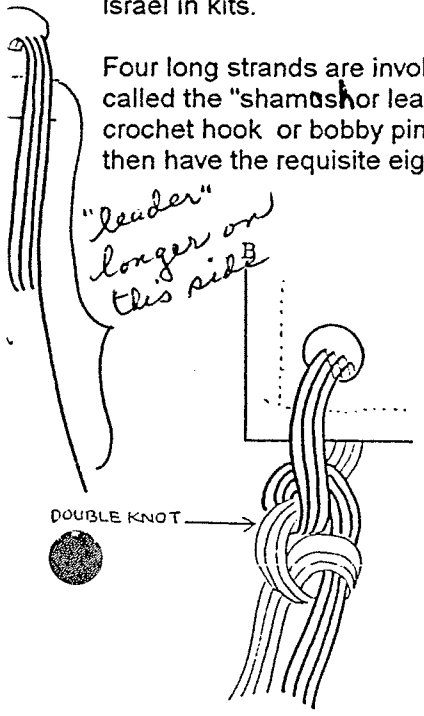
כ׳	20	ל׳	30	מ׳	40	צ׳	90
כ״א	21	ל״א	31	נ׳	50	ק׳	100
↓	↓	↓	↓	ס׳	60	ר׳	200
כ״ט	29	ל״ט	39	ע׳	70	ש׳	300
				פ׳	80	ת׳	400

WINDING TZITZIT

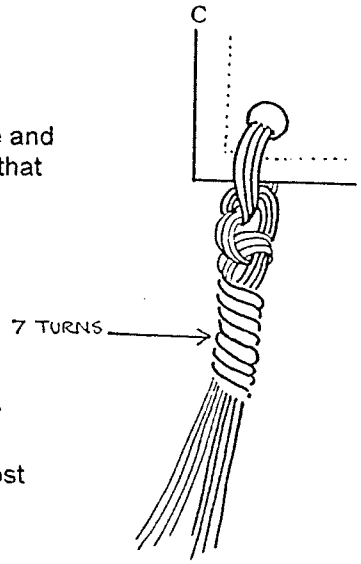
Traditionally, each person should be responsible for winding the tzitzit on his or her tallit. It is not difficult to do (each tzitzit takes about eight or ten minutes to complete), and can be especially meaningful if a special occasion is created for the winding, perhaps with the members of the family participating by winding a section.

The hole in each corner of the talit may be 2" in from both sides of the corner (in the Ashkenazic tradition, "two to three fingerbreadths" although it is not uncommon in the Sephardic tradition to have the hole much closer to the edge ofthe fabric). Many people prefer to purchase a set of tzitzit yarn already cut in appropriate lengths, and many fine tzitzit yarns are available from Israel in kits.

Four long strands are involved, with one of them longer than the rest. The longer strand is called the "shamash" or leader. When the entire group is gently pulled through the hole (a crochet hook or bobby pin works well) so that the ends are even on the shorter lengths, you then have the requisite eight strands. Then -



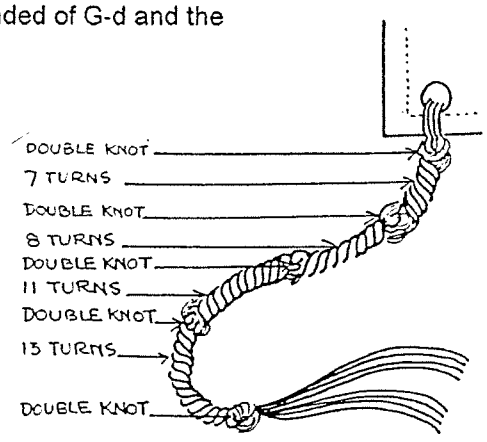
Make a double knot.
Wind the leader around the group seven times.
(It is helpful to keep the tallit flat on a table and weighted down, or held by someone, so that you can hold the yarns taut.)
Make a double knot.
Wind the leader around the group eight times.
Make a double knot.
Wind the leader around eleven times.
Make a double knot.
Wind the leader around thirteen times.
(It is helpful to count out loud so that you know you have wound the correct number of turns, since a part of the first and last coil may get lost going into the knot).
A final double knot.



Explanation: G-d instructed Moses to tell the Israelites to make and wear fringes on the corners of their garments as a reminder to observe all the commandments.
In Hebrew, letters of the alphabet are also used for arithmetic numbers - each letter has a numerical value. Did you know that.....

The Hebrew word "tzitzit" has a numerical value of 600. This number, plus eight strands, plus five knots totals 613, the traditional number of all the commandments (mitzvot). Thus, by wearing tzitzit and looking at them, we are reminded of G-d and the Commandments in the Torah. Also.....

7 + 8= 15. 15= Yod & Heh, the first two letters of G-d's name.
11= Vav & Heh, the last two letters of G-d's name.
7 + 8 + 11= 26, which = YHVH
13 = Ehad, meaning "One." The tzitzit remind us that G-d is one.



(Information obtained from "The First Jewish Catalog")

From Shapiro's, The Gates of Shabbat

Hadlakat Neirot
Candlelighting

Introduction

(You may read one of the following.)

In kindling Sabbath light,
we preserve life's sanctity.
With every holy light we kindle,
the world is brightened to a higher harmony.

❖

*(When children are present,
more than one reader might share this passage.)*

Shabbat can be different from any other day.
Shabbat can be many things.

*Shabbat can be the beauty of the candles
as we light them at our table.*

Shabbat can be singing the Kiddush and tasting sweet wine.

Shabbat can be biting into the soft, golden challah.

Shabbat can be a blessing for the family.

Shabbat can be saying thank you, God, for our whole family.

The Blessing

§ See page 109

Light the candles and then recite the blessing.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav,
ve-tsi-va-nu le-had-lik
neir shel Sha-bat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has made us holy with commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of Shabbat.

(The service continues on page 18.)

Shalom Aleichem
A Song of Peace

(You may sing the following song.)

𝄞 See page 110

Sha-lom a-lei-chem, mal-a-chei
ha-sha-reit, mal-a-chei El-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.

שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מַלְאֲכֵי
הַשָּׁרֵת, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן,
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Bo-a-chem le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei
ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.

בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי
הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן,
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Ba-re-chu-ni le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei
ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.

בָּרְכוּנִי לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי
הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן,
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Tsei-te-chem le-sha-lom, mal-a-chei
ha-sha-lom, mal-a-chei El-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-le-chei ha-me-la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.

צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי
הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן,
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Peace be to you, O ministering angels, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.
Enter in peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.
Bless me with peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.
Depart in peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.

(The service continues on page 20.)

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:

יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה.

Ye-sim-cha E-lo-him ke-ef-ra-yim ve-chi-me-na-sheh.

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and Manasseh, who carried forward the life of our people.

For a girl:

יְשִׂמֵךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה.

Ye-si-meich E-lo-him ke-sa-ra, riv-ka, ra-cheil, ve-lei-a.

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:

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְיָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

יָאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ.

יִשָּׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.

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.

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.)

When we taste the sweetness of the grapes, we say:
Thank You, God, for all that is sweet in our lives.

The Concluding Day of Creation

(As a reminder of the origin of Shabbat, you can use the following Torah verses to introduce the Kiddush. The verses can be said in Hebrew or English.)

Va-ye-hi e-rev, va-ye-hi vo-ker,	וַיְהִי עֶרֶב, וַיְהִי בֹקֶר,
yom ha-shi-shi.	יוֹם הַשִּׁשִׁי.
Va-ye-chu-lu	וַיְכֻלּוּ
ha-sha-ma-yim ve-ha-a-rets	הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ
ve-chol tse-va-am,	וְכָל־צְבָאָם,
va-ye-chal E-lo-him	וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים
ba-yom ha-she-vi-i	בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
me-lach-to a-sher a-sa;	מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה;
va-yish-bot ba-yom ha-she-vi-i	וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
mi-kol me-lach-to a-sher a-sa.	מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
Va-ye-va-rech E-lo-him	וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים
et yom ha-she-vi-i	אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
va-ye-ka-deish o-to,	וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ,
ki vo sha-vat mi-kol me-lach-to	כִּי בוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ
a-sher ba-ra E-lo-him la-a-sot.	אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. The heaven and the earth were finished and all their array. And on the seventh day God finished the work which God had been doing, and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work which had been done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation which had been done.

(Genesis 1:31, 2:1–3)

Blessing over the Wine

Raise the Kiddush cups filled with wine or grape juice.
(The Kiddush can be said or sung with those present either standing or sitting.)

𝄞 See page 111

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
bo-rei pe-ri ha-ga-fen.	בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

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

Sanctifying Shabbat

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav	אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
ve-ra-tsa va-nu,	וְרָצָה בָּנוּ,
ve-sha-bat kod-sho	וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשׁוֹ
be-a-ha-va u-ve-ra-tson	בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
hin-chi-la-nu, zi-ka-ron	הִנְחִילָנוּ, זִכָּרוֹן
le-ma-a-sei ve-rei-shit.	לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית.
Ki hu yom te-chi-la,	כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה
le-mik-ra-ei ko-desh,	לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ,
zei-cher li-tsi-at Mits-ra-yim.	זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.
Ki va-nu va-char-ta,	כִּי־בָנוּ בָחַרְתָּ,
ve-o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta	וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדַּשְׁתָּ
mi-kol ha-a-mim,	מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים,
ve-sha-bat kod-she-cha	וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשְׁךָ
be-a-ha-va u-ve-ra-tson	בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
hin-chal-ta-nu.	הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ:
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
me-ka-deish ha-sha-bat.	מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe who hallows us with mitzvot and favors us with the holy Shabbat, lovingly and graciously bestowed upon us, a memorial of the act of creation, first of the holy assemblies, a remembrance of the going forth from Egypt.

You have chosen us and hallowed us from among all peoples, by lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us Your holy Sabbath. We praise You, O God, who sanctifies Shabbat.

Drink the wine.

(The service continues on page 27.)

that we ought to wash our hands symbolically before our meals.

Those who wish can participate in this ceremony by going to the sink before the Motsi. Each person grasps a cup or pitcher of water and pours some water from the cup over each hand two or three times. The cup is refilled for the next person until everyone has had a chance. At that point the following blessing is said and the hands are dried.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam
a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav,
ve-tsi-va-nu al ne-ti-lat ya-da-yim.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדָיִם.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has made us holy with commandments and commanded us to cleanse our hands.

The Motsi is said as soon as everyone returns to the table.

How is salt used after the Motsi?

After the blessing is said over the challah and the bread has either been cut or broken into pieces, some Jews sprinkle salt on the bread. This is done as a way of comparing the household table to the altar in the historic Jerusalem Temple. As salt was sprinkled on the offerings in Jerusalem, salt can be used on the challah when the meal begins.

When is the word "amen" said?

The word "amen" is first found in the Torah as a response of affirmation. After hearing a series of pronouncements by the Levites (Deuteronomy 27), the Israelites indicate their endorsement of the Levites' words by responding "amen."

"Amen" is used in the same way today. It is said when a person hears someone else say a blessing and then expresses agreement with the sentiments of the blessing by responding "amen."

Motsi
Blessing over the Bread

Introduction

(You may read one of the following)

When the world was created,
God made everything a little bit incomplete.
Rather than making bread grow out of the earth,
God made wheat grow so that we might bake it into bread.
Rather than making the earth of bricks,
God made it of clay
so that we might bake the clay into bricks. Why?
So that we might become partners
in completing the work of creation.

❖

Before Rabbi Simcha recited the blessing for bread, he would first look at the bare ground. He wanted to be inspired by an appreciation of the contrast between the dust of the earth and the fine bread which it brought forth.

The Blessing

𝄞 See page 113

The leader places hands on the challah as everyone says the blessing.

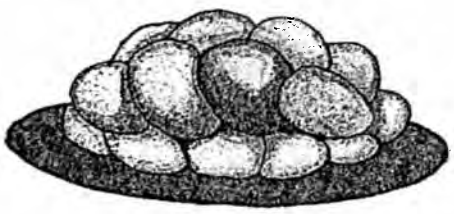
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-rets.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Slice or tear the challah and distribute it around the table to be eaten. Dinner is served.

(Birkat Hamazon, the blessing after the meal, can be found on page 34.)



Birkat Hamazon
The Blessing after the Meal

You shall eat, be satisfied, and bless Adonai your God for the good land given to you."
Deuteronomy 8:10

As we give thanks to God before the meal, it is also Jewish custom to give thanks with Birkat Hamazon after eating. The component parts of this prayer of gratitude are:

1. **PSALM 126**—An introductory psalm of hope set at the time when our biblical ancestors returned from exile in Babylonia, Psalm 126 ("A Song of Ascent") is used to introduce Birkat Hamazon only on Shabbat and holidays.
2. **ZIMUN / INVITATION** — The actual Birkat Hamazon is preceded by a responsive section in which one person acts as leader and invites those present to pray.
3. **THE BLESSING FOR FOOD**—The first paragraph of Birkat Hamazon expresses thanks to God for providing food.
4. **THE BLESSING FOR THE LAND**—This paragraph cites the biblical source for Birkat Hamazon (Deuteronomy 8:10). It also thanks God for the Land of Israel.
5. **THE BLESSING FOR JERUSALEM**—A prayer for the well-being of Jerusalem.
6. **ASKING FOR PEACE**—A short petition asking that the peace of this one Shabbat fill the whole world.
7. **MAKER OF PEACE**—The final hope that God bring peace to the world.

If you are not familiar with Hebrew you can begin by doing much of Birkat Hamazon in English. Section 7 of the prayer is probably familiar to many people in Hebrew, so you could end your Birkat Hamazon with this section in Hebrew.

You can find a more extended version of Birkat Hamazon, in which Jewish tradition has elaborated extensively on the themes of sections 4 through 7, in *A Passover Haggadah* (see "Further Reading," page 103).

1. Psalm 126

𝄞 See page 113

On Shabbat

Shir ha-ma-a-lot.	שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת.
Be-shuv A-do-nai	בְּשׁוּב יְיָ
et shi-vat Tsi-yon,	אֶת־שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן,
ha-yi-nu ke-chol-mim.	הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים.
Az yi-ma-lei se-chok pi-nu,	אָז יִמָּלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ,
u-le-sho-nei-nu ri-na.	וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה.
Az yom-ru va-goi-yim:	אָז יֹאמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם:
"Hig-dil A-do-nai la-a-sot im ei-leh."	'הִגְדִּיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם־אֵלֶּה.'
Hig-dil A-do-nai la-a-sot i-ma-nu,	הִגְדִּיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ,
ha-yi-nu se-mei-chim!	הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים!
Shu-va A-do-nai et she-vi-tei-nu	שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת־שְׁבִיתֵנוּ
ka-a-fi-kim ba-ne-gev.	כַּאֲפִיקִים בַּנֶּגֶב.
Ha-zor-im be-dim-a,	הַזֹּרְעִים בְּדִמְעָה,
be-ri-na yik-tso-ru.	בְּרִנָּה יִקְצֹרוּ.
Ha-loch yei-leich u-va-cho,	הָלוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבָכֹה,
no-sei me-shech ha-za-ra,	נֹשֵׂא מֶשֶׁךְ־הַזָּרַע,
bo ya-vo ve-ri-na,	בֹּא־יָבֹא בְרִנָּה
no-sei a-lu-mo-tav.	נֹשֵׂא אֲלֻמֹּתָיו.

When God restores the exiled of Zion, we shall be as those who dream.
Our mouths will be full of laughter then, our tongues with song.
Then will they say among the nations: "God has done great things for them."
God has done great things for us, and so we now rejoice.
Restore us once again, O God, like sudden floodstreams in the desert.
Then those who sow in tears will reap in joy.
Those who go forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, will return bearing the sheaves with song and with laughter.

2. Zimun / Invitation

(On weekdays, begin here)

Leader:
Friends, let us praise God.

Group:
Let the name of God be praised from now to eternity.

Leader:
Let us praise God of whose bounty we have partaken.

Group:
Let us praise our God of whose bounty we have partaken
and by whose goodness we live.

Leader:

𝄞 See page 114

Cha-vei-rai (Ra-bo-tai), ne-va-reich!* חַבֵּרַי (רַבּוֹתַי)*, נְבָרֵךְ!

Group:

Ye-hi sheim A-do-nai me-vo-rach
mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam!

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם!

Leader:

Ye-hi sheim A-do-nai me-vo-rach
mei-a-ta ve-ad o-lam!
Bi-re-shut cha-vei-rai,
(Bi-re-shut ma-ra-nan
*ve-ra-ba-nan ve-ra-bo-tai)**
*ne-va-reich (E-lo-hei-nu)***
she-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo.

יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם!
בִּרְשׁוּת חַבֵּרַי,
(בִּרְשׁוּת מָרָנָן
וְרַבָּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי)*
נְבָרֵךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ)**
שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ מִשֶּׁלּוֹ.

Group:

*Ba-ruch (E-lo-hei-nu)** she-a-chal-nu*
mi-she-lo u-ve-tu-vo cha-yi-nu.

בָּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ)** שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ
מִשֶּׁלּוֹ וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ.

Leader:

*Ba-ruch (E-lo-hei-nu)** she-a-chal-nu*
mi-she-lo u-ve-tu-vo cha-yi-nu.
Ba-ruch hu, u-va-ruch she-mo!

בָּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ)** שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ
מִשֶּׁלּוֹ וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ.
בָּרוּךְ הוּא, וּבָרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ!

* Chaveirai, *literally "my friends", is a gender-neutral alternative to the masculine terms traditionally used:* rabotai, *meaning "gentlemen";* maranan, *meaning "masters"; and* rabanan, *meaning "sages."*

***Added when ten or more are present at the meal.*

3. The Blessing for Food

Together:

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,	אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
ha-zan et ha-o-lam	הַזָּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם
ku-lo be-tu-vo.	כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ.
Be-chein be-che-sed u-ve-ra-cha-mim	בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים
hu no-tein le-chem	הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם
le-chol ba-sar,	לְכָל־בָּשָׂר,
ki le-o-lam chas-do.	כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ.
U-ve-tu-vo ha-ga-dol	וּבְטוּבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל
ta-mid lo cha-sar la-nu,	תָּמִיד לֹא־חָסַר לָנוּ,
ve-al yech-sar la-nu	וְאַל יֶחְסַר לָנוּ
ma-zon le-o-lam va-ed,	מָזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,
ba-a-vur she-mo ha-ga-dol.	בַּעֲבוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל.
Ki hu Eil zan u-me-far-neis la-kol	כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן וּמְפַרְנֵס לַכֹּל
u-mei-tiv la-kol	וּמֵטִיב לַכֹּל
u-mei-chin ma-zon	וּמֵכִין מָזוֹן
le-chol be-ri-yo-tav a-sher ba-ra.	לְכָל־בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, ha-zan	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַזָּן
et ha-kol.	אֶת־הַכֹּל.

Through God's kindness, mercy and compassion all existence is eternally sustained. God is forever faithful. God's surpassing goodness fills all time and space. Sustenance there is for all. None need ever lack, no being ever want for food. We praise You, O God, the One sustaining all.

4. The Blessing for the Land

Ka-ka-tuv: "ve-a-chal-ta,	כַּכָּתוּב: "וְאָכַלְתָּ
ve-sa-va-ta, u-vei-rach-ta	וְשָׂבָעְתָּ, וּבֵרַכְתָּ
et A-do-nai E-lo-he-cha	אֶת־יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ
al ha-a-rets ha-to-va	עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה
a-sher na-tan lach."	אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ."
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
al ha-a-rets ve-al ha-ma-zon.	עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְעַל־הַמָּזוֹן.

As it is written in the Torah: "You shall eat, be satisfied and bless Adonai your God for the good land given to you." We praise You, O God, for the earth and for sustenance.

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5. The Blessing for Jerusalem

U-ve-nei Ye-ru-sha-la-yim	וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם
ir ha-ko-desh	עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ
bi-me-hei-ra ve-ya-mei-nu.	בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai,	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
bo-neh ve-ra-cha-mav	בּוֹנֵה בְרַחֲמָיו
Ye-ru-sha-la-yim. A-mein.	יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן.

And build Jerusalem, O God, speedily in our day. We praise You, O God, whose compassion builds Jerusalem.

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6. Asking for Peace

On Shabbat:

Ha-ra-cha-man,	הָרַחֲמָן,
hu yan-chi-lei-nu	הוּא יַנְחִילֵנוּ
yom she-ku-lo Sha-bat	יוֹם שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת
u-me-nu-cha le-cha-yei ha-o-la-mim.	וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.

All Merciful, may we inherit a Sabbath of eternal peace.

---

7. Maker of Peace

O-seh sha-lom bi-me-ro-mav,	עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו,
hu ya-a-seh sha-lom	הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם
a-lei-nu, ve-al kol Yis-ra-eil,	עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל,
ve-i-me-ru: A-mein.	וְאִמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

May God who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, bring peace for us and all Israel.

A-do-nai oz le-a-mo yi-tein,	יְיָ עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן,
A-do-nai ye-va-reich	יְיָ יְבָרֵךְ
et a-mo va-sha-lom.	אֶת־עַמּוֹ בַשָּׁלוֹם.

May God give strength to our people. May God bless all peoples with peace.

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.

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(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.

הִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי,
אֶבְטַח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד.
כִּי עֻזִּי וְזִמְרָת יָהּ יְיָ,
וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה.

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.

וּשְׁאַבְתֶּם מַיִם בְּשָׂשׂוֹן
מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה.
לַיְיָ הַיְשׁוּעָה,
עַל־עַמְּךָ בִּרְכָתֶךָ, סֶלָה.

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.

יְיָ צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ,
מִשְׂגָּב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,
סֶלָה. יְיָ צְבָאוֹת,
אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם בֹּטֵחַ בָּךְ!
יְיָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה;
הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ
בְיוֹם־קָרְאֵנוּ.

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.

לַיְהוּדִים הָיְתָה אוֹרָה
וְשִׂמְחָה, וְשָׂשׂוֹן וִיקָר;
כֵּן תִּהְיֶה לָנוּ.
כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא,
וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא.

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.

Blessing 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.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

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.)

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, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי בְשָׂמִים.

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, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בּוֹרֵא 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.

Blessing of Separation

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.

𝄞 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, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל,
בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,
בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לָעַמִּים,
בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ,
הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.

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

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.

הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל,
חַטֹּאתֵינוּ הוּא יִמְחֹל,
זַרְעֵנוּ וְכַסְפֵּנוּ
יַרְבֶּה כַּחוֹל,
וְכַכּוֹכָבִים בַּלָּיְלָה.

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.

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𝄞 See page 120

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...

אֵלִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא,
אֵלִיָּהוּ הַתִּשְׁבִּי;
אֵלִיָּהוּ, אֵלִיָּהוּ,
אֵלִיָּהוּ הַגִּלְעָדִי.
בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ,
יָבֹא אֵלֵינוּ;
עִם מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד,
עִם מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד.
אֵלִיָּהוּ...

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

From Joel Grishaver's Learning Torah

Exercise 4.8b

TWICE-TOLD TALES

Here are two versions of the fourth commandment. What can you learn from comparing them?

Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exod. 20:8-11)

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the sabbath day. (Deut. 5:12-15)

1 Underline the portions of the text that are the same in both versions.

2 Circle the portions of the text which parallel (more or less the same words in the same place).

3 What should be left are the portions of the two versions which are different. List the differences.

4 What can be learned from comparing these two versions of the laws? (Look at the clues which follow.)

Clue # 1— לְכָה דוֹדִי /Lechah Dodi

לְכָה דוֹדִי לִקְרַאת כַּלָּה
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נְקַבְּלָה
"שָׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר" בְּדִבּוּר אֶחָד
הִשְׁמִיעָנוּ אֵל הַמְיֻחָד
יְיָ אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד
לְשֵׁם וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וְלִתְהִלָּה.

Beloved, come to meet the bride;
(Come) greet the face of Shabbat.
"*Observe*" and "*Remember*": a single command,
the one God caused us to hear;
the LORD is one and His name is one.
His are honor and glory and praise.

Clue # 2— קִדּוּשׁ לְשַׁבָּת /The Shabbat Kiddush

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Praised are You, LORD our God
Ruler of the universe
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְרָצָה בָּנוּ.
וְשַׁבָּת קָדְשׁוֹ
בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
הִנְחִילָנוּ
זִכָּרוֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית.
כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה
לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ
זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.
כִּי־בָנוּ בָחַרְתָּ
וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדַּשְׁתָּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים
וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשְׁךָ
בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Praised are You, LORD our God
Ruler of the universe
who hallows us with His mitzvot
and takes delight in us.
His holy Shabbat
in love and favor
He has made our heritage
as a reminder of the work of creation.
It is a day of celebration
a holy gathering
a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt.
It is us You have chosen
and us from among all people whom You made holy
and Your holy Shabbat
in love and favor
You gave us as an inheritance.
Praised are You, LORD our God
who makes Shabbat holy.

When *Lechah Dodi* says that God makes "Observe" and "Remember" a single commandment, what does it mean?

. How does the Shabbat Kiddush draw its two "remembrance" themes from the two sets of the Ten Commandments? What has the Kiddush learned from the two sets?

Readings on Shabbat:

Once the Torah asked, "God of the world, when the people Israel enter the Promised Land, what will become of me? Each Israelite will be busy with plowing and sowing his field, and what, then, will happen to me?" God answered the Torah, "I have a love partner which I am giving to You. It is Shabbat. When Israel ceases working, they will enter synagogues and study places and devote themselves to working with Torah."

Sefer HaAgadah 381:22

A great pianist was once asked by an ardent admirer: "How do you handle the notes as well as you do?" The artist answered: The notes I handle no better than many pianists, but the pauses between the notes- ah! that is where the art resides."

In great living, as in great music, the art may be in the pauses. Surely one of the enduring contributions which Judaism made to the art of living was the Shabbat, "the pause between the notes". And it is to the Shabbat that we must look if we are to restore to our lives the sense of serenity and sanctity which Shabbat offers in such joyous abundance.

Likrat Shabbat

I went out, God.
People were coming and going, walking and running.
Everything was rushing: cars, trucks, the street, the whole town.
People were rushing not to waste time.
They were rushing after time,
To catch up with time, to gain time.
Good-bye sir, excuse me, I haven't time.
I'll come back, I can't wait, I haven't time.
I must end this letter- I haven't time.
I can't accept, having no time.
I can't think, I can't read, I'm swamped, I haven't time.
I 'd like to pray, but I haven't time.
You understand, God, they simply haven't the time.
The child is playing, he hasn't time right now....later on...
The young married has his house, he has to fix it up.
He hasn't time...later on...
They are dying. Too late! They have no more time!
And so all people run after time, God.
They pass through life running, hurried, jostled, overburdened,
frantic, and they never get there.
They still haven't time.
In spite of all their efforts, they're still short of time.
Of a great deal of time.

God, You must have made a mistake in Your calculations.
The hours are too short, the dats are too short,
  our lives are too short.
You who are beyond time, God, You smile to see us fighting it.
And You know what You are doing...
But we must not deface time,
  waste time
  kill time,
For time is not only a gift that You give us
But a perishable gift,
A gift that does not keep.

God, I have time.
I have plenty of time,
All the time you gave me.
The years of my life,
The days of my years,
The hours of my days,
They are all mine,
Mine to fill quietly, calmly
But to fill completely to the brim.

Michael Quoist

How, above all, do we show our domination over the earth? In that we can fashion all things in our environment to our own purpose - the earth for our habitation and source of sustenance; plant and animal for food and clothing. We can transform everything into an instrument of human service. We are allowed to rule over the world for six days with God's will. On the seventh day, however, we are forbidden by divine behest to fashion anything for our purose. In this way we acknowledge that we have no rights of ownership or authority over the world. Nothing may be dealt with as we please, for everything belongs to God, the Creator, who has set human beings into the world to rule it according to the divine word. On each Shabbat day, the world, so to speak, is restored to God, and thus we proclaim, both to ourselves and to our surroundings, that we enjoy only a borrowed authority.

Adapted from Samson Raphael Hirsch

It's so stupid.
Wednesday afternoon,
soaked in the idiotica of errands
and all those "things to do"
that steal a man's minutes, his years -

I forgot the Queen.
Her Majesty was due at four-eighteen
on Friday, not a minute later,
and I was wasting hands, words, steps,
racing to a rushing finish-line
or roaring insignificance
I just as well could fill
with preparations for the royal entourage:
cleaning and cleansing each act's doing,
each word's saying,
in anticipation of he Great Event of Shabbas.

Who am I that she should wish
to spend the day with me?
I dry out my strengths, cook, move dust,
casually insensitive to all the songs
reminding me that she, the Queen,
in diamond-ruby-emerald-glow tiara,
would come to grace my table.
She comes,
no matter how the week was spent,
in joy or in silliness,
yet she comes.
And I am her host,
laying a linen flower tablecloth
that is white,
that is all the colors of the rainbow.

This is the Jews' sense of royalty;
she never does not spend one day a week
with me, and every Jew,
in the open air of freedom,
or lightening the misery of prisoners
in stinking Russian prisons
or the ghettoes of Damascus.

Come, my Shabbas Queen,
embodiment of Worlds-to-Be:
Your gracious kindness is our breath of life,
and though we once, twice, all-too-often
fail to say, "How beautiful your cape!
How lovely your hair, your Shechina-eyes!"
we will not always be so lax,
apathetic to your grace, your presence.
Touch us again this week

with your most unique love's tenderness,
and we shall sing to your our songs,
dance our dances in your honor,
and sigh for you our sighs of longing, peace, and hope.

Danny Siegel

Where has the week vanished?
Is it lost forever?
Will I ever recover anything from it?
The joy of life, unexpected victory,
the realized hope, the task accomplished?
Will I ever be able to banish the memory of pain,
the sting of defeat, the heaviness of boredom?
On this day let me keep for a while what must drift away.
On this day let me be free of the burdens that must return.
On this day, Shabbat, abide.

And now Shabbat has come,
can it help me to withdraw for a while
from the flight of time?
Can it contain the retreat of the hours and days from the
grasp of a frantic life?
When all days abandon me, Shabbat, abide.

Let me learn to pause, if only for this day.
Let me find peace on this day.
Let me enter into a quiet world this day.
On this day, Shabbat, abide.

David Polish

UNIT 1 Observing/Remembering Shabbat

שָׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר שַׁבָּת

)VERVIEW

The only holiday mentioned in the Ten Com-
andments pertains to Shabbat: "Remember
achor) the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days
ou shall labor and do all your work, but the
eventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God:
ou shall not do any work, you, your son or
aughter, your male or female servant, or your cat-
e, or the stranger who is within your settlements.
or in six days the Eternal One made heaven and
arth and sea, and all that is in them, and God
ested on the seventh day; therefore, the Eternal
)ne blessed the seventh day and hallowed it"
Exodus 20:8-11). When the Ten Commandments
re repeated in Deuteronomy 5:15, the Sabbath is
) be observed (*shamor*) as a remembrance "that
ou were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord
our God freed you from there with a mighty hand
nd an outstretched arm."

The Torah does not specify what constitutes
ork. The Rabbis, however, noted that Leviticus
9:30 states: "You shall keep My Sabbaths and
enerate My sanctuary: I am the Lord." Since Shab-
at and the sanctuary are mentioned in the same
erse, they concluded that those labors which were
equired for constructing the Tabernacle were the
ery work prohibited on the Sabbath. The *Mishnah*
numerates 39 categories of work (*muktzah*) that
re forbidden: plowing, sowing, reaping, sheaf-
naking, threshing, winnowing, selecting, sifting,
rinding, kneading, baking, sheep-shearing,
leaching, combining raw materials, dying, spinning,
eparation into threads, tying a knot, untying a
not, sewing, tearing, trapping, slaughtering, skin-
ing, tanning, scraping pelts, marking out, cutting to
nape, writing, erasing, building, demolishing, kin-
ling a fire, extinguishing a fire, the final hammer
low (of a new article), carrying from the private to
ne public domain or vice versa (*Shabbat* 7:2).

Some of these activities relate to the manufacture
nd preparation of fabrics, hides, and poles used to
uild the Tabernacle. Others relate to preparing dyes
nat were used, or to baking bread used for
acri s.

While these activities reflect the day-to-day life of
ne ancient Jewish community, Rabbis throughout history have used them as a basis for deciding whether new activities are permitted or forbidden on Shabbat. For example, it is forbidden to turn electricity on or off, since such acts are analogous to kindling or extinguishing a fire. It is permitted, however, to leave an electrical appliance running during Shabbat, or to use a timer to turn an appliance on and off, as long as the timer is set before Shabbat. It is also forbidden to drive or ride in a motor driven vehicle on Shabbat.

All of these restrictions may be lifted in order to save a human life. "The commandment of the Sabbath, like all other commandments, may be set aside if human life is in danger" (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat* 1). Saving a life takes precedence because the Torah states: "You shall keep My laws and My rules, by the pursuit of which human beings shall live" (Leviticus 18:5), i.e., shall live and not die. Even if there is doubt about whether a life will be saved, one may violate the Sabbath "for the mere possibility of danger to human life overrides the Sabbath" (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat* 1).

Many find the numerous restrictions of activities on Shabbat liberating. Rabbi Samuel Dresner has called keeping Shabbat "one of the surest means of finding peace in the war-torn realm of the soul" (*The Sabbath*, p. 14). Erich Fromm has written: "The Sabbath symbolizes a state of union between a man and nature and between man and man. By not working — that is to say, by not participating in the process of natural and social change — man is free from the chains of time" (*You Shall Be As Gods*, p. 198).

Not only is it a Mitzvah to refrain from working on Shabbat, it is a positive Mitzvah to rest on Shabbat. Some Jews take a nap on Shabbat afternoon to observe this Mitzvah.

The second positive Mitzvah pertaining to Shabbat is to proclaim the sanctity of the Sabbath, based on the phrase "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). This Mitzvah is fulfilled by reciting the Shabbat *Kiddush* on Friday evening, and by the Havdalah ceremony at the end of Shabbat. In addition, one honors Shabbat by bathing, by the way that one prepares for it by wearing one's finest clothes, and by eating the finest food one can

Kiddush Cup

Materials needed: Greenware cups (unfinished pottery that can be obtained at a ceramic shop), paints and glazes as recommended by the shop.

Procedure: Decorate the cups and return them to the ceramic shop for firing and then glazing. This *Kiddush* cup will be a long lasting ritual object for the students to use at home.

Secondary

1. Utilizing information from the Overview for this unit, synthesize the Jewish concept of an ideal Shabbat. Then ask each student to come up with his/her own personal version of an ideal Shabbat. Compare and discuss.

2. With your students listen to the song "Sabbath Prayer" from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof.* Discuss the content of the song. Does it reflect an outmoded life style or can we derive meaning from it for today? Using a melody of a contemporary song, write new lyrics to create the students' own "Sabbath Prayer."

3. The Rabbis have taught that nothing is repeated in the Torah without reason. The commandment to observe Shabbat appears twice: Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. With your students compare these two versions. Questions to consider: In the Exodus passage, the initial word is "remember" and in Deuteronomy, it is "observe." How are these words different? Which is the more important concept for Jewish survival — to remember the Sabbath or to observe it? What important event is mentioned in the Exodus passage? Is it mentioned in Deuteronomy? If not, what event is singled out? Compare these passages with the *Kiddush* for Erev Shabbat.

4. Ask students if they think they will observe Shabbat in different ways at different stages in their lives. How do they think they will observe Shabbat when they are in college? When they are married? When they have children? When they have grandchildren?

5. Have students do research in order to formulate a Shabbat celebration for the class. The excellent sources below deal with Shabbat celebrations.

References: *A Shabbat Haggadah for Celebration and Study* compiled by Michael Strassfeld; *The Art of Jewish Living: The Shabbat Seder* by Dr. Ron Wolfson; *Sabbath: The Day of Delight* by Abraham E. Millgram; *The First Jewish Catalog* by Richard Siegel, Michael Strassfeld, and Sharon Strassfeld; *The Sabbath: Time & Existence* by David Zisenwine and Karen Abramovitz.

6. Create a Shabbat table display for the class. Announce that students are to be guides for the display for non-Jewish groups. Have them write monologues which explain the history, special features, and significance of the objects to the visitors. If students desire, they can prepare similar tables for all the holidays and festivals, write scripts for each, and lead an invited church group or groups through the display.

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1. Hold an all-school Erev Shabbat dinner, service, and Oneg Shabbat. The dinner may be organized in several different ways: Each class could cook a part of the meal, the meal could be potluck, a committee of parents and students could prepare the meal, or it could be catered. The meal should include the recitation of the Shabbat blessings, *zemirot*, and the *Birkat HaMazon.* Continue the communal nature of this Shabbat by encouraging each class to participate in the worship service. They might lead a song, recite a prayer or special reading, or perform a dance or a skit with a Shabbat theme. Conclude the evening with an *Oneg Shabbat* and, if possible, Israeli dancing.

2. Hold an all-school Shabbat Quiz. Depending on the size of your school, divide into teams of eight to ten students each. A few examples of questions follow:
   a. Shabbat is our day of _____.
   b. Name three items found on the Shabbat table.
   c. Give an example of a Shabbat greeting.
   d. When was the first Shabbat celebrated?
   e. Traditionally, how many *challot* are placed on the table?
   f. Where can we find the commandment telling us to keep Shabbat?
   g. Recite the blessing for the Shabbat candles.
   h. Recite the blessing for the *challah.*

i. Recite the blessing for the wine.
j. What is the Hebrew name for the blessing over the wine?
k. What is the ceremony for the close of Shabbat called?
l. What three objects do we use during the Havdalah ceremony?

Add questions based on what your students have studied.

. At a retreat or Shabbaton, prepare a booklet about the home observance of Shabbat for members of your congregation. First, study material about Shabbat. Then divide into task forces, each of which will prepare one part of the booklet. Chapters might include: historical background, Shabbat home ritual for Friday evening, Shabbat songs, a Havdalah ceremony, resources.

. For this activity you will need a real or symbolic bridge. Gather the students (this is best done with grades K-6) on one side of the bridge, which represents the weekdays. There should be loud music blaring, people yelling, loud machines running (e.g., a vacuum cleaner, hair dryer, etc.). a[illegible]eneral chaos. In small groups dismiss students to walk across the bridge and "enter" Shabbat. There should be a sign that says "*Shabbat Shalom*," and general peace and calm on the Shabbat side of the bridge. A song leader or Cantor could be leading mellow Shabbat songs. After all the students have crossed over the bridge, discuss the difference between the two sides, and the importance of Shabbat as an escape from the clamor of the weekday world.

RESOURCES

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For the Students

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Schwartz, Amy. *Mrs. Moskowitz and the Sabbath Candlesticks*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983. (Grades K-4)

Zwerin, Raymond A., and Marcus, Audrey Friedman. *Shabbat Can Be*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1979. (Grades K-3)

Audiovisual

Abrams, Leah. *Because We Love Shabbat*. Songbook and sound recording containing original and traditional songs, stories, and activities for young children and parents. Tara Publications. (Grades K-4)

Fiddler on the Roof. Sound recording of the musical, contains the song "Sabbath Prayer." RCA Records LSO-1093. (Grades 3 and up)

The Sabbath. An 18 minute video containing four animated shorts relating to Shabbat. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. (Grades K and up)

The Legend of Chanale's Shabbat Dress. A 10 minute video about Chanale, who takes a pre-Shabbat walk and receives a miraculous reward for her kind deeds. Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. (Grades PK-6)

"Shabbat Shalom." On the album *To See the World With Jewish Eyes,* Volume I. Sound recording which includes this English song about welcoming Shabbat. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. (Grades PK-2)

THE JEWISH WAY

Living the Holidays

Rabbi Irving Greenberg

Summit Books
NEW YORK LONDON SYDNEY TORONTO TOKYO

THE HOLY DAYS are the unbroken master code of Judaism. Decipher them and you will discover the inner sanctum of this religion. Grasp them and you hold the heart of the faith in your hand.

The holy days are the quintessential Jewish religious expression because the main teachings of Judaism are incorporated in their messages. Recurrent experience of these days has sustained the Jews on their long march through history. By interpreting and reinterpreting the holidays and by applying their lessons to daily life, the Jewish people have been continuously guided along the Jewish way.

There are thousands of details and practices associated with each Jewish festival. Though customs have grown and changed over millennia, and each community and every age has added its own special flavor and detail, each holiday has one central metaphor that orchestrates myriad details into one coherent whole. By understanding a few key models one can hear and interpret the central messages of Judaism and its development over the course of history.

What makes decoding even more of an adventure is that the pattern is not fixed; it is still unfolding. Judaism itself is a pattern of meaning and direction for human history. Every time there is a major new event or a decisive turn on the road through history, new insights and patterns emerge. These are marked and inserted into the record by add-

ing a new Jewish holiday to the calendar. Thus, the sacred days are the register of Judaism in history. And just as Judaism and the Jewish people are not finished, neither is the role of the holidays. Out of the twentieth century, in response to the two momentous historical events of a new era in Jewish history, two holy days—Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Commemoration Day) and Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day)—are struggling to be born.

As in a brilliant kaleidoscope, emergent patterns often give new coherence and constellation to already existing ones. In the same way each new Jewish holiday has affected the meaning of all the others. Each holiday pattern projects its own central image and also reflects additional highlights in relation to every other holiday. As each new holiday has refocused the understanding of the existing holidays and thus has shed light on the Jewish way in general, so will Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'Atzmaut color the fundamental understanding of all of Judaism.

What, then, is the key to Judaism's cipher? Is there some fundamental, unifying principle underlying all the Jewish holidays?

The central paradigm of Jewish religion is redemption. According to the Bible, the human being is created in the image of God. According to the Rabbis this means that every single person is unique and equal, endowed with the dignity of infinite value. But in history most humans have been degraded or denied their due. Judaism affirms that this condition should never be accepted; it must and will be overcome.

The Jewish religion is founded on the divine assurance and human belief that the world *will* be perfected. Life will triumph over its enemies—war, oppression, hunger, poverty, sickness, even death. Before we are done, humanity will achieve the fullest realization of the dignity of the human being. In that messianic era, the earth will become a paradise and every human being will be recognized and treated as an image of God. In a world of justice and peace, with all material needs taken care of, humans will be free to establish a harmonious relationship with nature, with each other, with God.

Jewish tradition has dreams, not illusions. It knows that the world is not now a Garden of Eden. Redemption is a statement of hope. The Torah offers a goal worthy of human effort, to be realized over the course of history. Through the Jewish way of life and the holidays, the Torah seeks to nurture the infinite love and unending faith needed to sustain people until perfection is achieved. It becomes even more necessary to develop staying power—for beyond Judaism's incredible statement that life will totally triumph, it makes an even more remarkable claim. The final, ideal state will not be bestowed upon humans by some miraculous divine fiat. According to classic Judaism, God alone is the divine ground of life but God has chosen a partner in the perfection process. The ultimate goal will be achieved through human participation. The whole process of transformation will take place on a human scale. Human models, not supernatural beings, will instruct and inspire humankind as it works toward the final redemption. Realization of perfection will come not through escape from present reality to some idealized utopia but by improving this world, one step at a time. Universal justice will be attained by starting with the natural love and responsibility for one's family, then widening the concern to include one's people, and eventually embracing the whole world.

The perfect world can be reached only by an endless chain of human effort. The actions of any one people or any single generation are not enough. It would almost seem futile to begin the work unless others could be counted on to complete the work. According to the Bible, God set this process in motion first by covenanting with all humankind (the children of Noah) and then by singling out one people (the children of Israel). The Jews were charged with the mission of being the vanguard of humanity as it walks through history toward the messianic end goal. The Bible teaches that the Jews have pledged their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor to make this hope finally come true. By their acceptance of the Torah, the Jews promised not to settle or stop short of that goal. This is the Jewish covenant. Jews have given their word to go on living as a people in a special way so that their lives testify to something greater than themselves. With that testimony they bear witness to a final, universal redemption.

Thus, the Torah—the distinctive way of life of the Jewish people—is part of a covenant with all people. This particular people has committed to journey through history, exploring paths and modeling moments of perfection. But the testimony and example are for the sake of humanity. The Jewish witness affects all people and is affected by them. When the final messianic redemption is achieved, the Jewish testimony will be complete. All humans will live in a divine/human perfection.

The messianic dream is the great moving force of Jewish history and of the Jewish role in the world. It is the natural unfolding and universal application of the Exodus experience. The central biblical event—the overthrow of tyranny, the redemption of the Jewish slaves, and the gift of freedom and dignity—will become the experience of all humankind in the future kingdom of God. This idea has proven to be one of the most fertile and dynamic concepts of all time. The lesson that humans are entitled to a better life has unleashed a thousand liberation movements—spiritual, political, and social. By communicating its dream of redemption to others, Jewry has shaken and moved humanity. Setting in motion a subversive discontent, creating an explosive tension between the ideal and the real, Judaism has transformed the

world again and again. And in Christianity, Islam, and modern secular messianic movements, the redemptive seed cast by Judaism has borne fruit yet again.

The above claim expresses a fundamental Jewish self-understanding. By some astonishing divine grace and by the peculiar experiences of their history, a people—the Jews—have become a key vehicle for the realization of the perfect world. Their task is to enter deeply into present reality while holding fast to the vision of the end days that far surpass it. And through their lives, Jews are to lead the way to a unification that will overcome the tormenting gap between the present and the final messianic perfection.

This is not to claim that the Jews are a super race. As the record shows, the Jews are all too human. Jewish history and religious development reflect the interaction of a people and its mission—sometimes living up to the ideal, sometimes failing miserably. Often, the people are divided over the proper direction to go. Yet somehow they manage to go on. But in their flawed humanness and through their recurrent displays of limitations and greatness, Jews prove the possibilities for all finite humans to reach for infinite life and freedom. These people who often "dwell alone" point the way for all humanity.

To ensure the fulfillment of the Jewish role is a staggering pedagogical challenge. How to inspire the people with the vision of the final perfection? How to supply the strength to persevere for millennia on the road to redemption without selling out? How to prevent the extraordinary range of experiences along the path from turning the Jewish way into a set of discontinuous events experienced by unrelated communities? How to undergo the radical transformations of condition over the course of history without losing the continuity of vision essential to completing the mission? The answer to all these questions is one and the same. The key is found in the *halacha*, the Jewish Way (of life), and its primary pedagogical tools: the Jewish calendar and the Jewish holidays.

Orthodox Jews believe that the halacha and its principles and methods were revealed to Moses at Sinai. In modern times, others may dispute the claim that it all began at Sinai, but all Jews acknowledge that the process did not stop at Sinai. Halacha includes law, custom, institution; it is a strategy for getting through history. Above all, halacha is what the name literally means: the walking, or the way. Add together a set of memories and values with commandments and goals, and you have the halacha, a total life-style that sustained the Jews even as it guided them toward the final goal.

Building on biblical commandments and modes of living, the halacha took every aspect of life—food, dress, sex, names, parenting—and oriented them to affirm Jewish distinctiveness. To make it through

history intact, Jews needed to maintain themselves, so the halacha developed boundary practices and group rewards to keep them going. Special obligations were placed on Jews to care for Jews; special penalties were placed on Jews who betrayed Jews; special efforts were required to save Jews. The halacha constantly reminded the downtrodden Jews that, whatever their external circumstances, they were still royalty in God's kingdom of priests.

The crucial factor in Jewish perseverance was that, against the risks of being Jewish, the halacha also provided the rewards of being Jewish. Alongside the sense of overarching purpose, the halacha offered seasons of joy, strong bonds of family, a sense that the others cared, a system of justice and law, and the hope that sustained people even on days of despair.

Many of the halacha's messages were communicated through the distinctive Hebrew calendar that Jews live by, a lunar one. The solar New Year occurs in January; the lunar New Year generally comes in September or October. The solar day begins after midnight, the morning comes before the evening. In the Hebrew lunar calendar, evening precedes morning and the day begins with the night before. The solar calendar knows the variation of the length of days and the seasons of the sun's distance from the earth; the lunar calendar knows the rhythm of the moon's waxing and waning in a monthly cycle. Thus, dates and anniversaries and time locations reinforce the Jewish sense of otherness. Since Jews lived amid a Gentile majority, in the realm of physical space Jewish identity was "deviant." By contrast, the calendar provided a framework of Jewish time that enveloped the Jews. It was a "total institution" into which the Jew entered. In this way, personality and identity were reworked in light of Jewish memory and Jewish values. The calendar was a vehicle of Jewish solidarity. For example, on Shabbat, when non-Jews worked, Jews stayed home and went to their own institutions. When weekdays coincided with holy days, Jews withdrew from society and came together to share the Jewish past.

The Talmud contains stories of the coincidence of Jewish festivals with Roman mourning days and ways in which anti-Semites sought to exploit the contradiction in order to harm the Jews. In America, the Fourth of July falls, in one out of three years, during the three-week period when Jews mourn the darkest days of ancient loss of national independence. The effect is jarring, and it tends to lift traditional Jews out of the present. Through such juxtapositions, the Jewish calendar guides the Jews through history even as it guides each individual through life. As long as people live in the consciousness and rhythm of the Jewish calendar, they will go on living as Jews.

This does not mean that the march of time in the Jewish community

is paced by a totally different beat. Judaism's message is dialectical—Jews are distinctive yet are part of society. In this spirit, the Hebrew lunar calendar was intercalated so as not to tear loose from the seasons of the solar year. Passover was always to occur in the spring (see Exodus 13:4) and Sukkot in the fall (Exodus 34:22). Since the lunar year is only 354 days long, an unadjusted lunar calendar would wander eleven days per year—further and further away from the original seasons. (This is what happens in the Islamic lunar calendar.) Such a calendrical arrangement would have separated Jews totally from the flow of time in their host societies—except for the later Moslem culture in which their calendar would be totally congruent with local practice. Instead, by the mandated insertion of an extra month a year (in seven out of every nineteen years), the Jewish calendar was permanently synchronized with the solar one. Thus, the Hebrew calendar remained distinctive yet integrated in all the host cultures. The Jews walked on the path of their own elected mission even as they remained in step with the general society.

The Jewish year has an inner logic of its own. The joy of Passover in the spring is linked through seven weeks of counting to the ascent of Sinai on Shavuot and the climax of the Jewish covenantal commitment to live by the Torah. In late summer, the year dips to its low point as the community retells and reenacts the greatest tragedy of its early history: the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the people. Thirty days later, at the onset of the sixth month, a new cycle begins: the awakening to self-renewal and repentance—individual and national. This builds up to the thunderous climax of judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. (Because life and death hang in the balance of these days, this period is also called the Days of Awe.) Then, on the heels of the High Holy Days, comes the joyous celebration of Exodus and the harvest that is the holiday of Sukkot. Months later come the two winter holidays—Hanukkah and Purim—that celebrate deliverances along the historic Jewish way.

So the calendar constantly shapes and deepens group memory. Individual Jews might have absorbed, through cultural osmosis, contemporary values, role models, and heroes from the street, but from the calendar and the holy days, Jewish values and ideal types enter the bloodstream. In an annual cycle, every Jew lives through all of Jewish history and makes it his or her personal experience.

Through the power of the calendar and the community, each individual life is linked to a cause that transcends it. Each action is given cosmic significance. Redemption is steeped in little acts that finally add up to a new heaven and a new earth. Judaism plucks eternity in a flower (or a palm branch) and holds infinity in a grain of sand (or a pinch of maror). Even the passion of a young man for his beloved,

unleashed by the arrival of spring, became a paradigm of divine-human love (Song of Songs—Passover). Not only the heroic love and self-sacrifice of a widow but also the petty self-interest of the anonymous cousin who could not see beyond momentary advantage and refused to marry the future mother-ancestor of the Messiah (Book of Ruth—Shavuot), and even the world-weariness of a cynical old man whose experience pointed out the limitations of materialism (Kohelet —Sukkot) were woven by human effort and divine plan into the warp and woof of the tapestry of final perfection.

Thus, the experiences garnered from the sacred days made every day a special day. That sense of being special sustained the Jews and gave them the strength to carry the burden of the covenantal way.

CHAPTER ONE

The Holidays as the Jewish Way

THE JEWISH RELIGION affirms the life that is the here and now. At the same time, Jewish tradition insists that the final goal of paradise regained is equally worthy of our loyalty and effort. Judaism is the Jewish way to get humanity from the world as it is now to the world of final perfection. To get from here to there, you need both the goal and a process to keep you going over the long haul of history. In Judaism, the holidays supply both.

In the face of widespread evil and suffering, the holy days teach the central idea of redemption. They keep the idea real by restaging the great events of Jewish history that validate the hope. In their variety, the holidays incorporate rich living experiences that sustain the human capacity to hold steadfast on course. Sacred days give sustenance to spiritual life and a dimension of depth to physical life. The holy days provide a record of the struggle to be faithful to the covenant. While chronicling the history, they distill the lessons learned along the way. And because they are popular, the holidays make the dream and the process of realization the possession of the entire people.

THE HOLIDAYS OF THE VISION

The Exodus is the core event of Jewish history and religion. The central moment of Jewish religious history is *yetziat mitzrayim*, exodus

from Egypt. In this event, a group of Hebrew slaves were liberated. The initiative for freedom had to come from God, for the slaves were so subjugated that they accepted even the fate of genocide. Moses, called by God, came to Pharaoh with a request that the slaves be given a temporary release to go and worship in the desert. Then, step by step, the power of Pharaoh was broken; step by step, the temporary release escalated into a demand for freedom. Thus, the Torah makes its point that the entry of God into history is also a revelation of human dignity and right to freedom and foreshadows the end of absolute human power with all its abuses.

The Exodus inaugurated the biblical era of the Jewish people's history. In Judaism's teaching, the Exodus is not a one-time event but a norm by which all of life should be judged and guided. The Exodus is an "orienting event"—an event that sets in motion and guides the Jewish way (and, ultimately, humanity's way) toward the Promised Land—an earth set free and perfected. And as they walk through local cultures and historical epochs, people can gauge whether they have lost the way to freedom by charting their behavior along the path against the Exodus norms. An analogy: A rocket fired into space navigates by a star such as Canopus; it even makes a mid-course correction by measuring its relationship to the celestial marker. So does the Exodus serve as the orienting point for the human voyage through time and for mid-course corrections on the trajectory toward final redemption.

The Exodus is brought into life and incorporated into personal and national values through the classic Jewish behavior model—reenactment of the event. The basic rhythm of the year is set through the reenactment of the Exodus (Passover), followed by the covenant acceptance (Shavuot), and then by restaging of the exodus *way* (Sukkot). For the Israelite living in biblical times, the holidays were concentrated in two months: the first month, Aviv, in later times renamed Nissan, which incorporated the seven days of Passover; and the seventh month, Eytanim, in later times renamed Tishrei, with one day of Rosh Hashanah, one day of Yom Kippur, seven days of Sukkot, and an eighth day of closure (Shemini Atzeret). Both months were dominated by the Exodus holidays. The only other annual holiday was Shavuot, which occurred on one day in the third month.

Passover, marking the liberation, and Sukkot, commemorating the journey, are the alpine events in the Hebrew calendar. Shavuot is the link between the two major Exodus commemorations, marking the transformation of Exodus from a one-time event into an ongoing commitment.

Forty-nine days after the Exodus, the people of Israel stood before Sinai. There, in the desert, on the fiftieth day, the Israelites accepted a covenant with God. Shavuot marks the second great historical experi-

ence of the Jews as a people—the experience of revelation. Shavuot is the closure of the Passover holiday. On this day the constitution of the newly liberated people, the Torah, was promulgated.

In the land of Israel, both holidays had strong agricultural foundations—Passover linked to the spring and Shavuot to the summer. From Passover to Shavuot, the holiday of freedom leads to the historical conclusion of liberation—the establishment of the covenant at Sinai. From Passover to Shavuot, sowing the seed in the spring culminates in the summer harvest.

Each year on Shavuot, the Jewish people reenact the heart-stopping, recklessly loving moment when they committed themselves to an open-ended, covenantal mission. Through song and story, Torah study and Torah reading, the congregation of Israel is transported to Sinai and stands together again under the mountain of the Lord.

The third core holiday, Sukkot, celebrates the redemption way itself. Sukkot reconstructs the wilderness trek, the long journey to the Promised Land. The festival explores the psychology of wandering, the interplay of mobility and rootedness, and the challenge of walking the way. By reliving the Exodus in a distinctive way (focusing on the process rather than the event), Sukkot ensures that encounter with the Exodus will bracket the Jewish year. Thus, the three core holidays combine to communicate powerfully the origins and vision of the Jewish religion. If, as the prophet said, in the absence of vision a people perishes, then the halacha can truly affirm that in the constant presence of vision, a people lives on eternally.

How can the great redemption events be brought so powerfully into the present? Part of the answer lies in the brilliant pedagogy and rich variety of observances in each holiday. The primary thrust of the holidays is to make the event so vivid and so present that all of current life and the direction of the future will be set by its guidelines. Telling the story and living through these events, liturgically recreated, Jews experience them as *happenings in their own lives*. The Exodus is tasted (matzah, maror, festive seder, Paschal lamb), narrated (haggadah), and celebrated (Psalms 114–18). On Shavuot, the covenant is proclaimed (reading the Book of Exodus, Ten Commandments/Sinai portion), studied (all night), accepted (symbolically), and explored. On Sukkot, the Exodus way is walked, its huts erected (Sukkah), its bounty shared (with the poor), and its exhilaration danced (the Rejoicing of the Water Drawing). Through repetition, the Exodus became so real that the Israelites remained faithful to its message in the face of an indifferent world—even in the face of oppression or defeat.

Beyond this answer there is a deeper Jewish teaching as well. The past is not over; by tapping into the deeper layers of time, the Jew brings the past revelation event into life now. The Sh'ma prayer states:

"And these words which I command you today shall be on your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6). Say the Rabbis: They are commanded *today* —every day.* In a mystical sense, under the surface of normal time there courses a parallel stream of sacred time. In it, the Sinai revelation and other great events are carried in tandem with present existence. This is the meaning of the rabbinic dictum: "Every day a voice goes out from Horeb (Sinai)."† Ritual calls up that voice into the life of the present-day believer. Energized by that voice, Jews persist on the road to redemption.

A people does not live by vision alone. After communicating the goal, the Torah turns to the next key challenge: how to develop the incredible human capacities needed to carry the burden of the mission. Judaism places this nurturing of human capability at the center of its religious life. Experiencing the event through reenactment gives one the strength to assume the burden of being both witness and trailblazer and enables one to wrestle with the unrelenting, ratcheting pulls of dream and reality without releasing either.

By summoning the future into the present reality, Judaism cultivates the fundamental quality of hope in humans. In certain liturgical moments, the believer encounters the future and draws its strength into life today. The entire Shabbat experience anticipates the future messianic redemption and gives human beings a foretaste of the kingdom. One can view this layering of time in which past, present, and future coexist from the perspective of God before whom there is no passage of time but only eternity. Or one can view this conception from the perspective of human psychology. Other animals have only the present and the past remembered through instinct or conditioning. Such experiences program the animal and shape its response to stimuli in the present. Uniquely, the human being can anticipate the future redemption and bring it closer. Thus, an event that has not yet occurred can have a profound impact on the present, an impact strong enough to overcome even powerful past conditioning. Beaten, tormented, and totally ground down, human beings, inspired by the future, have arisen and reversed all the conditioning of despair. The human is a future-oriented creature to whom hope is life-giving.

The focus on developing human capacity is particularly exemplified in the Sabbath and Days of Awe, the primary holy days that nurture personal life along the way. The Shabbat, on a weekly basis, and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, annually, are the key periods of individual and family renewal. These holidays accomplish their goals primarily

*Sifre on Deuteronomy 6:6.
†R. Travers Herford, editor, *Ethics of the Fathers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962) pages 150–51, chapter 6, Mishnah 2.

by lifting the individual out of the routine that controls and, too often, deadens daily life.

The central metaphor which shapes the pattern of Shabbat observance is that of creating a "messianic reality" for a day. In the course of that day, one enters into a preenactment of the world's final state of perfection. The core paradigm of Rosh Hashanah–Yom Kippur is that of being on trial for one's life. In the course of that trial one moves from life through death to renewed life.

Shabbat offers total release from work and daily routine; it brings the family together in relaxed intimacy and mutual support. Although the greatest event of redemption anticipated by Judaism—the universal messianic redemption—has not yet occurred, on Shabbat the future event is made manifest through imagination, liturgy, and ritual. For more than twenty-four hours community space is transformed into the messianic realm. The vivid glimpse of perfection combines with the delights and peace of the day to restore the soul. The Shabbat experience gives the strength to go on for another week . . . and another.

The dialectical interplays of ideal and reality that run through the Sabbath day are matched by the striking juxtapositions of death and life, of guilt and forgiveness, in the Rosh Hashanah–Yom Kippur period. Shaking people out of their routines, shattering the crusts of arrogance and complacency, these days of awe lead to fundamental self-renewal. Those who have encountered their own death have a different perspective on life's choices. Moved, the individual removes the detritus of evil deeds and guilt; afterward, a reborn person walks the Jewish way.

The first five holidays—Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Shabbat, and Days of Awe—present a stationary model of Judaism, coherent, revealed, structured. Equipped with these biblical paradigm holidays, the Jewish people set out on their journey through history.

THE HOLIDAYS ON THE WAY

Judaism is intrinsically open to history. It looks forward to a future event—the messianic redemption—that will dwarf the importance of the Exodus. By wagering its truth on the claim that the real world will be transformed, Judaism opens itself to further historical events that can challenge or confirm its message. And whenever an event has truly challenged or confirmed the covenantal way, that event has become another "orienting event" for Judaism. The orienting events have become the nuclei of new holidays.

History is full of the unexpected. Through changing societies, locations, circumstances, and through countless cultures, the people of

Israel wended their way. Wherever they stopped, they took root. In each host country, within each population, they participated, yet remained distinct—their eyes set upon the final goal. At times, Jewish life flourished; at others, it flickered close to extinction. Sometimes the people gloried in their role; sometimes they stumbled like an ignorant army on a darkling plain. There were times when the Jews turned chosenness into self-seeking complacency, and slept away a kingdom. There were times when the people were surprised and even unprepared for what happened to them. How does one deal with experiences that do not fit—nay, challenge—one's categories of meaning? The agony of working them through is part of the record of Jewish spiritual heroism. Each culture, each major crisis of victory or tragedy, of loyalty or betrayal, became part of a record that guided the next and future generations. Those hard-won understandings are codified in the later holidays that were added to the first five.

Around the fifth century B.C.E., as told in the Book of Esther, a decreed genocide of the Jews of the Persian empire was narrowly averted by the heroic actions of an unlikely pair—a queen hitherto known for her shyness and beauty (rather than for her initiative) and a hanger-on in the king's courtyard, a man of controversial reputation. The incident brought the Jews face-to-face with the absurdity and randomness that (contrary to the idealized moral universe of much of Jewish theology) determined life or death in the Persian empire. The highly integrated Jewish community suddenly was confronted with the vulnerability of Diaspora existence. The pattern of meaning that emerged was eventually spelled out in the holiday of Purim, a holiday that tickled the risibility of the masses who created it but baffled the scholars and theologians. In time, Purim was absorbed into the cycle of the year and proved to be a turning point in Jewish understanding of life in the Exile and of God's actions in history.

In the second century B.C.E., a civil war in the house of Israel almost tilted the balance of Jewish history into assimilation and disappearance. A great power intervened and ended up invading the sacred precincts of Israel. The Jewish revolt that followed barely triumphed—or, rather, partially triumphed—only long enough to save the religious way. The event was incorporated into the calendar as Hanukkah, the festival of lights. Hanukkah is actually a case study of three Jewish strategies in response to a dynamic external culture: separation, acculturation, and assimilation. Each of the groups that pursued these policies alone proved inadequate to take charge of Jewish destiny. The shifting alliances and interactive development among the three groups led to the defeat of the assimilators. The coalition that saved Judaism did not last long enough to forge the course of its future

development. The victorious ruling group received relatively short shrift in later rabbinic Jewish sources. Yet, by saving Judaism, the Maccabees enabled the rabbinic tradition to emerge triumphant. The effect on world history was even greater, for Christianity also grew out of those groups saved by the Maccabean victory.

As the holiday cycle expanded, tragedies, in particular, proved to be central to the maturation of Judaism, beginning with the destruction of the First Holy Temple, the principal sanctuary of God, by a Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. The surviving Jews had to face the question of whether the covenant was invalidated by this defeat of unparalleled proportions. They found consolation and a sense of Divine Presence in Babylonia by studying the Scriptures and the story of the Exodus. They intensified prayer. They expressed in words what heretofore had been manifest primarily in sacrifice. They learned to feel the presence of the Lord in subtler, more hidden forms. People placed greater stress on studying the Torah. Personal participation in religious activity was stepped up. After the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century C.E., these tendencies blossomed. After that catastrophe, following past models, the event and its lessons were incorporated into the calendar of holy days in the form of four permanent fast days. The chief fast day of the four was Tisha B'Av, the anniversary date of the great destructions.

Tisha B'Av taught Jews how to deal with tragedy and catastrophe, how to give way to sorrow while yet incorporating it into the round of holy days, thereby purging grief and emphasizing renewal. The four fast days served as spiritual buffers, absorbing repeated tragedy and diverting the shock waves of defeat so they would not crush the inner resources of the people. Strengthened by these days and by rabbinic theological interpretation, the surviving Jews did not yield to despair or to political *force majeure*. Rather, they grew more religiously faithful than before. They became more participatory and more able to discern God's presence in every aspect of life, including the divine sharing of the state of Exile.

Nor did the process of growth stop in the first century. The twentieth century is one of the great generations of revelation and transformation in Jewish history. Two historical events of extraordinary magnitude have occurred in this century: the Holocaust, which is as great a crisis for Judaism as was the destruction of the Temple, and the recreation of the State of Israel, which can only be compared to the Exodus.

It is easy to look back thousands of years, with reenactment and liturgical patterns of the Bible and Talmud in hand, and see the overarching vision of Judaism. It is more difficult in the midst of crisis and rebirth to predict what will emerge. Many faithful Jews have tried to go on without confronting these events. Some great spiritual leaders have opposed incorporating their observances out of fear that they will dominate the religion and distort its message. In particular, many have argued that by entering the Holocaust into the Jewish sacred calendar the Jewish people will fixate on death and thereby defeat the message of redemption.

Yet the events of Holocaust and Israel reborn are too massive and too challenging for us to go on as if nothing has happened. Jewish faith and loyalty are deep enough to cope with these events. "Leave it to the people, Israel—if they themselves are not prophets, then they are the children of prophets."* The people—without asking permission from theologians and halachists—already have begun to respond.

One guesses that the covenant and the Jewish people's role in it—as well as the understanding of holiness and secularity—will be renewed before all is done. The Jewish people will be preceded, in the next stage of their journey, by the cloud of smoke and pillar of fire that are the Holocaust and Israel. Therefore, though it may not complete the work, this generation is not exempt from taking up the task of interpreting their lessons for the covenantal way. This will inevitably lead to adding new holy days to the calendar.

One final feature of the Jewish holidays needs highlighting: These celebrations are oriented toward human needs. The operating assumptions of each special day incorporate a fundamental affirmation of the dignity of humans. Although flawed and fallible, every human being is nevertheless precious to God and central to the divine plan. In the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel: God is in search of man. Some religions seek to escape from our all-too-mortal daily round of life to the eternal presence of God. Judaism, conversely, seeks to draw the Divine into the world. In a thousand little details of the holidays, the presence of the Divine is made manifest.

The very human texture of Judaism is evident in the way holy days focus on family and the simple delights of shared pleasure. Coming back home to be together for special days; advance shopping and cooking with each person's favorite foods in mind; talking or singing together at the table—all contribute to the ambience of holy days. Festival meals are occasions for collective nostalgia, for exchanging family news and community doings, for catching up with one another, for welcoming guests. This is how Jews bring a perfect world closer.

Just as the holidays provide the community with spiritual suste-

*Babylonian Talmud, Tosefta Pesachim, chapter 4, Mishnah 11.

nance, so their dialectical nature expands the individual soul. The burden of redemption is so heavy that it threatens to undermine the ability to get through the demands of daily life; then comes the Shabbat as a corrective, a day of release and family time. The acceptance of gradualism and of everyday reality is so powerful in Jewish tradition that the culture could easily raise a conformist, materialistic, don't-rock-the-boat generation. The countervailing force is the Sabbath, with its foretaste of redemption. The Shabbat atmosphere creates a counter reality; it generates a human appetite for *paradise now* so the individual will not settle for less.

When complacency and self-congratulation threaten, the holiday cycle responds with the radical self-criticism and guilt of Yom Kippur. When depression looms, it is opposed with the balm of hope on Passover. The chastening experience of Rosh Hashanah, with its vision of cosmic Lord and universal judgment, corrects hubris and excessive self-sufficiency. The halacha punctures pompousness with the satire and playfulness of Purim. The ritual drunkenness of Purim challenges repression. Yet the tradition also prevents drunkards by inculcating moderation in drink in the kiddush and Havdalah of the Sabbath and festivals. Just when the individual is overwhelmed by the sense of being puny, a mere sport for great historical forces, the tradition tells the tale of Hanukkah, the triumph of few over many, the story of the handful of loyalists who defied a world empire and won. Yet, when unbridled messianism takes over, the cycle retorts with Tisha B'Av, the story of revolutionaries who overreached and brought catastrophe down on the nation. To those who would like to forget, it offers reenactment of the tragedy. To those who can never forget it offers the High Holy Days' forgiveness of sins and renewal of the past.

In short, the holy days nurture extraordinary dialectical capacities in the individual and the community. Trust in God, but help yourself; demand justice, but take it one step at a time; save the world, but start with your own family; bleed for humanity, but be sure to preserve your own group because "all of Israel are responsible one for the other."*

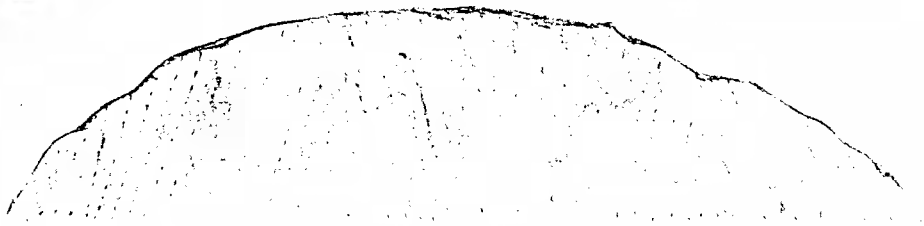
The vision of messianic perfection generated the need for a community that combined faith with action, hope with realism, universalism with particularism so that it could work persistently toward the final goal. No other people has faced so unrelenting a pattern of hostility and destruction while continuing to preach the ultimate triumph of life. Some argue that anti-Semitism and persecution have kept the Jews Jewish, but that claim grossly simplifies Jewish history. A people

*Babylonian Talmud, Shavuot 39A.

continuously defined by its enemies would end up internalizing the hatred and committing mass suicide. And no people could carry the burden of a mission to bring perfection without being eaten up by the strain and guilt of the task. Without the holidays, the Jews would never have lasted. "Were not your Torah my delight, I would have perished in my oppression" (Psalms 119:2).

Living the Jewish way means dreaming a dream of total perfection so vivid that you can almost touch it, while affirming and working with what *is* in order to make the dream come true. The life-style designed to teach the hope and pass it on—the specific acts and images needed to nurture the people who must live out this challenging way—is what this book on the Jewish holidays is all about.

From Strassfeld's, The Jewish Holidays



be noted that, in extremis, any matzah can be used for the afikomen, not just the one set aside at *yahatz.*)

The prescribed ritual at the beginning of the seder seems similar to that of any Shabbat or festival eve, and yet there are differences. We begin with kiddush, but then we wash without a blessing. And instead of following the washing by the eating of bread, which would be customary, we dip vegetables and break bread without eating it. Next, we invite the hungry to join us, but instead of eating, we remove the seder plate that is the symbol of the seder meal. All these curious doings are a prelude to the Mah Nishtanah—the Four Questions. Rabbi Akiva at this point used to hand out treats to the children both to retain their interest and to make them wonder why they were getting dessert before the meal.

V. *Maggid.* This is the heart of the Haggadah—the story of the Exodus. The main structure is as follows:

A. *Ha lahma anya*—"This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in Egypt." This paragraph—which is in Aramaic, the spoken language of the Jews in the early centuries of the Common Era—invites all who are hungry to join with us and ends with a hope that next year we will be free and in the land of Israel. It should be noted that the seder begins and ends with a hope for the return to Israel and Jerusalem. Confidence in that redemption helps us to celebrate the seder despite the reality we acknowledge when we say, "This year we are slaves, next year we will be free." Despite our present condition, we still celebrate the redemption of the Exodus as a foreshadowing of the redemption to come.

B. *Mah Nishtanah*—The Four Questions. This famous section is usually recited by the youngest child, though in fact anyone can ask "Why is this night different?" As mentioned, much of the previous ritual is to provoke children to ask questions, and the Talmud states that any question fulfills the purpose and makes Mah Nishtanah unnecessary.

The most challenging and exciting method I know for concealing the afikomen was employed by the leader of a seder I attended as a boy. Every year he would insert the half-matzah into the lining of the pillow on which he reclined. Everyone knew where it was; the problem was how to get it. The various children around the table would compete, often in collusion with another child or two, to sneak up and steal the afikomen when the leader was distracted. Often one would be caught in the act and forced to back down. But one would try, try again!

E.GR.

Ha lahma anya—"Let all who are hungry come and eat; let all who are in need come share our Passover." Its recital in the common language of the day was to ensure that even those less well educated be able to understand its intent: that none be excluded from the celebrative feast.

And today? In our trim and economically segregated suburban neighborhoods, *Ha lahma anya,* even if recited in English with the door wide open, is unlikely to be heard by the poor, for they live elsewhere. In cities, who opens doors so unguardedly? Besides, even if we could contact the poor in our immediate areas, what about the desperately poor in many parts of the world, at least some portion of whose poverty is the result of policies pursued by our own government, our own corporations, and other agencies that we support and from which we benefit?

Yet if we fail, in truth, to open our doors at *Ha lahma anya,* if we permit the poor to remain unfed, how can we expect Elijah to enter when we open our doors for his messianic coming?

Along with the traditional pre-Pesah custom of *ma'ot hittim,* I have added the sending of contributions to Oxfam and Food First, two organizations whose integrity, programs, and perspicacity I trust. Perhaps in this way our symbolic opening of the door for *Ha lahma anya* has somewhat more reality to it, and Elijah may feel slightly more inclined to enter when later we open our door to him.

Addresses: Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, Mass. 02116

Food First Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1885 Mission Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94103

E.GE.

Without in any way detracting from the concrete image of Jewish redemption in the land of Israel, we may still view Zion and Jerusalem as more abstract symbols of our personal and national fulfillment—just as Egypt symbolizes not only the place of our physical oppression but also the state of our enslavement by many different things. "Next year in Jerusalem" looks forward to a future of greater freedom just as leaving Egypt does.

E.GR.

Ask yourself: What are your four questions? Your four questions about Judaism? If I want to *know* something this night, what is it I really want to know? Why is it *different?* Life, I mean; why is it different from what I expected?

Z.S.

And even the wisest were not so wise as to stand aloof from the hope for imminent redemption and therefore were cruelly disappointed when the Bar Kochba rebellion was crushed. The question of whether Passover would be observed after the Messiah's coming ("all the days of your life . . . *all* the days includes the messianic era") was a real one for them; the pain that fueled such expectation was all too real as well. And the problem is to share their perfect faith in redemption, keeping the hope alive, without succumbing to false messiahs. Better to tell of the exodus from Egypt, all the way till the morning shema.

A.E.

Incidentally, the meal originally preceded the maggid section, which is why there are questions about matzah and maror although in our seders the child has not yet tasted them. It is customary to fill the second cup of wine and to remove the seder plate before Mah Nishtanah is recited—again to encourage questions.

C. *Avadim hayinu*—"We were slaves to Pharaoh. . . ." The Four Questions are never answered directly in the Haggadah. This paragraph begins the indirect answer by telling the story of the Exodus. It sets forth two essential themes of the Haggadah:
   1. We, not just our ancestors, were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and if God had not redeemed us, we and our descendants would still be enslaved to Pharaoh.
   2. No matter how learned we are, it is still incumbent upon us to tell the story of the Exodus. Whoever expands upon the telling is considered praiseworthy. *Avadim hayinu* points to the fact that the Egyptian experience is our own as well and therefore the story must be retold and expanded upon, since we are still struggling to be free. Each year we try to expand the frontiers of our freedom a little farther, since we understand that if we simply recite the story as a tale told about others, we can easily slip into being enslaved to the "pharaohs" of our own creation.

      Avadim hayinu is followed by a paragraph telling of five talmudic scholars who stayed up all night discussing the Exodus, thus giving us an example of how even the wisest expanded upon the tale.

D. *Arba banim*—the Four Children. The rabbis use four biblical references to children asking or being told about the Exodus to construct this exposition of four types of children. Much commentary has been written on this section discussing such issues as the difference between the wise and wicked child, whether the simple child is stupid or innocent, etc. An underlying motif of this section is that each child is different and should be told the story on the level of his or her own understanding.

E. *Mi-tehilah ovdei*—"In the beginning our ancestors worshiped idols." In the Talmud it states that the Haggadah should "begin with degradation and end with praise." There is disagreement over what is "degradation." One opinion is that we were slaves, hence *Avadim hayinu.* The other is that we were idol-worshipers, hence this paragraph.

F. *Barukh shomeir*—two paragraphs stating that God has kept His promise and redeemed us in Egypt and will redeem us from the foes that arise against us in every age.

G. *Arami oveid avi*—"My father was a wandering Aramean." These verses from Deuteronomy (26:5–8), the core of the telling of the story, were recited by Jews bringing their first fruits to the temple in Jerusalem and therefore were familiar to everyone. In the Haggadah each verse is recited and then interpretations of individual phrases are offered.

   This part of the Haggadah requires the most preparation by the seder leader(s). The midrashic style of commentary can be foreign to

people unfamiliar with it, and the interpretations may add little to their understanding of the verses. This section can be handled in a number of ways as outlined below in "Kavvanot." You may also want to playact or begin a discussion on an important Passover theme instead of focusing on the text. Some modern Haggadot have changed the text in this section, and you may find a revised text that appeals to you.

This section ends with a recitation of the ten plagues. It is customary to remove a drop of wine from your cup at the mention of each plague. This is to show that we are cognizant of the humanity of our enemies and rejoice over their downfall with less than a full heart.

H. "Dayyeinu"—a song that recounts all the great deeds God performed for the Israelites. Each line ends with the refrain *dayyeinu*—"It would have been enough."

I. *Rabban Gamliel hayah omeir*—*"Rabban Gamliel would say . . ."* Gamliel requires an explanation of the central symbols of the seder—the Passover sacrifice, matzah, and maror. There is a custom of pointing to the matzah and maror as we refer to them. We do not point to the shank bone to show it is only a symbol of the Passover sacrifice.

J. *Be-khol dor ve-dor*—"In each generation, every individual should feel personally redeemed. . . ." This paragraph is the clearest statement that *we* were redeemed from Egypt, not just our ancestors. Thus the Haggadah stresses the mythical notion that we, living today, are slaves and *are* redeemed. This Passover myth continues to live in our lives since all of us in different ways are still enslaved and still striving to be free. *Le-fikhakh*—"Therefore, since God redeemed us, we must glorify the Holy One and sing praise before Him." Following this paragraph are two sections of the hallel service. The second section speaks of the Exodus, which is why it was placed here, while the rest of hallel is recited after the meal.

L. The concluding blessing of the maggid section praises God for being our redeemer and speaks of our hope for future redemption. The maggid section concludes with the second cup of wine, over which we recite the blessing and which we drink while reclining.

VI. *Rohtzah.* We ritually wash our hands and recite the blessing *al netilat ya-dayim.*

VII & VIII. *Motzi, Matzah.* We take the three matzot and recite two blessings—the regular blessing for bread and a special one for matzah. We eat from the top and middle matzot while reclining.

IX. *Maror.* We take the bitter herbs, dip them in haroset, and recite the blessing for maror. We do not recline while eating.

X. *Koreikh.* We use the bottom matzah to make a sandwich with maror. By way of explanation, we recite a paragraph describing temple practice; then we eat the sandwich while reclining. The sage Hillel believed that matzah and maror (and the Passover sacrifice) were eaten together in temple times. Our

The wicked child, like the others, quotes the exact words of Torah—and that is precisely the point. For in order to twist the words to his purpose, he utters them in a tone of voice and gives them a meaning far different from those intended, thereby standing above the text, detached from it. He has distanced himself by his irony. Therefore, says the Haggadah, the child denies a cardinal principle of Jewish faith, and the very essence of Pesah: that God acts in history to redeem us.

Had such a person been present in Egypt, he would never have stopped to smear blood on the lintel; at Sinai he would probably have overslept on the morning of Revelation; today he puts redemption far off by his failure to say the word *we.*

How different is the simple person who, though he cannot follow most of what goes on, still gets the essential point. Like the Hasid of Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, who knew only that "our fathers and mothers were in captivity in the land of the Gypsies, and we have a God, and He led them out, and into freedom. And see: Now we are again in captivity and I know, and I tell you, that God will lead us to freedom, too."

A.E.

From Zion's Leader's Guide ...

Chapter 7
Storytelling — Maggid

Role-Playing at the Seder:
Experiencing the Exodus

by Aliza Arzt *(adapted by Noam Zion)*

"In every generation all are obligated to see themselves as if they went out of Egypt"
— The Haggadah.

The goal of the seder is to reexperience personally the pain of slavery and the exhilaration of liberation. Role-playing is a wonderful tool to achieve this goal. Without any specialized dramatic skills and with little knowledge it is still easy to involve the participants in a simple role-play. A role-play — unlike a play — involves no costumes or set script. One needs to improvise orally while sitting in one's seat at the table. A prop can be made at home to concretize the role being performed.

The following pages should be mailed to each participant in the seder well before the seder itself. Children as young as six should be included. Everyone should be given ample time to prepare before the seder. It is best to consult with the leader on the choice of parts. (This activity may replace the Rabbinic midrash "*Arami Oved Avi*" in the Haggadah — see page 78.)

Directions for Preparations:

1. *Choose a* ***category*** *based upon who you are (child, adolescent, Jewish man or woman, senior, non-Jew, Jewish leader).*
2. *Read the description of who you are and what your life is like during the time when you are a slave in Egypt. (The printed descriptions are merely suggestive. Feel free to use your imagination. If you wish, read Exodus 1-2; 5-14, or other resource books.)*
3. *Choose one of the following* ***scenes: A. Living as a Slave****, or* ***B. Leaving Egypt****; and answer the questions for that scene (you don't have to write down the answers, just know what you would say to answer them).*
4. *Choose at least one of the* ***project*** *ideas and bring the completed project to the seder to use as a prop in the role-play:*
   - *Make a banner that you would carry leaving Egypt.*
   - *Write a letter to an Egyptian friend your age, one you had made while you were a slave.*
   - *Draw a picture of one of your experiences during this story.*
   - *Make a scroll that you would bury in Egypt or at the Red Sea with some kind of record (writing or drawing) of what happened to you, for someone to find in the future.*
   - *Make a simple mask expressing your feelings (sad, happy, angry, scared) about a particular event in the story.*
   - *Bring an object that might have been a memento from Egypt.*

At the Seder:

The "narrator" will tell the story, scene by scene. At the beginning of each scene, the narrator will ask those in this scene to introduce themselves: "Who are you?" The person then reads or summarizes the description of who he or she is.

Next, the narrator will ask you to tell "What happened?" Answer according to the questions you prepared.

Finally, the narrator will ask: "What have you brought to show us?" You show everyone your project and explain what it is.

The Narrator's Part

The narrator must read all the roles in advance and review the questions to be asked. The narrator must be able to read slowly and clearly and to improvise as the interviews are conducted. (Don't let anyone go on too long.)

Aliza Arzt is a member of Havurat Shalom, Boston.

Scene A: Living as a Slave in Egypt

Jacob went down to Egypt with 70 descendants. As the years passed, we, his children, grew to be a great multitude and the Egyptians, fearing us, enslaved us. Pharaoh and the taskmasters worked us hard, and when this did not diminish us, he commanded that every baby boy be thrown in the Nile.

Who would like to be interviewed about their slavery time in Egypt? *(People who prepared for this section.)*

Who are you? *(a Jewish man, child, etc.)*

What happened to you? *(Probe according to the role of each character, encouraging improvisation based on Scene "A" — see pages 42-43.)*

What have you brought to remind us of your time in Egypt? *(They answer by showing and telling about their "project.")*

Scene B: Leaving Egypt

Moses and Aaron were sent to rescue our people. At first, even we did not listen to them because we were so weary from our labors. Then they brought wondrous things — 10 plagues. Before the 10th plague, we were commanded to kill, roast and eat a lamb and smear the blood on our doorposts. We were set free, but the Egyptians would not let us go unharmed and they came after us with soldiers and chariots. God provided yet another miracle and the Red (Reed) Sea split open for us.

Who would like to be interviewed about the Exodus? *(People who prepared for this section.)*

Who are you? *(a Jewish man, child, etc.)*

What happened to you? (*Ask the questions for the appropriate role for scene "B" — see pages 42-43.)*

What have you brought to remind us of your Exodus from Egypt? *(They answer by showing and telling about their "Project.")*

Conclusion:

And now, as we recall these events and as we try to place ourselves into the minds and hearts of those who experienced them, we thank God that we can sit here tonight, in freedom, to retell the story. We hope that we will be able to show empathy with those who experience a similar fate.

Scene C: Singing our Redemption

All sing together:

"LET MY PEOPLE GO"

An Afro-American Spiritual

When Israel was in Egypt's land:
"Let My people go" *(Exodus 5:1).*
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
"Let My people go."

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: "Let My people go."

Thus said the Lord, bold Moses said,
"Let My people go."
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead,
"Let My people go."

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: "Let My people go."

No more shall they in bondage toil,
"Let My people go. "
If they come out with Egypt's spoil,
"Let My people go."

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: "Let my people go."

SEE NEXT PAGES FOR PARTICIPANT PARTS

THE PARTICIPANTS' PARTS

I. CATEGORY: CHILD

Description: You are one of the children who are slaves. The children worked in the fields with their parents 6 days a week. They only had to work 8 hours a day instead of 12 hours. The children had these jobs: helping their parents with their jobs (gathering straw, bringing food and water to everyone, preparing the food, making bricks, and taking care of the youngest children (up to age 3, usually their brothers, sisters and cousins). When the children were not working, they sometimes had school taught by the older people, even though the Egyptians didn't like to see them studying. They would learn how to read and write and learn the stories of their people. There was very little time to play. If the children were seen playing, someone would probably find a job for them to do.

Tasks: Please prepare yourself to play in one of these two scenes and to do a project.

Scene A: Living as a Slave (type of work, task masters, throwing the boys into the Nile, Moses' killing of the taskmaster, etc).

Tasks:

1. Describe what you would do during a typical day.
2. What would you do on Shabbat when you didn't have to work for the Egyptians?
3. What do you think things will be like when you grow up?
4. What things do you like most and hate most about your life now?

or

Scene B : Leaving Egypt (the plagues, killing the lamb and the blood on the doorpost, the matza, crossing the Red Sea)

1. What was the scariest thing that happened to you during the Exodus?
2. What did you take as a souvenir from Egypt?
3. What did you think of Moses and Aaron and Miriam? Did you ever get to see them? When?
4. Did anything happen that you didn't understand? What was it?
5. What was it like crossing the Red Sea?
6. How do you feel about what happened to the Egyptians? About God's role in your escape?

Project: Making props. *(See the directions on page 30, #4)*

II. CATEGORY: ADOLESCENT

Description: You are about to become 13, the age when people begin to make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Your parents have probably been working to make this change more gradual for you, by gradually increasing their expectations even though you technically don't have to work a full day, or do the adult jobs. However, when you reach 13, it will be the Egyptian taskmasters making sure you do your 12 hours of work, not just your parents. You may be assigned a job away from the people you have come to know. You will be required to report to a taskmaster for your instructions. You have managed to learn to read and write and enjoy these activities very much, but you know that in a few weeks, you will not have time to do this anymore. You are unsure of how you will fit in to your new role, and before you have much of a chance to find out, the plagues and the Exodus begin and you are catapulted into a new life.

Tasks:

Please choose one scene and prepare for your role with the help of the following questions and do a project.

Scene A: Living as a Slave (type of work, taskmasters, throwing baby boys in the Nile, Moses kills the taskmaster)

1. How have you been prepared to take on the work of an adult?
2. What are you most anxious about and most excited about in becoming an adult?
3. What do you think things will be like during the next 5 years?
4. What things do you like most and hate most about your life now?

or

Scene B : Leaving Egypt (the plagues, killing the lamb and the blood on the doorpost, the matza, crossing the Red Sea)

1. Describe your feelings about these events. Were they different from what you had expected would happen? Give examples if possible.
2. What did you take from Egypt?
3. What did you think of Moses and Aaron and Miriam? Did you even get to see them? When?
4. Did anything happen that you didn't understand? What was it?
5. What was it like crossing the Reed Sea?
6. How do you feel about what happened to the Egyptians? About God's Role in the Exodus?

Project: Making props. *(See the directions on page 30, #4)*

III. CATEGORY: JEWISH MAN

Description: Slavery and work are all you've ever known and all you've seen your parents and grandparents do. When you were a child, you learned about your people's history through songs and stories, but you have not had much time to think about that since you became a man. You work 12 hours a day for the Egyptians making bricks, preparing food, building, excavating, gathering supplies. You never know what work you will be given or where you will be asked to work. Frequently, the work you are asked to do is demeaning: work you consider to be for women, or work beyond your strength. When work is done, you must work more hours in your home to take care of your few possessions and to tend your animals. If you are married, you have little time for your wife. You know what will happen if she should bear a son, so you have considered (or are already) sleeping apart from her so she will not conceive a child. Sometimes you feel that the only way out of slavery is to refuse to bring another generation into such a world.

Tasks: Prepare to role-play one of these scenes and to do one project:

Scene A: Living as a Slave (type of work, taskmasters, Pharaoh's daughter saves Moses, later Moses kills a taskmaster).

1. Do you ever reflect on your life, and if so, what are your thoughts?
2. What would you do if you were able to do whatever you wanted to the Egyptians?
3. What are your fantasies about the kind of life you would like to lead?
4. What are the biggest drawbacks and biggest benefits about your life as it is?
5. What does "being Hebrew" mean to you? What role models do you have for your children?
6. Do you think it is easier for a man to withstand oppression as compared to a woman?

or

Scene B : Leaving Egypt (the plagues, killing the lamb, "borrowing" things from the Egyptians, crossing the Red Sea)

1. What was your reaction to the plagues?
2. What have you learned about God from the things you witnessed?
3. What do you expect will be different in your life now that you have left Egypt?
4. What did you do when you were told to step into the Red Sea? What did this teach you about yourself?

Project: Making props. *(See the directions on page 30, #4)*

Description: Slavery and work are all you've ever known and all you've seen for your parents and grandparents. When you were a ch[illegible]u learned about your people's history though songs and [illegible]es, but you have not had much time to think about that since you became a woman. You work 12 hours a day for the Egyptians making bricks, preparing food, building, excavating, gathering supplies. You never know what work you will be given or where you will be asked to work. Frequently the work you are asked to do is demeaning: men's work beyond your strength, work with people much older or younger, work with men who look at you in a way that makes you uncomfortable and who make suggestive remarks to you. You know you must always guard your virtue but you are frightened when you are alone in the city that is being built. When work is done, you must work more hours in your home to prepare food, make, clean and mend clothes, keep the house clean. If you are married, you have little time for your husband. You know what will happen if you should bear a son, so you try not to entice your husband, but you wish he would want to be with you more often. Maybe he is worried about the same things you are. Sometimes you feel that the only way out of slavery is to refuse to bring another generation into such a world.

Tasks: Prepare yourself to play one of these scenes and to do a small project.

Scene A: Living as a Slave (type work, attitude to ethnic strangers, to slave women, taskmasters, Pharaoh's daughter saves baby boy thrown into the Nile, Moses kills the taskmaster).

1. Do you ever reflect on your life, and if so, what are your thoughts?
2. What would you do if you were able to do whatever you wanted to the Egyptians? What would you do to protect your children?
3. What are your fantasies about the kind of life you would like to lead?
4. What are the biggest drawbacks and biggest benefits about your life as it is?
5. What does "being a Hebrew woman" mean to you?
6. Do you think it is easier for a woman to cope with slavery?

or

Scene B : Leaving Egypt (the plagues, killing the lamb, "borrowing" things from the Egyptians, crossing the Reed Sea)

1. What was your reaction to the plagues?
2. What have you learned about God from the things you witnessed?
3. Have your feelings about what God has done affected your idea of what it means to be a "woman?" How?
4. What do you expect will be different in your life now that you have left Egypt?
5. What did you do when you were told to step into the Red Sea? What did this teach you about yourself?
6. What will you tell your children about Egypt or the Exodus?

Project: Prepare props for the role-play. *(See the directions on page 41, #4)*

Description: You live the life of a man or woman slave. You are aging and feel the effects of the hard labor more every year. There is no respite for the older worker in the eyes of the Egyptians, although sometimes the young adults are able to help you. You see that joy and wonder have been extinguished from the eyes of your children as they come to resemble you more and more. You may be a grandparent, or are thinking about what that may be like. This brings up memories of your own childhood, young adulthood and your parents and grandparents. You have heard Moses' demands and God's promises, but you are unsure whether you want to join the movement to leave Egypt.

Tasks: Prepare a role-play for one of these scenes, and a small project:

Scene A: Living as a Slave

1. Do you ever reflect on your life, and if so, what are your thoughts?
2. Do you feel you are still able to protect or aid your children? How?
3. How do you feel about what your children are like as adults?
4. What advice would you give your children as they grow older and become parents themselves?
5. Do you feel that you have attained any wisdom? Explain.
6. What does "being an Israelite" mean to you?

or

Scene B : Leaving Egypt (the plagues, killing the lamb, "borrowing" things from the Egyptians, crossing the Red Sea)

1. What was your reaction to the plagues, especially the tenth plague?
2. What have you learned about God from the things you witnessed?
3. How has your experience leaving Egypt affected your assumptions about what your life will be like? How has it affected your children?
4. What did you do when you were told to step into the Red Sea? What did this teach you about yourself?

Project: Making props for the role-play. *(See the directions on page 41, #4)*

Description: You are, by birth, an Egyptian or a member of a group which is neither Israelite nor Egyptian. You feared the population growth of the Hebrews, but opposed the throwing of the baby boys into the Nile. You benefited from slavery. Now you have experienced the plagues that the God of Israel brought and it has frightened or greatly affected you. You no longer feel safe in your own land.

Tasks: Prepare yourself to play one of these scenes and to do one project.

Scene A: Living in the era when the Hebrews are slaves

1. Do you ever reflect on your life, and if so, what are your thoughts?
2. What are the biggest drawbacks and biggest benefits about your life as it is?
3. How did you feel about Pharaoh's plan? About the midwives? About Pharaoh's daughter's adoption of Moses?
4. What was your first response to Moses' demand?

or

Scene B: Living during the Exodus and the splitting of the Red Sea

1. What was your reaction to the plagues?
2. What have you learned about Israel's God from the things you witnessed?
3. What did you do when you were told to follow Israel into the Red Sea? What did this teach you about yourself?
4. What do you think will occur in Egyptian society after the traumatic Exodus of Israel?

Project: Making props for the role-play. *(See the directions on page 41, #4)*

LEADER: MOSES, AARON, or MIRIAM

Description: You grew up with an exceptionally strong mother who hid her baby from Pharaoh and then agreed to his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter to save his life. Later you took part in the "Let My People Go" movement whether through physical violence (killing the Egyptian taskmaster), through negotiations or through wonders. You must mediate between a demanding God and a hesitant enslaved people. You must collaborate with your siblings in a tense situation where the youngest is God's chosen leader.

Tasks: Prepare to role-play one of the scenes and prepare a project for the scene.

Scene A: Confronting a Slave People

1. What bothered you most about the way the slaves responded to the taskmasters?
2. Describe your mother's special strength. What nourished it? Was your father as strong as she was? What have you tried to learn from her model?
3. How did you feel when you first heard God's promises to redeem the people and your appointed mission within the Divine plan?

or

Scene B: Leaving Egypt

1. What difficulties did you have with your siblings and their roles in the "Let My People Go" movement?
2. How did the people and Pharaoh respond to you as the bearer of God's message? What doubts of your own did you feel?
3. What lessons did you learn from negotiating with Pharaoh?
4. How did you feel about the role of violence in the liberation (plagues, Red Sea, etc.)?

Project: Making props for the role-play. *(See the directions on page 41, #4)*

A Symposium About Slavery and Freedom

An Anthology of Quotations

"We were slaves to Pharaoh" / "We are slaves now"

The Haggadah recalls slavery as a historic moment from the past – "we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt," but it also declares that "we still are slaves now, though next year we will be free." Are we today still slaves – if not politically and economically, then psychologically or spiritually? That is the theme of the symposium of famous quotes found below.

Directions:

- Reproduce a group of ten quotations for all the participants.
- Ask everyone to choose a quote about freedom and slavery that expresses something felt deeply.
- Ask participants at the table to read the quote they chose and explain their reasons for choosing it.
- Hopefully a discussion will emerge regarding the true nature of freedom.

1 *No human being is free who is not master of himself.*

– EPICTETUS (ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER)

2 *Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err.*

– MAHATMA GANDHI (20TH C. INDIAN FREEDOM "FIGHTER")

3 *Better a thin freedom than a fat slavery.*

– FOLK PROVERB

4 *There is no boredom like that which can afflict people who are free, and nothing else.*

– RALPH BARTON PERRY

5 *A man may not always eat and drink what is good for him; but it is better for him and less ignominious to die of the gout freely than to have a censor officially appointed over his diet, who after all could not render him immortal.*

– GEORGE SANTAYANA (20TH C. EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHER)

6 *Security is never an absolute... The government of a free people must take certain chances for the sake of maintaining freedom which the government of a police state avoids because it holds freedom to be of no value.*

– A. BARTHOLINI

7 *Praised be You who has not made me a slave.*

– RABBI AHA BEN JACOB (BABYLONIAN TALMUD SCHOLAR)

8 *None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.*

– GOETHE (GERMAN 19TH C. WRITER)

9 *The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good, in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.*

– J.S. MILL (ENGLISH 19TH C. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER)

10 *He is the free man whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves beside.*

– COWPER

11 *Slaves are free when they are satisfied with their lot; free persons are really slaves when they seek more than their lot.*

– TACHKIMONI

12 *Freedom is taken, not given.*

– AHAD HAAM (ZIONIST, 20TH C. THINKER)

10

13 *I am for those that have never been master'd!*
For men and women whose tempers have never bee[n] ster'd,
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never master.

— Walt Whitman (19th C. American poet): *As I Sat Alone*, 1856

14 *Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.*

— Abraham Lincoln (U.S. President during the Civil War), 1859

15 *Better to be a free bird than a captive king.*

— Danish Proverb

16 *No human is wholly free. One is a slave to wealth, or to fortune, or the laws, or the people restrain him from acting according to his will alone.*

— Euripides (ancient Greek playwright)

"No man can command my conscience."
from Martin Luther (16th C. Reformation)

— Ben Shahn, 1956, The Biography of a Painting

17 *Who, then, is free? The wise who can command their passions, who fear not want, nor death, nor chains, firmly resisting their appetites and despising the honors of the world, w[holly] ely wholly on themselves, whose angular points of character have all been rounded off and polished.*

— Horace (Rome, c. 25 B.C.E.)

18 *It is not good to be too free. It is not good to have everything one wants.*

— Blaise Pascal (France): *Pensees*, 1670

19 *Since the general civilization of mankind, I believe there are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations.*

— James Madison (U.S. President), 1788

20 *The Merciful demands that your servant be your equal. You should not eat white bread, and he black bread; you should not drink old wine, and he new wine; you should not sleep on a featherbed and he on straw. Hence it was said, Whoever acquires a Hebrew slave acquires a master.*

— Talmud

21 *When is a man free? Not when he is driftwood on the stream of life, ... free of all cares or worries or ambitions ... He is not free at all — only drugged, like the lotus eaters in the Odyssey ... To be free in action, in struggle, in undiverted and purposeful achievement, to move forward towards a worthy objective across a fierce terrain of resistance, to be vital and aglow in the exercise of a great enterprise — that is to be free, and to know the joy and exhilaration of true freedom. A man is free only when he has an errand on earth.*

— Abba Hillel Silver (20th C. Reform Rabbi and Zionist leader)

22 *Because I was born a slave, I love liberty more than you.*

— Ludwig Boerne (German Jew), 1832

23 *I hold a jail more roomy than would be the whole world if I were to submit to repression.*

— Samuel Gompers (American Jew, founder of the American Federation of Labor), 1925

24 *Though in themselves trivial ends are not important — indeed it is of their essence to be unimportant — they give one a measure of breathing space. How important it is to the sense of one's autonomy and worth to have some such area of arbitrary and trivial concerns reserved to oneself.*

— *Unknown*

Neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal have we created you, so that you might be free according to your own will and honor, to be your own creator and builder. To you alone we gave growth and development depending on your own free will. You bear in you the germs of a universal life.

— PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA (ITALIAN RENAISSANCE HUMANIST): *ORATIO DE HOMINIS DIGNITATE*

26 *The serious threat to our democracy is not the existence of foreign totalitarian states. It is the existence within our own personal attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions which have given a victory to external authority, discipline, uniformity and dependence upon the "Leader" in foreign countries. The battlefield is also accordingly here — within ourselves and our institutions.*

— JOHN DEWEY (20TH C. AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER OF EDUCATION)

27 *The ambiguous meaning of freedom was to operate throughout modern culture: on the one hand, the growing independence of man from external authorities, on the other hand, his growing isolation and the resulting feeling of individual insignificance and powerlessness. Freedom from the traditional bonds of medieval society, though giving the individual a new feeling of independence, at the same time made him feel alone and isolated, filled him with doubt and anxiety, and drove him into new submission and into a compulsive and irrational activity.*

— ERICH FROMM (20TH C. GERMAN JEWISH PSYCHOLOGIST), *ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM*

28 *What then is the meaning of freedom for modern man?*

He has become free from the external bonds that would prevent him from doing and thinking as he sees fit. He would be free to act according to his own will, if he knew what he wanted, thought, and felt. But he does not know. He conforms to anonymous authorities and adopts a self which is not his. The more he does this, the more powerless he feels, the more is he forced to conform. In spite of a veneer of optimism and initiative, modern man is overcome by a profound feeling of powerlessness and enslavement.

— ERICH FROMM, *ESCAPE FROM FREEDOM*

Difference is the condition requisite to all dignity and to all liberation. To be aware of oneself is to be aware of oneself as different. To be is to be different.

— ALBERT MEMMI (20TH C. NORTH AFRICAN ZIONIST THINKER)

An oppressed person must never expect others to hand him his liberation... The oppressed person must take his destiny in his own hands. My life must no longer depend on any treaty, often signed with other ends in mind, by anyone with anyone... Better still, no one owes us anything....

We should not have had to ask ourselves piteously and in vain, why the Pope was silent, or why the Americans abandoned us, why the Russians didn't budge.

And why not the Red Cross? And the ASPCA!

Liberty is not a gift. Bestowed, conceded, protected by someone else, it is denied and it vanishes.

Our liberation must depend on our own fight for it....

One never really shakes off oppression except by revolt.

— ALBERT MEMMI

30 *Self-negation is slavery.*
Self-affirmation is freedom.
We go to Zion to be ourselves.

— LUDWIG LEWISOHN

The first mark of the position of a minority is its complete lack of self-determination. Do what it may, the terms of its very existence are fixed for it by the mere weight and tendencies and habits of the surrounding majority. And this is no less true when that majority is friendly than when it is hostile.

Favor and disfavor are the moods of the masters.

— LUDWIG LEWISOHN

31 *We have continued to celebrate Passover because we have always been in the desert and we have always awaited our liberation.*

— ALBERT MEMMI

32 *When Moses wished to free his people from Egyptian slavery, the Jews were the first to rise against him and threaten to denounce him to the Egyptian authorities.*

— MAX NORDAU (19TH-20TH C. AUSTRIAN INTELLECTUAL AND ZIONIST), 1898

10

בַּסֻּכָּה
BLESSINGS FOR SUKKOT

On waving the lulav

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לוּלָב.

To sit in the sukkah

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לֵישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

After you practice reading the two בְּרָכוֹת, color the סֻכָּה.

TEACHER:
Use this page to evaluate your students' phonetic skills, reading fluency and comprehension. Have individual students read aloud and enter your evaluation on the Diagnostic Reading Chart, page 29.