

Reform Judaism in America:
Modern, American, and Jewish

Curriculum Guide for 7th-8th Grade
Religious School

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Curriculum Rationale

Reform Judaism began in Germany in the 19th century and today represents the most popular Jewish denomination in the United States. Despite its popularity, many Reform Jews are unaware of the movement's historical contributions to American Judaism and its ideological positions and modern challenges. In September 2002 I posed the following questions to seventh graders (students who will soon celebrate their bnai mitzvah in a Reform context): Why has the Reform movement been so successful in America? What attracts you and your family, today's American Jews, to the Reform movement? To my dismay, the responses I received included "we do less" or "it is easier because we can do whatever we want and still be Jewish." This answer, while true for some, does not reflect the evolving historical and ideological stances of the American Reform movement.

The intent of this curriculum guide is to provide a thorough examination of American Reform Judaism in order to educate Reform Jews about the movement with which they have chosen to affiliate. The students completing this course should gain foundational knowledge of American Reform Judaism and a sense of pride in affiliating with the movement. The curriculum guide will focus on examples of Reform beliefs and practices. It will demonstrate the uniqueness and advantages of being an American Reform Jew. The curriculum guide is based around the following four enduring (major) understandings:

- 1. Reform Judaism is an intentional, liberal, expression of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood.**
- 2. From its inception Reform Judaism affirmed the ideas of modernity and adapted Judaism to model its concepts/values.**
- 3. Reform Judaism reflects a commitment to full integration and participation in both American and Jewish society.**
- 4. The evolving ideological stances of American Reform Judaism reflect both a commitment to tradition and a response to societal change.**

This curriculum will examine the dynamic relationship that Reform Judaism maintains with the concepts of Judaism, Jewish peoplehood, and Jewish identity. It will include both the early classical Reform concept of Judaism as a religious faith and the modern Reform concept of Judaism as a religious expression of the Jewish people. The curriculum guide will provide opportunities to explore and express one's personal identification as a Reform Jew.

This curriculum guide is designed for Reform religious school students in grades 7-8. It is designed for students around *bnai mitzvah*, the entrance into Jewish adulthood and the entrance into adolescence for several reasons. 1) Around this time, students begin to question their personal identity and their relationship to Judaism. 2) They question the apparent contradictions between Jewish tradition and modernity. 3) They feel tension between being Jewish and being American. 4) They are seeing and meeting Jews from other denominations in the community at camp, Hebrew High... and are

unclear about the similarities and differences. They are trying to figure out what they believe as Reform Jews, and how their beliefs and practices fit into the greater Jewish community.

By incorporating these developmental realities, the curriculum provides a forum for students to begin the process of understanding the advantages and complexities of Reform Judaism. Grappling with these issues will enable them to begin the process of forming their own identifications as American Reform Jews. At the end of the course students should be able to answer the questions posed on page 1 based on the enduring understandings.

This curriculum addresses foundational and modern concepts within the American Reform movement. It allows students to study and debate important issues within Reform Judaism. This curriculum guide will enable a new generation of Reform Jewish teens to understand Reform's Judaism's past and present; after all, they will determine its future.

Curriculum Goals

This course is designed to:

- **Help students understand that Reform Judaism is an intentional, liberal expression of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood**
- **Expose students to the uniqueness of Reform Judaism as the first Jewish movement that embraced modernity**
- **Demonstrate to students that Reform Judaism represents a Jewish movement committed to full integration and participation in American and Jewish life**
- **Expose students to the evolution of Reform Judaism as it relates to Jewish tradition and social change**
- **Help students develop a positive identification as Reform Jews**
- **Prepare students to be able to discuss and represent American Reform Judaism with other Jewish youth**

Curriculum Units: Reform Judaism

- I. Introduction: What is Reform Judaism?**
- II. Reform Jewish Ideas: Philosophy of Modernity**
- III. American Reform Jewish Synagogue Practice**
- IV. Reform Judaism as Religion and/or Peoplehood**
- V. Reform Responses to Contemporary Society**
- VI. Conclusion: Reform Judaism and Me**

Introduction Unit: What is Reform Judaism?

Goals:

1. To assess what the students know about Reform Judaism
2. To define Reform Judaism and some of its main characteristics
3. To show that Reform Judaism evolves with societal change (It began as a response to the Enlightenment. Today Reform Judaism continues to evolve with societal change)
4. To demonstrate that Reform Judaism survived and continues to flourish in America

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Express what they know already about Reform Judaism
2. Begin to define some of the main characteristics of Reform Judaism
3. Explain where, when, why the Reform movement began
4. Defend why the Reform movement survived and continues to flourish in America
5. Explain why it is called Reform Judaism, not Reformed Judaism

Enduring Understandings (Key Concepts) and Suggested Activities

Note: Enduring Understandings appear in bold throughout the unit. Corresponding suggested activities are listed below each set of enduring understandings.

Enduring Understandings

- 1. Reform Judaism is an intentional, liberal expression of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood**
- 2. Reform Judaism began in Europe (primarily Germany) during the time of and as a response to the enlightenment period. It broke away from traditional shtetl/ghetto Judaism and incorporated principles of modernity into its ideology and practice. It was the first of the modern Jewish denominations to be established.**
- 3. Reform Judaism survived in America and continues to flourish today. It believes that Jews can be fully Jewish and fully American. It adopted many American secular and other religious customs such as using English and a formal style of worship (this will be explored in further detail in later units)**
- 4. Reform Judaism evolves with societal change, while keeping with Jewish Traditions**

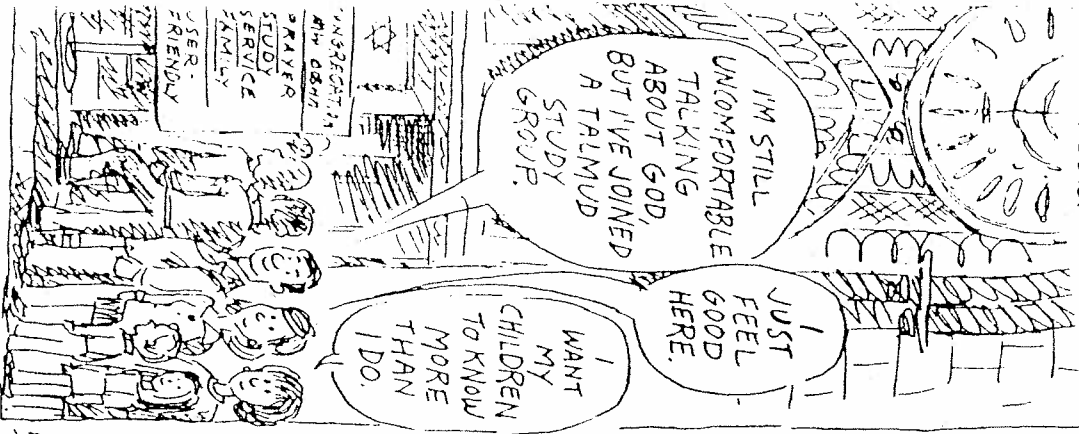
Suggested Activities

- **Assess what the students know.** Ask them to work alone and to write down answers to the following: 1) Define Reform Judaism 2) Where, when, and why did Reform Judaism begin? 3) Why does Reform Judaism flourish in America? 4) What are some unique characteristics of Reform Judaism 5) What makes you (not your parents) a Reform Jew?
- **Then have them examine the cartoon on page 263 from Stan Mack's The Story of the Jews (provided).** Discuss the denominations and try to find out what your students know. Tell them that at the end of the course, they will know a lot about Reform Judaism. They will have the opportunity to meet peers from other movements to learn from them and teach them about Reform Judaism.

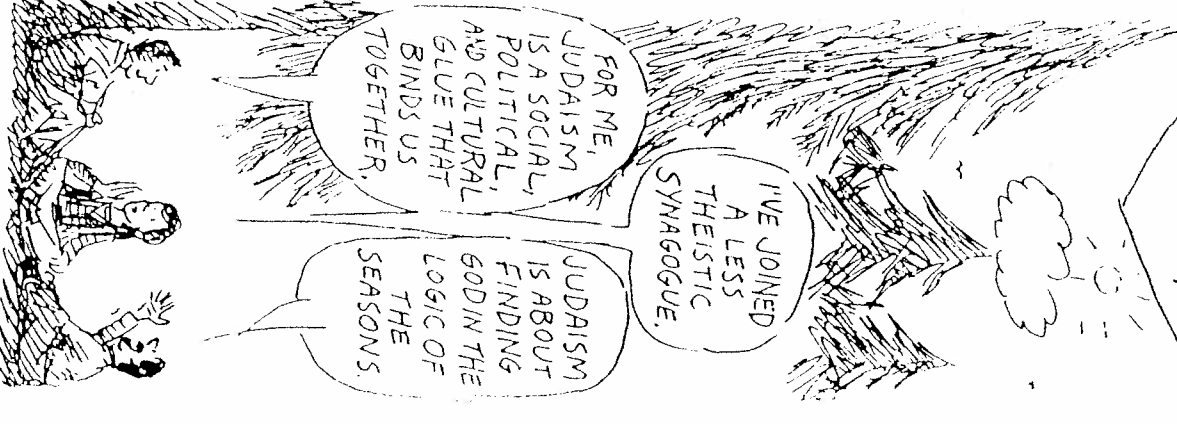
- **Reform Judaism's Origin.** Read the cartoons (provided) from Stan Mack's The Story of the Jews. **Key Questions** 1) What was Judaism like before the Haskalah (Enlightenment)? 2) What ideas of the Haskalah influenced Jews towards Reform? 3) What types of Reform were made? 4) When and why did the Jews leave Europe? 5) Where did the majority go and why?
- **Reform Judaism in America.** Read "Reform Judaism comes to America" (Borowitz) (provided). **Key Questions:** 1) Why didn't Reform Judaism survive in Europe? 2) Why did it survive in America? 3) What were the two major waves of immigration and how did they manage?
- **Reform is always evolving. Reform, not Reformed.** Look at the picture caption on Borowitz p. 18. Discuss: Why is Reform Judaism called "Reform" NOT "Reformed"?
- **Jewish Tradition and Evolving with Societal Change.** The following activity is called Concept Attainment. It is adapted from Jerome Bruner. A Study of Thinking. New York: Science Editions, 1957.
 - a. Present two lists of ideas, one list describing some Jewish Traditions and the other describing changes due to societal change such as:

Reciting Traditional Prayers	Praying some of them in English
A man wears a Kippah	Both men and women have the option
 - b. Ask students to name each category
 - c. Ask students to propose additional example to each category
 - d. Share names of categories (Jewish Traditions and Reform Adaptations) and additional examples. Explain that Reform Judaism made these adaptations to evolve with societal change
 - e. Discuss the benefits and potential harm of changing Tradition

ET IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, YOUNG JEWS DEMONSTRATED RENEWED INTEREST IN THEIR HERITAGE. THEY JOINED CONGREGATIONS LED BY ENERGETIC MALE AND FEMALE RABBIS.



OTHERS BELIEVED THAT EACH PERSON COULD RESPOND TO GOD IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY.



TRADITIONAL DENOMINATIONS ADJUSTED TO THE CHANGING TIMES. AS IT HAD THROUGH HISTORY, JEWISH DIVERSITY FLOURISHED.

MY REFORM TEMPLE IS GEARED TO SOCIAL ACTION, GENDER EQUALITY, AND A CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF JEWISH TRADITION.



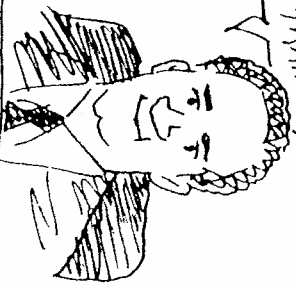
IN RECONSTRUCTIONISM WE PREFER THE COSMIC TO THE SUPERNATURAL. GOD HAS A VOTE, NOT A VETO.



MY CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE IS MODERNIZING CONSERVATIVELY-NEITHER TOO FAR TO THE LEFT, NOR TO THE RIGHT.



WE MODERN ORTHODOX STUDY THE TALMUD ON THE INTERNET, BY SATELLITE, AND ON OUR COMPUTER TRAINS.



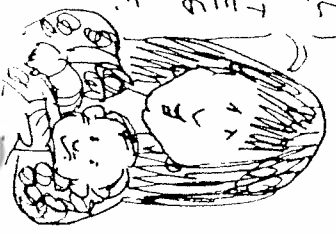
IN OUR JEWISH RENEWAL SERVICES, WE EMPHASIZE JOYOUS DANCE, MEDITATION, POETRY, AND HEALING.



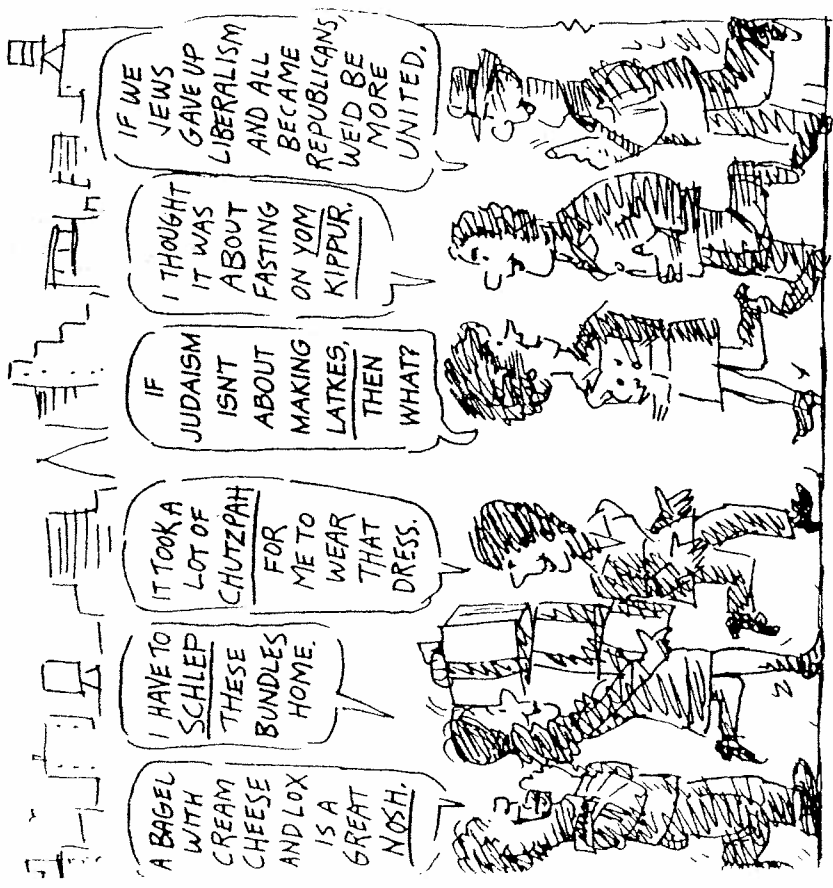
MY SYNAGOGUE IS UNAFFILIATED. OUR MEMBERS HAVE AN EQUAL SAY, ARE NON-IDEOLOGICAL, AND HAVE LOW DUES.



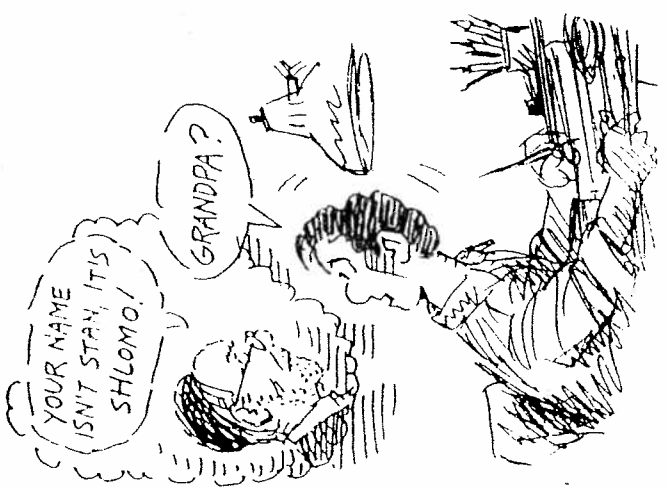
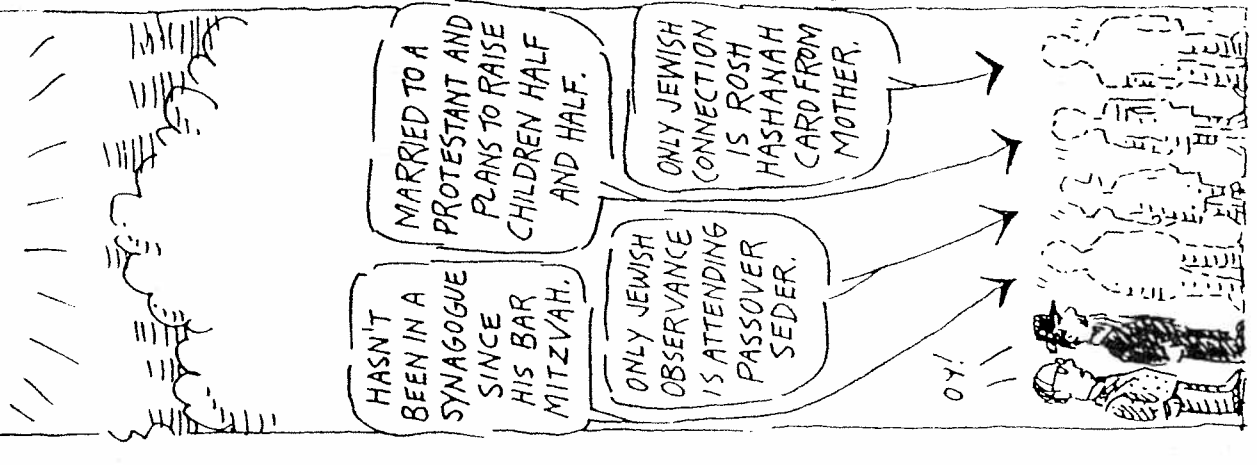
I'M A CULTURAL JEW. FOR ME, JUDAISM IS JUST COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE SEEKING MEANING AND DIGNITY IN LIFE.



IN THE '80s, MUCH OF THE MOST POPULAR CULTURAL ACTIVITY HAD BECOME A PART OF AMERICAN LIFE.

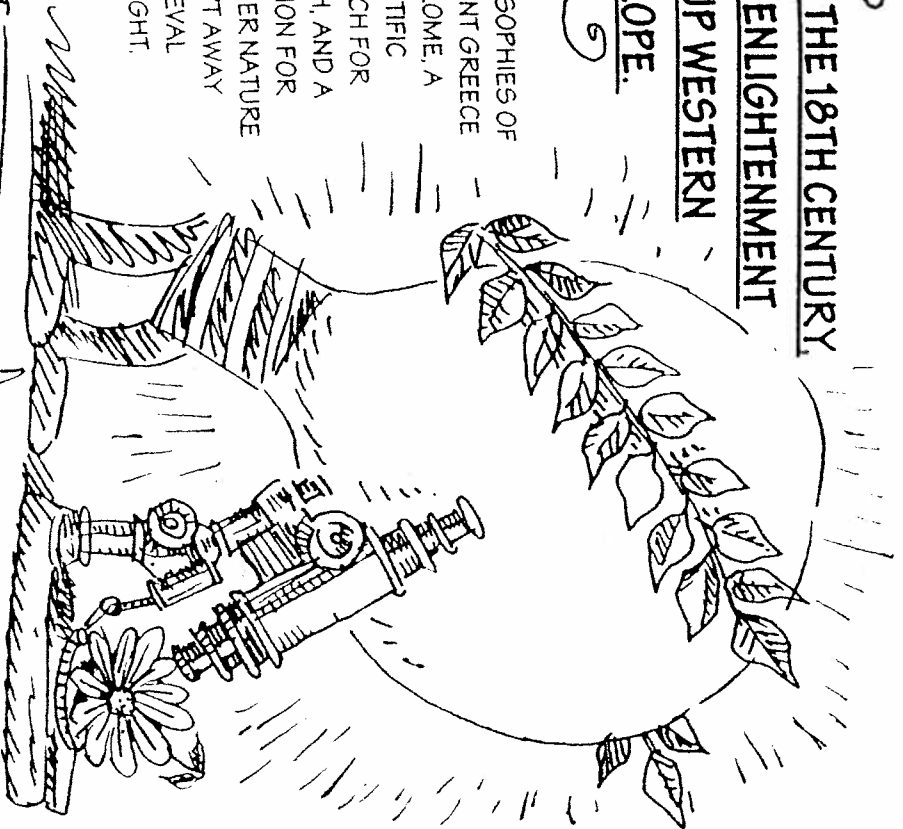


IN THE 1990s, WITH THE INTERMARRIAGE RATE AT 50%, JEWISH LEADERS WORRIED THAT U.S. JEWRY WAS DISAPPEARING.



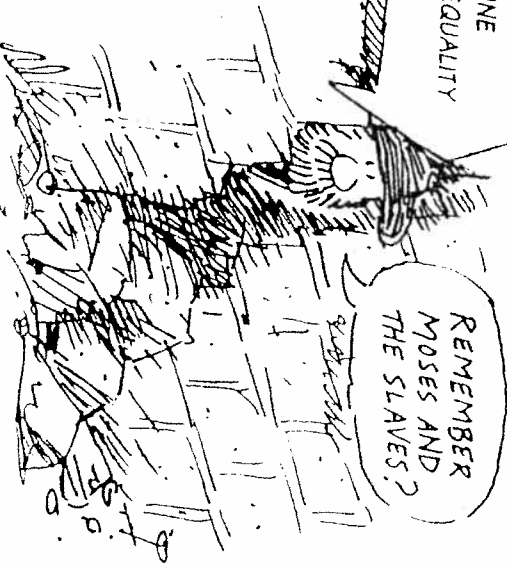
IN THE 18TH CENTURY THE ENLIGHTENMENT LIT UP WESTERN EUROPE.

THE
PHILOSOPHIES OF
ANCIENT GREECE
AND ROME, A
SCIENTIFIC
SEARCH FOR
TRUTH, AND A
PASSION FOR
MOTHER NATURE
SWEEP AWAY
MEDIEVAL
THOUGHT.



IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL EQUALITY
REPLACED RULE BY DIVINE
RIGHT. FOR THE JEWS, EQUALITY
HAD A FAMILIAR RING.

IN THE 1700's,
THESE IDEAS STARTED
TO BREAK DOWN THE
GHETTO WALLS. THE
JEWS, PHYSICALLY
AND EMOTIONALLY
TRAPPED INSIDE,
BEGAN TO CLIMB OUT.



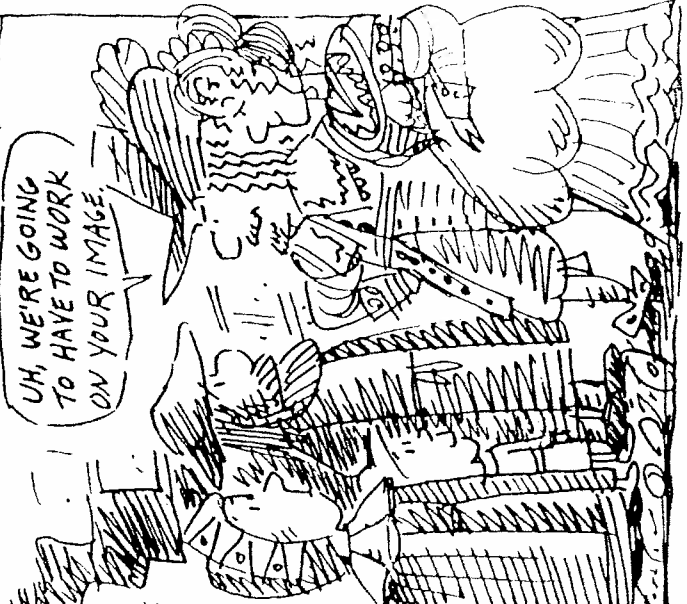
REMEMBER
MOSES AND
THE SLAVES?

THE JEWS EMERGED UNSURE HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BRIGHT NEW LIGHT.

THEY SAY THE UNIVERSE NOW WORKS BY SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES, THAT GOD IS A CLOCK MAKER.

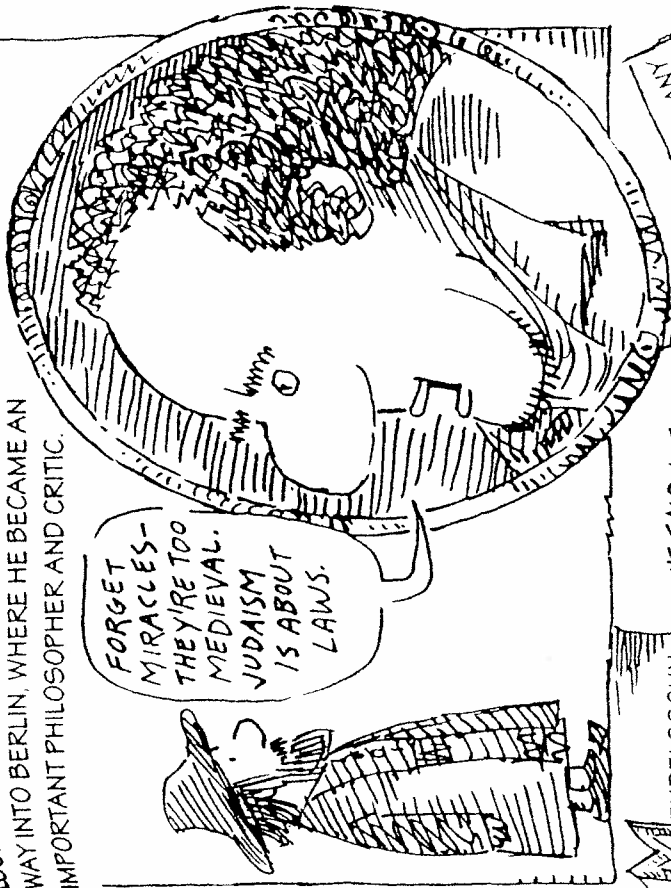


IN A POSITION TO HELP SMOOTH THEIR WAY WERE THE COURT OR SALON JEWS OF AUSTRIA AND GERMANY. AS MERCHANTS AND ADVISORS TO PRINCES, THESE TALENTED AND SOPHISTICATED FAMILIES HAD MADE THEIR WAY INTO CHRISTIAN HIGH SOCIETY.



SALON JEW WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN HELPING THE JEWS ADJUST WAS **MOSES MENDELSSOHN**, AN ODD-LOOKING LITTLE MAN, BORN IN 1729. MOSES HAD TALKED HIS WAY INTO BERLIN, WHERE HE BECAME AN IMPORTANT PHILOSOPHER AND CRITIC.

FORGET MIRACLES—THEY'RE TOO MEDIEVAL. JUDAISM IS ABOUT LAWS.



MENDELSSOHN TRIED TO EXPLAIN JUDAISM TO THE GERMANS AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO THE JEWS.

HE SAID WE CAN KEEP OUR TRADITIONS IF WE'RE NOT TOO OBVIOUS ABOUT IT.

OUT FOR MANY GERMAN JEWS WERE STRANGE AND SCARY.

DEVILISH PEOPLE.



THE GERMANS WANTED TO MAKE THE JEWS LESS JEWISH. THEY ASSIGNED GERMAN NAMES TO THE ASHKENAZIM.

IT'S FOR TAX PURPOSES.

MY NAME WAS YAAKOV BEN MOSES, NOW I'M FRANZ KLEIN.

BETTER THAN WHAT THEY GAVE ME: ESELKOPF (DONKEY'S HEAD).

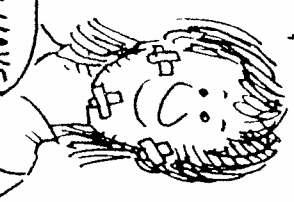
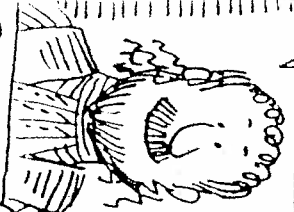


ESPIE THE PREJUDICE OF CHRISTIANS AND THE PROTESTS OF RABBIS, YOUNG GHETTO JEWS EMBRACED THE ENLIGHTENMENT.

I'M NOT WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH ANYMORE.

I SHAVED MY BEARD.

I'M LEARNING HOW TO PLAY CARDS.



THE MONARCHS OF EUROPE WERE TERRIFIED BY THE ENLIGHTENMENT'S IDEA THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE HAD RIGHTS.

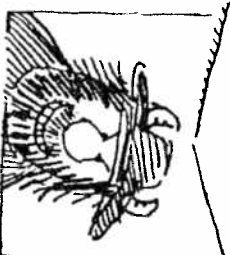
IF THEY HAVE NO BREAD, LET THEM EAT CAKE!

AND THE JEWS WERE SWEEPED UP IN THE TIDAL WAVE THAT WAS

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION WAS AN OPPRESSED PEOPLE'S REVOLT AGAINST THE POWER AND PRIVILEGE OF ARISTOCRACY AND CHURCH. AFTER THE BASTILLE WAS STORMED IN 1789, THE JEWS GOT EQUAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW FRENCH REPUBLIC—MORE OR LESS.

VIEW OF THE JEWS BY THEIR ENEMIES BEFORE THE REVOLUTION...



IGNORANT AND SUPERSTITIOUS

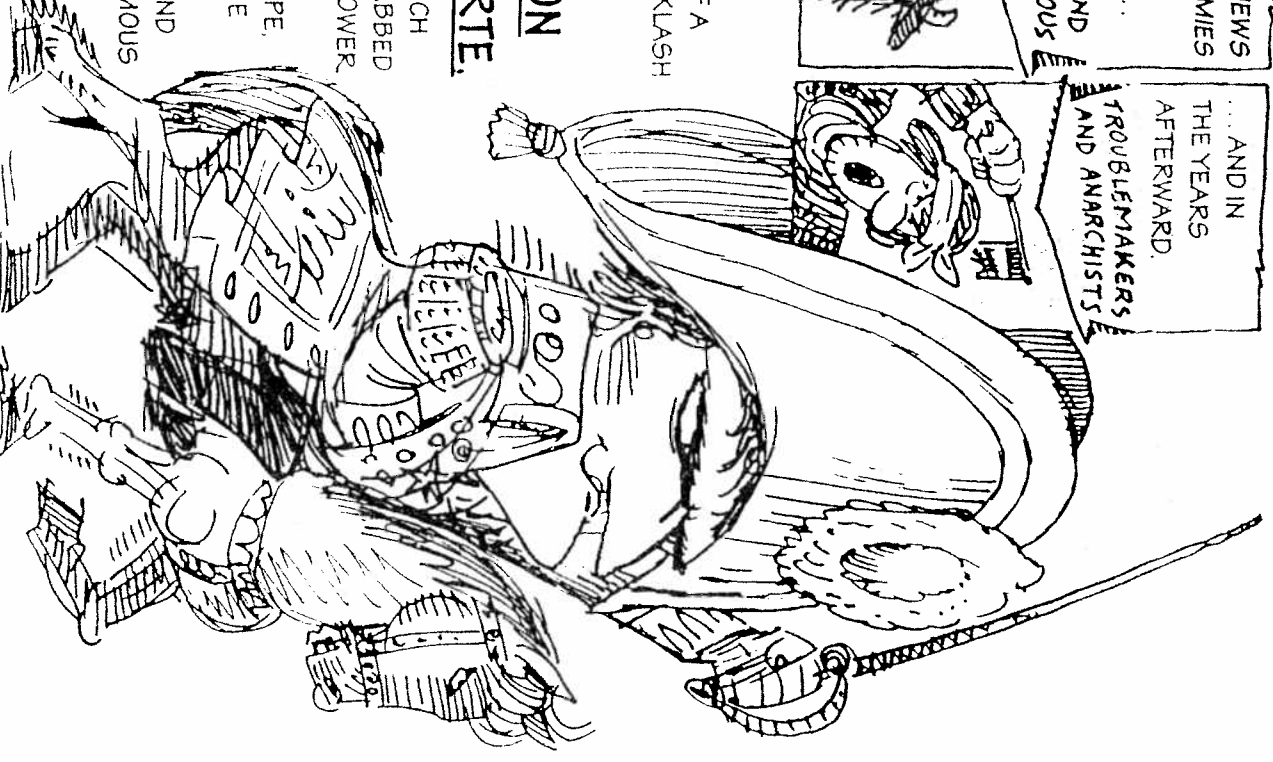
... AND IN THE YEARS AFTERWARD, TROUBLEMAKERS AND ANARCHISTS



TO HEAD OFF A ROYALIST BACKLASH AT HOME AND ABROAD,

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

A YOUNG FRENCH GENERAL, GRABBED DICTATORIAL POWER HE MARCHED ACROSS EUROPE, SPREADING THE IDEALS OF THE REVOLUTION AND OPENING INFAMOUS GHETTOS.



NAPOLEON BROUGHT TOGETHER JEWISH NOTABLES AND ASKED THEM A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

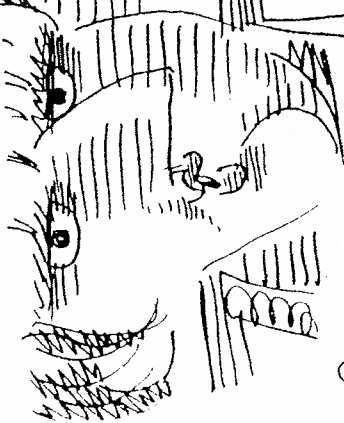
YOU FEEL "CONSIDER" ABOUT YOURSELF? INTER-? MARRIAGE?

WHAT POLICE POWERS DO RABBIS HAVE?

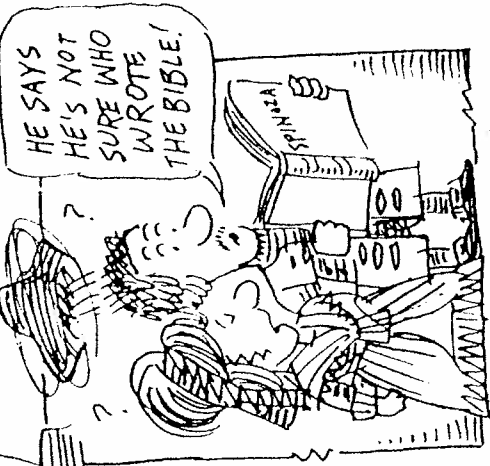


BASED ON THEIR ANSWERS, NAPOLEON ANNOUNCED THAT JUDAISM WASN'T SUBVERSIVE, IT WAS JUST ANOTHER RELIGION.

THE POINT IS, WE EXPECT CONFORMITY TO THE FRENCH STATE.



HE SAYS HE'S NOT SURE WHO WROTE THE BIBLE!



A DUTCH JEW, BARUCH SPINOZA, BORN IN 1632 BUT NOT FULLY APPRECIATED UNTIL THE 1800s, WAS A TRAILBLAZER FOR JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT THINKERS.

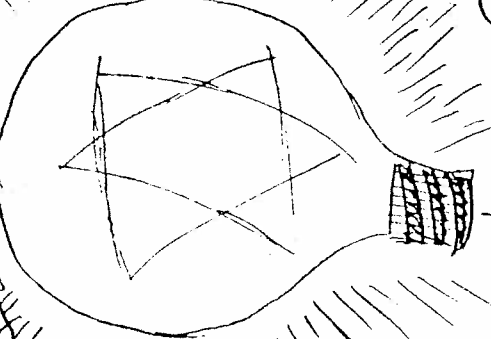
WORLD, BARUCH SPINOZA TRIED TO EXPLAIN HOW REASON AND GOD MIGHT LIVE TOGETHER.

PRODUCT OF THE IMAGINATION. GOD IS PROVABLE THROUGH GEOMETRY. GOD AND NATURE ARE THE SAME.



JEWISH PHILOSOPHERS, SCIENTISTS, AND ARTISTS OF WESTERN EUROPE JOINED THE MODERN WORLD BY EMBRACING THE ENLIGHTENMENT. THEIR AESTHETIC AND LITERARY WORKS CREATED A JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT STYLE CALLED THE

ALLIANCE OF REGRESSIVE EUROPEAN RULERS HALTED NAPOLEON AT WATERLOO IN 1815. THEY TRIED TO DRAG EUROPE INTO THE PAST AND SHOVE THE JEWS BACK INTO GHETTOS.



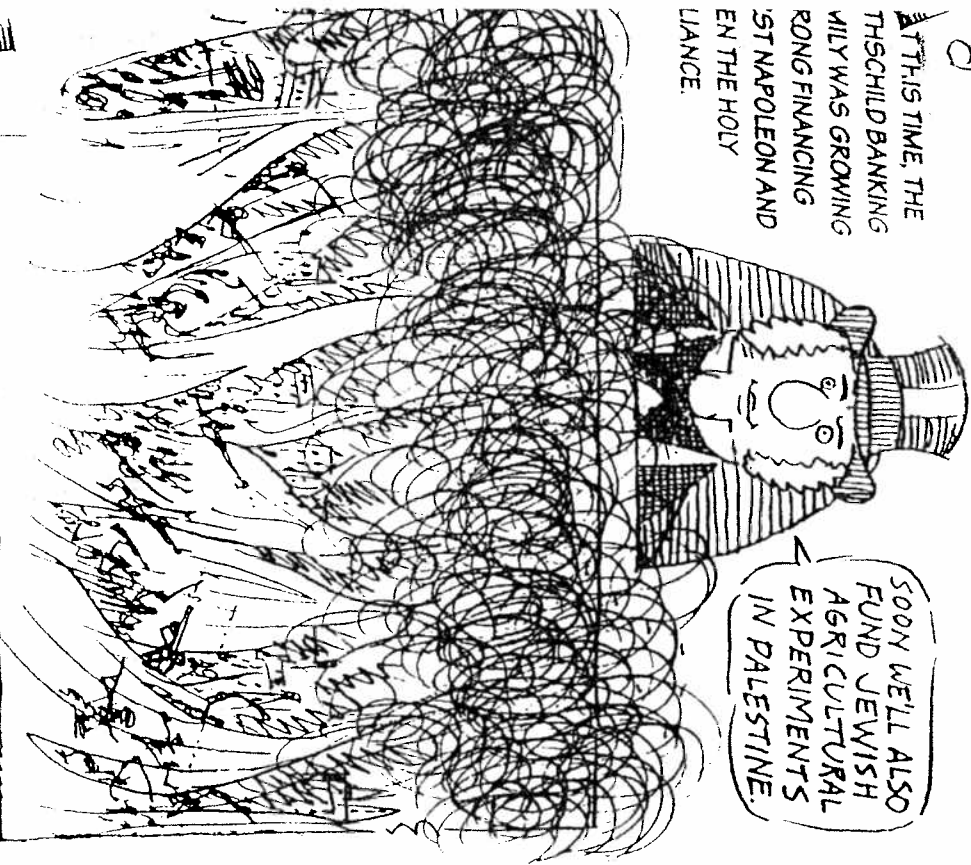
NOT THIS TIME!



HASKALAH (WESTERN STYLE)



AT THIS TIME, THE THSCHILD BANKING MILY WAS GROWING RONG FINANCING ST NAPOLEON AND EN THE HOLY LANCE.



SOON WE'LL ALSO FUND JEWISH AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENTS IN PALESTINE.

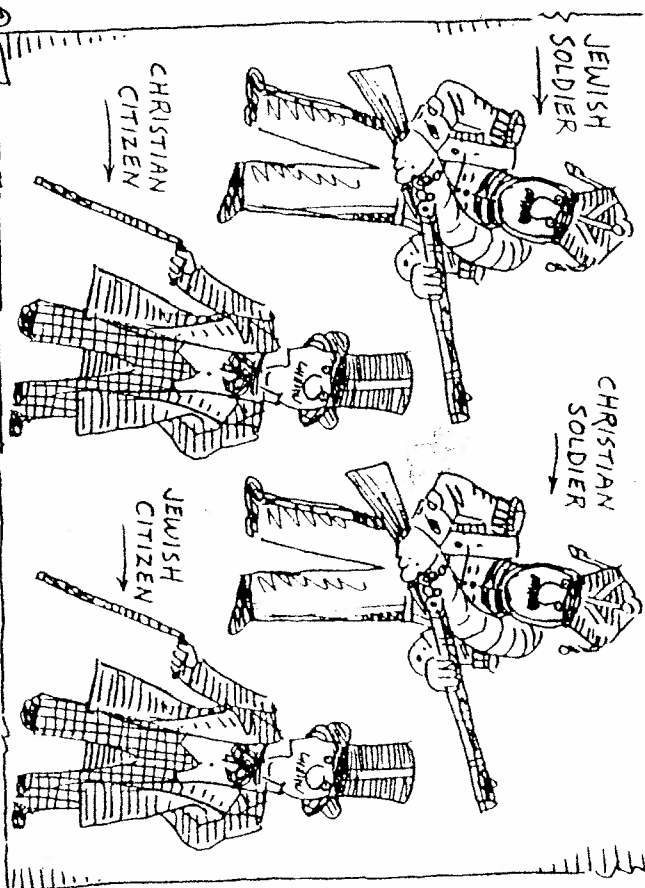
THE COMMON PEOPLE OF EUROPE WERENT ABOUT TO GIVE UP THE IDEALS OF EQUALITY AND NATIONALISM AND GO BACK TO FEUDAL TIMES. BY 1848, MOST OF EUROPE WAS AFLAME WITH REVOLUTION.

JEWISH ROLE MODEL OF PROTEST AGAINST POLITICAL OPPRESSION WAS THE ACERBIC POET HENRICH HEINE.



I DO NOT TRUST THESE PRUSSAINS... PIETISTIC HEROES OF THE SPIC AND SPAN UNIFORM, WITH THEIR... CORPORAL'S CLUBS DIPPED INTO HOLY WATER."

DURING THE 1800s, IN WESTERN EUROPE, JEWS FOUGHT ALONGSIDE CHRISTIANS TO DEFEAT THE AUTOCRATIC HOLY ALLIANCE. AS THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES OPENED THEIR DOORS, JEWS WERE FREE TO BECOME SECULAR CITIZENS OF THE MODERN WORLD.



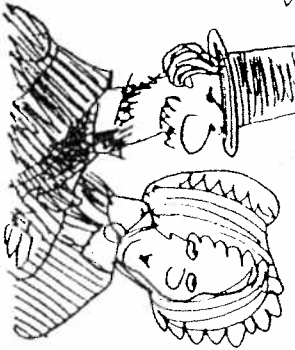
THE JEWS OF THE HASKALAH WERE ESPECIALLY DRAWN TO THE GERMAN LOVE FOR CULTURE AND SCHOLARLY DISCIPLINE. TO BLEND INTO GERMAN SOCIETY THEY SANITIZED THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS SERVICES. IT WAS THE RISE OF THE JEWISH REFORM MOVEMENT.



WE WEAR OUR TOP HATS TO TEMPLE.

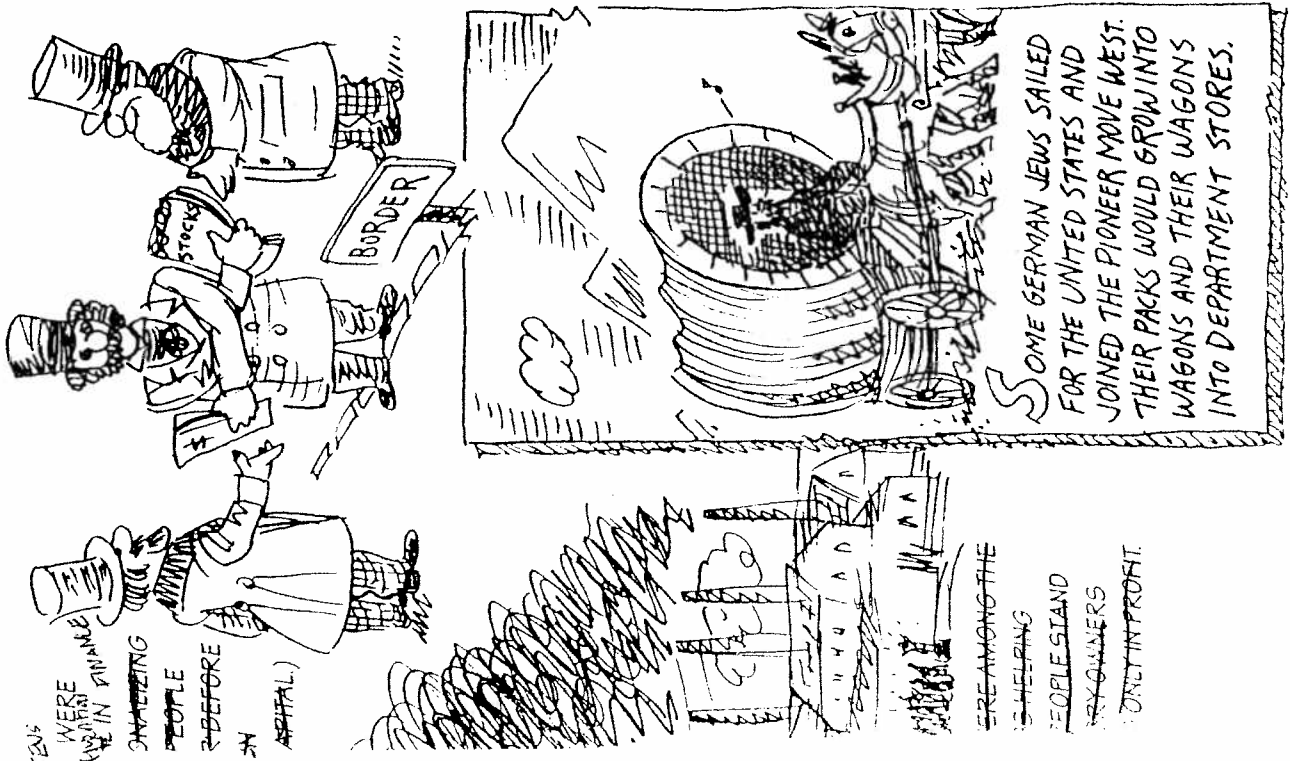


WOMEN SIT WITH MEN.



AND WE SKIP THE RAPTURE AND THE ECSTASY.

1800s, INDUSTRY BOOMED, MATERIALISM INCREASED, NATIONAL BANKING GREW, AND A HUGE WORKING CLASS WAS FOR THE JEWS. IT WAS A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY.

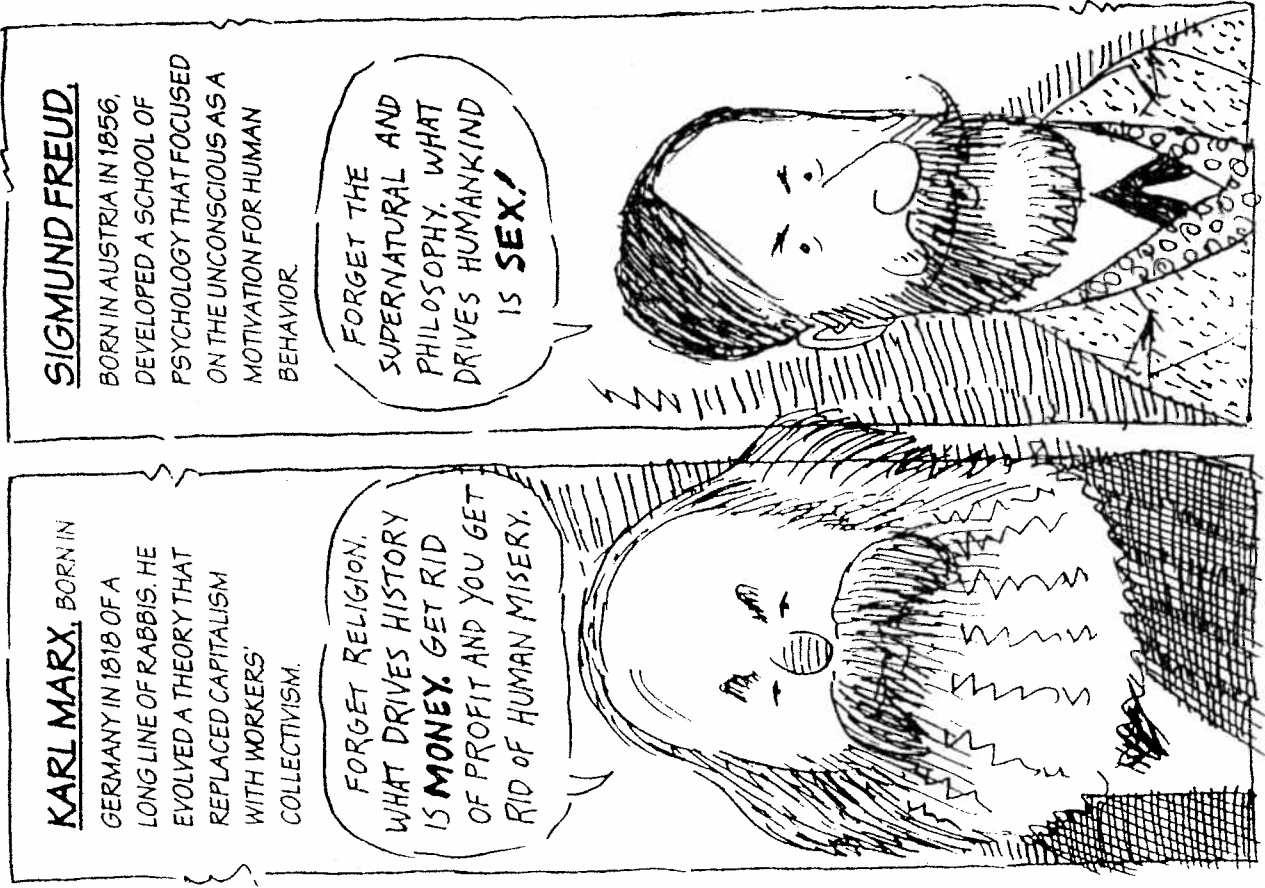


JEWS WERE BEING USED IN FINANCING SHARPEZING PEOPLE BEFORE AN ASPIRANT)

CREATING THE IS HELPING PEOPLE STAND FOR OWNERS ONLY IN PROFIT.

SOME GERMAN JEWS SAILED FOR THE UNITED STATES AND JOINED THE PIONEER MOVE WEST. THEIR PACKS WOULD GROW INTO WAGONS AND THEIR WAGONS INTO DEPARTMENT STORES.

ASKALAH THINKERS DEVELOPED PHILOSOPHIES BASED ON THE IDEAS OF FREEDOM, RATIONALISM, AND SCIENCE. TWO IMPORTANT THINKERS WERE KARL MARX AND SIGMUND FREUD.



KARL MARX, BORN IN GERMANY IN 1818 OF A LONG LINE OF RABBIS. HE EVOLVED A THEORY THAT REPLACED CAPITALISM WITH WORKERS' COLLECTIVISM.

FORGET RELIGION. WHAT DRIVES HISTORY IS **MONEY**. GET RID OF PROFIT AND YOU GET RID OF HUMAN MISERY.

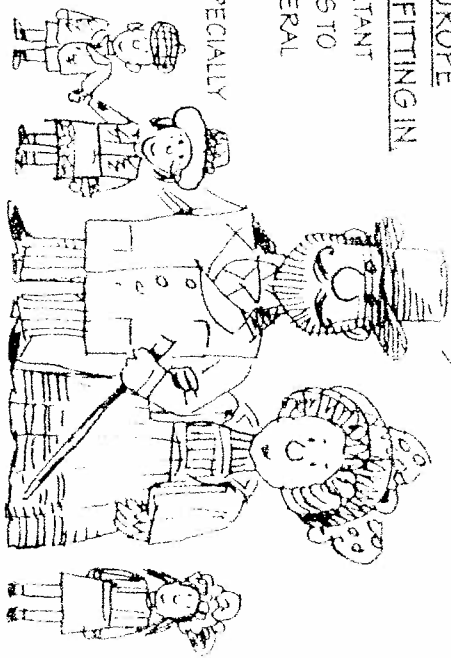
SIGMUND FREUD, BORN IN AUSTRIA IN 1856, DEVELOPED A SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY THAT FOCUSED ON THE UNCONSCIOUS AS A MOTIVATION FOR HUMAN BEHAVIOR.

FORGET THE SUPERNATURAL AND PHILOSOPHY. WHAT DRIVES HUMANKIND IS **SEX!**

EUROPE

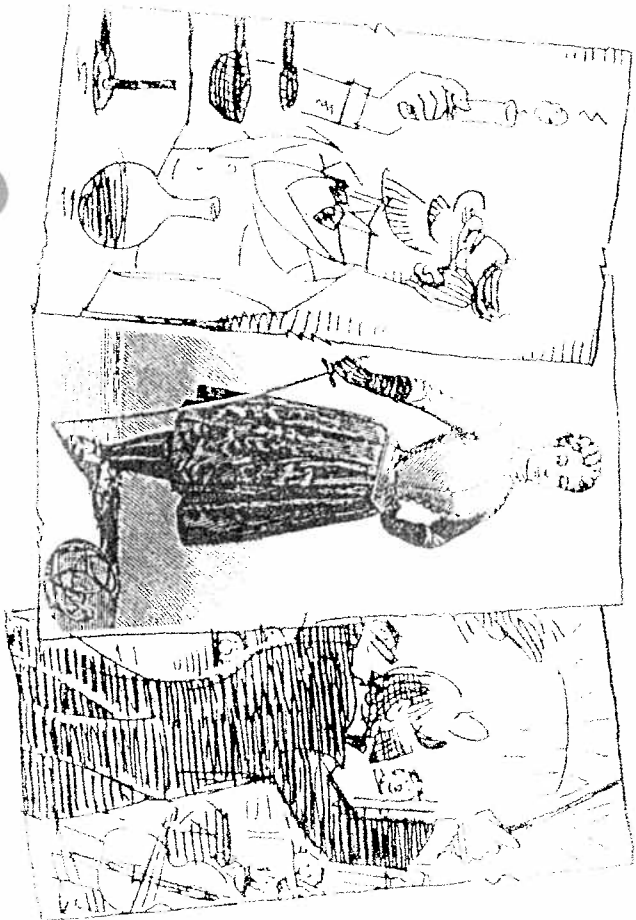
OTHER JEWS OF WESTERN EUROPE WERE BUSY FITTING IN

MAKING IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUSINESS, LIBERAL POLITICS, AND CULTURE—ESPECIALLY IN GERMANY



GERMANS ARE SO RATIONAL, ETHICAL, AND REASONABLE.

GERMAN JEWS WON NOBEL PRIZES IN THE SCIENCES. A GERMAN JEWISH WOMAN WAS AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST IN FENCING. GERMAN AND VIENNESE MUSICIANS OF JEWISH BACKGROUND, LIKE STRAUSS, MAHLER, AND SCHOENBERG, CREATED INNOVATIVE MUSIC.



IN BUSINESS, POLITICS, AND ART JEWS WERE RISK-TAKERS. FOR THEM, THE INSECURITIES OF THE MODERN WORLD WERE NOTHING NEW.



HEY, AFTER WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, WHAT'S A LITTLE MORE TRAUMA AND STRESS?

IN THE LATE 1920s, THE JEWS APPEARED TO BE ACCEPTED IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY. THEIR INTERMARRIAGE RATE WAS 50%.

THE JEWISH PROVENANCE ON THE RIGHT AND LEFT PROVIDED ANTI-SEMITES WITH PLENTY OF AMMUNITION.



BANKING CONSPIRATORS!

CULTURALLY CORRUPT

COMMUNIST!

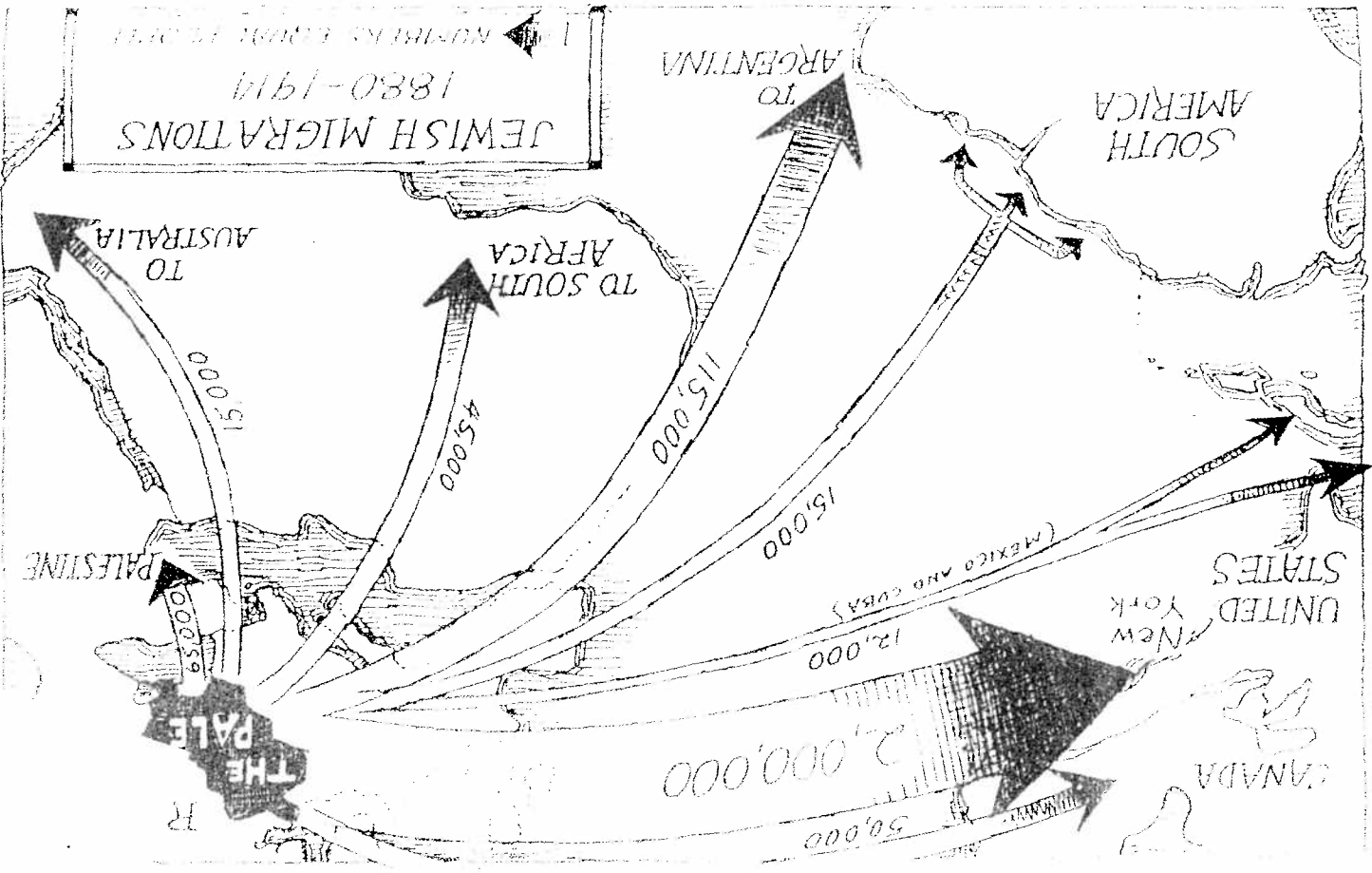
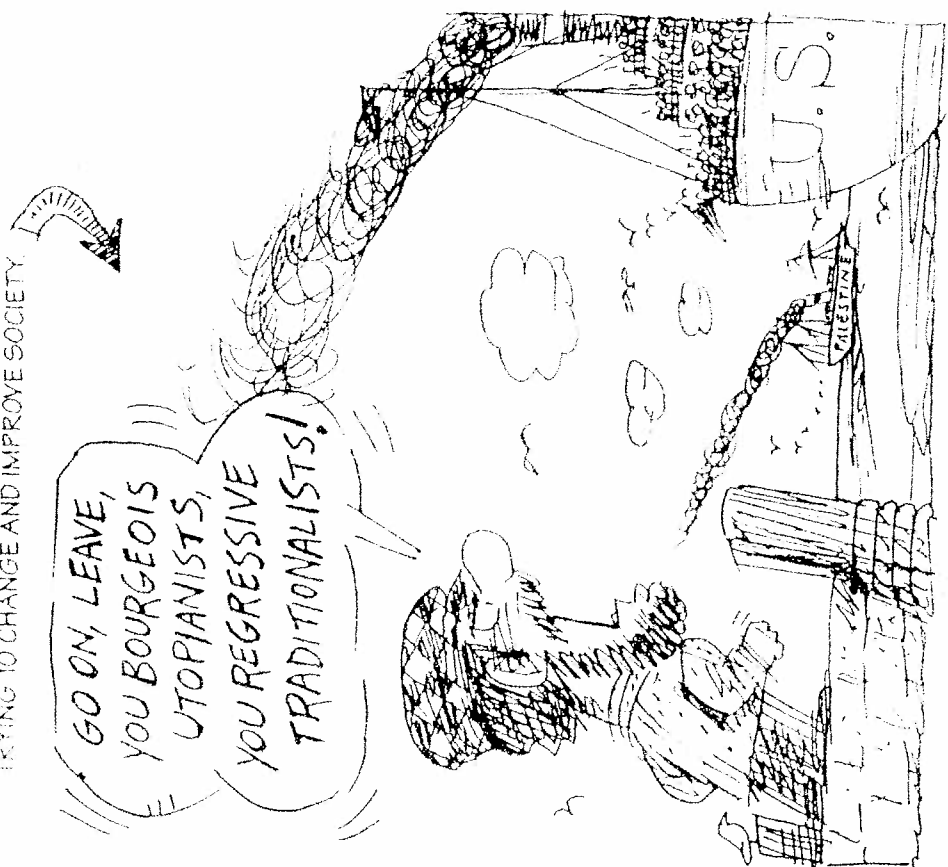
**AS THE 20TH CENTURY DAWNED,
MANY JEWS WERE ON THE MOVE.**

A SMALL NUMBER WERE ZIONISTS SAILING FOR PALESTINE TO BUILD A NEW COUNTRY.

A FLOOD OF EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS, EMBODYING YIDDISH CULTURE, WERE HEADING FOR THE HIGH-SPEED LIFE OF THE UNITED STATES.

SOME WERE SOCIALISTS STAYING BEHIND IN EUROPE, TRYING TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE SOCIETY.

GO ON, LEAVE,
YOU BOURGEOIS
UTOPIANISTS,
YOU REGRESSIVE
TRADITIONALISTS!

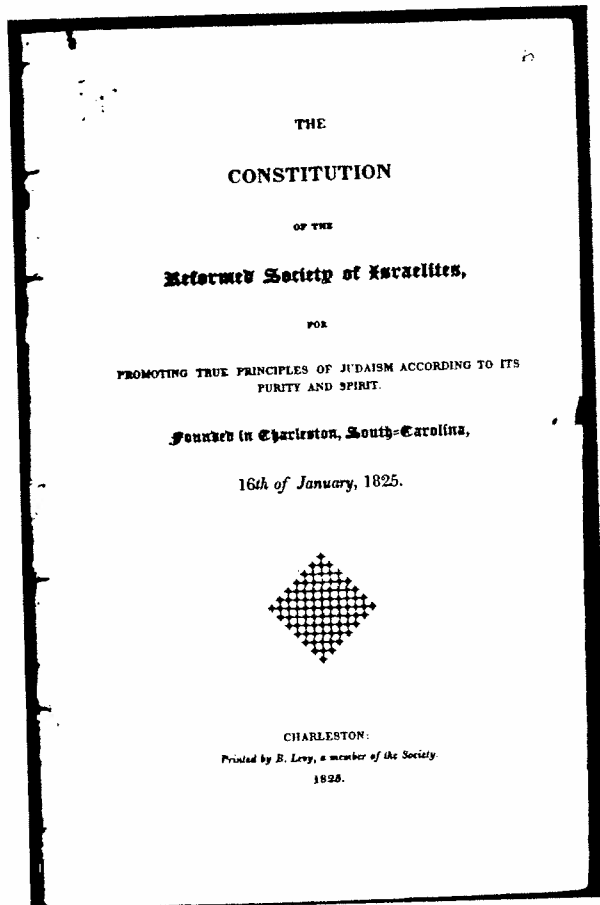


Reform Comes to America

Many problems kept the promises of the Emancipation from being fully realized in Europe. Reactionary governments came back into power. They controlled religion and denied freedom. Those people who wanted to resist change could call on the government to help them fight innovation. Liberal synagogues, therefore, had a very difficult time. Although Reform didn't die in Europe, it remained a fragile and somewhat exotic blossom.

America provided the ideal climate for Reform Judaism. American democracy separates church and state. There has never been any government control of religion here. The entire atmosphere of the country has always encouraged freedom, growth, and change. The synagogues that were established in America did not have to compete with others that already had official state recognition and traditions stretching back for centuries, as in Europe.

The Jews who came to North America, whose very immigration was a big break with the past, brought with them the practices of their European communities. At first, this meant that they and their congregations were rather traditional—but not for very long. They had to adapt their observances to the conditions they found here. Besides, until well into the nineteenth century there were no rabbis or Jewish scholars in America to correct their practices or teach them about their Jewish heritage.



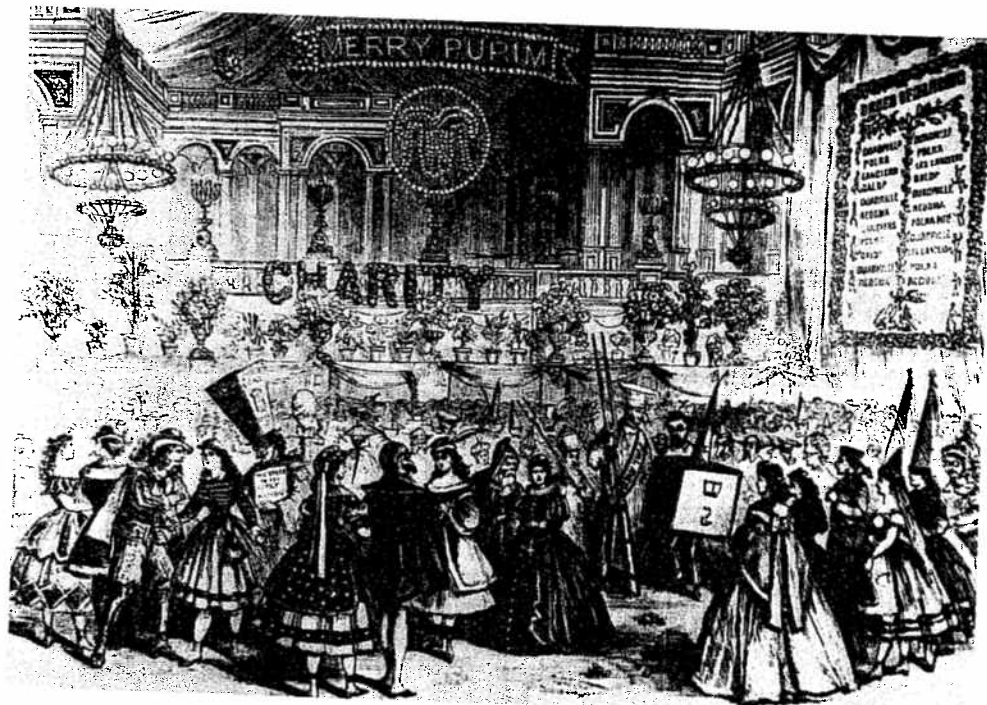
Reform means a continuing process of change and adaptation; *Reformed* has the sense of something already fixed and concluded. Reform Jews today never use the past tense in referring to the name of our movement, although that is the name originally given to the first Reform congregation in the United States, established in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1825.

For all these reasons, the Reformers had an easier time modernizing Judaism in America than they did in Europe. As early as 1824, a group of Jews in Charleston, South Carolina, had their own liberalized service. They soon founded the first Reform congregation in America.

The Two Great Waves of 19th Century Immigrants

The first Jewish settlers arrived in America in the seventeenth century from Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. In the early nineteenth century, Jews from Western European countries, primarily Germany, sailed to America. They had experienced the Emancipation. Most were modern in their outlook. Many were familiar with the activities of the early Reformers. When Reform rabbis and teachers began coming to America in the 1840s, their ideas were immediately popular with great numbers of Jews.

In 1880 the immigration pattern shifted. Jews from Eastern Europe began to arrive in huge numbers. Eastern European Jews continued to come here in a mass migration until 1924, when United States law drastically cut



The Jewish immigrants from Western Europe were comfortable as both modern Jews and as citizens of the United States. Many of them took part in elegant social events such as this Purim Charity Ball.

Levi Strauss was one of many Jewish peddlers who carried their packs into frontier areas, later opening stores and clothing factories.



WHAT MAKES REFORM JEWS SPECIAL?

immigration. By then, Jews from Eastern Europe had become the Jewish majority in this country. Their background was extremely different from that of Western European Jews. These Jews had not been emancipated. Many of them—like Tevye, in *Fiddler on the Roof*—had no secular education or modern world view. They came from countries where Jews lived in isolation. Many spoke only Yiddish. Once in America, they tended to settle in densely packed neighborhoods in the very largest cities.

The new immigrants were obviously not attuned to German-style Reform Judaism. The Reformers, for their part, were very comfortable with the highly Americanized kind of Judaism they had developed and they—not tra-

The influx of huge numbers of Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews created tensions within the established Jewish community. Can you read the Yiddish sign on the vendor's pushcart?



ditionalists—were providing the leadership for the whole American Jewish community. Let's see what their Reform Judaism looked like around the year 1900.

The Style of the Services

Services in Reform congregations were conducted in English, the language of most of the members of the congregation. A majority used the prayer book written by American Reform rabbis, published in 1895. Almost every Reform congregation used an organ, had a choir made up of men and women, and sang English hymns. The services were conducted with great formality and dignity. Sermons, preached every week, often dealt with general human problems as well as with Jewish concerns.

In Europe, most Reform Jews had continued to wear *kippot* at services. This custom followed the old Eastern tradition of keeping heads covered as a sign of respect. In Western countries, on the other hand, it has been considered disrespectful—particularly in the presence of someone important (and who is more important than God?)—for a man to wear a hat indoors. The American Reformers felt that praying bareheaded was the right way to show respect to God. They decided that at their services men should keep their heads uncovered.

Changing More than Styles

The European experiment in shortening the service had now been fully worked out. A number of new changes made the American service shorter still. Over the centuries, many intricate Hebrew poems known as *piyyutim* had been added to the prayer book. Nothing was omitted to make room for them since the rules prohibited dropping any of the regular prayers. Although the *piyyutim* were written in a particularly complicated style, and therefore almost incomprehensible, they were the lyrics of the cantors' most important (and longest) songs. Because they made the service drag on, the Reformers eliminated them.

They also cut out all repetition of prayers. The *tefillah*, or *amidah*, is the central part of the service. In traditional congregations, it is first said quietly by the worshipers and then chanted out loud by the cantor so that people who do not know Hebrew will have this most important group of prayers said for them. The repetition seemed unnecessary now that the Reformers' service was largely in English. It, too, was eliminated.

The Reformers shortened the Shabbat and festival services even further

Unit I: Reform Jewish Ideas: Philosophy of Modernity

Goals:

1. To demonstrate the Reform Jewish commitment to encompassing modern ideas with Jewish tradition
2. To inform students of the critical roles of universalism and rationalism within the Reform movement
3. To expose students to several issues of social justice addressed by the American national and local Reform community
4. To introduce students to the Reform organizations dedicated to social justice
5. To explore Reform Jewish approaches to Bible and Secular Studies

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Articulate ways that Reform Judaism has incorporated ideas of modernity with Jewish tradition
2. Trace the Reform Jewish approach towards moral and ritual laws over time
3. Explain the Reform Jewish involvement in one issue of social justice
4. Identify the key Reform Jewish organizations committed to social justice
5. Explain the Reform Jewish justification for secular study and critical Biblical scholarship

Enduring Understandings (2 out of 4)

1. **Classical Reform Judaism embraced Jewish moral laws and rejected certain ritual laws**
2. **20th-21st Century Reform Judaism promotes the idea of informed choice, meaning that Jews are obligated to learn about Jewish laws, but observance of the ritual laws is up to the discretion of each individual. People shall observe ritual laws that are meaningful to them**

Suggested Activities

- Explain that the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) has expressed beliefs about Reform Judaism in Platforms. The CCAR has issued five main Platforms since 1885. Read excerpts from the Platforms addressing the issue of observance of moral and ritual laws. **Key Questions:** What is the Reform Jewish approach to observing moral and ritual laws? How has the Reform Jewish position on ritual law changed over time? Has it become clearer or more vague? Which platform's position on ritual laws do you agree with? Why?
- Split the class into groups and assign each group to become the CCAR authors of one of the platforms. List the advantages of your position. Debate among the other CCAR authors or have a trial deciding which position towards ritual laws your class agrees with.

Enduring Understanding

3. **American Reform Judaism has always and remains committed to the pursuit of social justice. National and local organizations and committees are dedicated to social justice.**

Suggested Activities

- Read “Social Justice” excerpt from What We Believe... What We Do... A Pocket Guide for Reform Judaism by Maslin, excerpts from the Platforms addressing the issue of social justice, and the two UAHC resolutions on social action. Key Questions: Why is the Reform movement committed to social justice? What are some examples of social justice you think Reform Judaism has been/should be committed to? Has the Reform commitment evolved or stayed the same?
- Exploring the RAC (Religious Action Center) and today’s social justice issues. If you have computers accessible, have your students explore the RAC website www.rac.org. If you don’t have computers, you can ask them to do this at home or you can print out the appropriate material and bring to class. Discuss the main mission of the RAC. Then in pairs or individually have them pick an issue the RAC addresses to explore in depth. There is an alphabetical list provided here as well as online at www.rac.org/issues ranging from affirmative action to world Jewry. After researching the RAC’s involvement on this issue they can write articles for the Temple Bulletin about the RAC’s involvement and the important role we have in supporting the issue. They can also write articles about the importance of supporting their issue to the local newspaper or local Congressman.

- If possible, take a trip to the RAC or invite a RAC representative to speak.
- Local Commitment to Social Justice. Research your synagogue's commitment to social justice. Is it mentioned in the Temple's mission statement? Is there a social action committee? If so, invite a member to come address the class. What does the committee do? Do you have a Mitzvah Day? Ask why. If so, Get Involved! If not, create a Social Action Project!



Enduring Understanding

4. **Reform Judaism encourages the study of both Jewish and secular subjects and allows for the questioning of religious authority (ie: Torah authorship)**

Suggested Activity

- Who wrote the Torah? Read the stories of Creation in Genesis 1:1-2:3. List the order of creation. Key questions: How does this account fit in with the theory of evolution. Are they compatible? Then read "Reform Jewish Belief about the Writing of the Bible," "An Imperfect Creation" and "Adding Torah in Every Generation," (Borowitz 102-106). Key Questions: According to this text, who wrote the Torah? What was God's role? What is our role today?
- Research a Reform or Community Jewish Day School's policy on teaching Bible and Science. Conduct the search via phone, email, or in person. How does the school teach Torah, specifically the creation story? Is the Torah written by God, by people, or is this issue not addressed? How does it teach science and the theories of evolution? Does it? How does it explain these contradictory theories to students?


Memorable Moments:

1. Trip to RAC
 2. RAC or Day School speaker
 3. Social Justice Article Writing to Congressman or Temple Bulletin
 4. Class Social Action Project. Get involved in a Mitzvah Day project or create your own class project such as a food or toy drive or something more active like serving in a soup kitchen. Be in charge of publicizing the event and if applicable have the class deliver the food or toys to the pantry/shelter.
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CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS



Reform Judaism

Declaration of Principles

1885 Pittsburgh Conference

Convening at the call of Kaufmann Kohler of New York, Reform rabbis from around the United States met from November 16 through November 19, 1885 with Isaac Mayer Wise presiding. The meeting was declared the continuation of the Philadelphia Conference of 1869, which was the continuation of the German Conference of 1841 to 1846. The rabbis adopted the following seminal text:

1. We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the Infinite, and in every mode, source or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers, in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended midst continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation, this God-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.

2. We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as the priest of the one God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domain of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age, and at times clothing its conception of divine Providence and Justice dealing with men in miraculous narratives.

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

5. We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.


Bible +
Science

Moral
Laws

6. We recognize in Judaism a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason. We are convinced of the utmost necessity of preserving the historical identity with our great past. Christianity and Islam, being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission, to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and therefore we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

7. We reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul is immortal, grounding the belief on the divine nature of human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism, the beliefs both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward.

8. In full accordance with the spirit of the Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relations between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.

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The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism Columbus -- 1937

In view of the changes that have taken place in the modern world and the consequent need of stating anew the teachings of Reform Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis makes the following declaration of principles. It presents them not as a fixed creed but as a guide for the progressive elements of Jewry.

A. Judaism and its Foundations *Universalism, Rationalism*

1. *Nature of Judaism.* Judaism is the historical religious experience of the Jewish people. Though growing out of Jewish life, its message is universal, aiming at the union and perfection of mankind under the sovereignty of God. Reform Judaism recognizes the principle of progressive development in religion and consciously applies this principle to spiritual as well as to cultural and social life. Judaism welcomes all truth, whether written in the pages of scripture or deciphered from the records of nature. The new discoveries of science, while replacing the older scientific views underlying our sacred literature, do not conflict with the essential spirit of religion as manifested in the consecration of man's will, heart and mind to the service of God and of humanity.
2. *God.* The heart of Judaism and its chief contribution to religion is the doctrine of the One, living God, who rules the world through law and love. In Him all existence has its creative source and mankind its ideal of conduct. Though transcending time and space, He is the indwelling Presence of the world. We worship Him as the Lord of the universe and as our merciful Father.
3. *Man.* Judaism affirms that man is created in the Divine image. His spirit is immortal. He is an active co-worker with God. As a child of God, he is endowed with moral freedom and is charged with the responsibility of overcoming evil and striving after ideal ends.
4. *Torah.* God reveals Himself not only in the majesty, beauty and orderliness of nature, but also in the vision and moral striving of the human spirit. Revelation is a continuous process, confined to no one group and to no one age. Yet the people of Israel, through its prophets and sages, achieved unique insight in the realm of religious truth. The Torah, both written and oral, enshrines Israel's ever-growing consciousness of God and of the moral law. It preserves the historical precedents, sanctions and norms of Jewish life, and seeks to mould it in the patterns of goodness and of holiness. Being products of historical processes, certain of its laws have lost their binding force with the passing of the conditions that called them forth. But as a depository of permanent spiritual ideals, the Torah remains the dynamic source of the life of Israel. Each age has the obligation to adapt the teachings of the Torah to its basic needs in consonance with the genius of Judaism.
5. *Israel.* Judaism is the soul of which Israel is the body. Living in all parts of the world, Israel has been held together by the ties of a common history, and above all, by the heritage of faith. Though we recognize in the group loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition, a bond which still unites them with us, we maintain that it is by its religion and for its religion that the Jewish people has lived. The non-Jew who accepts our faith is welcomed as a full member of the Jewish community. In all lands where our people live, they assume and seek to share loyally the full duties and responsibilities of citizenship and to create seats of Jewish knowledge and religion. In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life. Throughout the ages it has been Israel's mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, Justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal.

B. Ethics

Social Justice

6. *Ethics and Religion.* In Judaism religion and morality blend into an indissoluble unity. Seeking God means to strive after holiness, righteousness and goodness. The love of God is incomplete without the love of one's fellowmen. Judaism emphasizes the kinship of the human race, the sanctity and worth of human life and personality and the right of the individual to freedom and to the pursuit of his chosen vocation. Justice to all, irrespective of race, sect or class, is the inalienable right and the inescapable obligation of all. The state and organized government exist in order to further these ends.
7. *Social justice.* Judaism seeks the attainment of a just society by the application of its teachings to the economic order, to industry and commerce, and to national and international affairs. It aims at the elimination of man-made misery and suffering, of poverty and degradation, of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife. It advocates the promotion of harmonious relations between warring classes on the basis of equity and justice, and the creation of conditions under which human personality may flourish. It pleads for the safeguarding of childhood against exploitation. It champions the cause of all who work and of their right to an adequate standard of living, as prior to the rights of property. Judaism emphasizes the duty of charity, and strives for a social order which will protect men against the material disabilities of old age, sickness and unemployment.
8. *Peace.* Judaism, from the days of the prophets, has proclaimed to mankind the ideal of universal peace. The spiritual and physical disarmament of all nations has been one of its essential teachings. It abhors all violence and relies upon moral education, love and sympathy to secure human progress. It regards justice as the foundation of the well-being of nations and the condition of enduring peace. It urges organized international action for disarmament, collective security and world peace.

C. Religious Practice

9. *The Religious Life.* Jewish life is marked by consecration to these ideals of Judaism. It calls for faithful participation in the life of the Jewish community as it finds expression in home, synagogue and school and in all other agencies that enrich Jewish life and promote its welfare. The Home has been and must continue to be a stronghold of Jewish life, hallowed by the spirit of love and reverence, by moral discipline and religious observance and worship. The Synagogue is the oldest and most democratic institution in Jewish life. It is the prime communal agency by which Judaism is fostered and preserved. It links the Jews of each community and unites them with all Israel. The perpetuation of Judaism as a living force depends upon religious knowledge and upon the Education of each new generation in our rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

Prayer is the voice of religion, the language of faith and aspiration. It directs man's heart and mind Godward, voices the needs and hopes of the community and reaches out after goals which invest life with supreme value. To deepen the spiritual life of our people, we must cultivate the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and synagogue.

Judaism as a way of life requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular, in our worship and instruction.

These timeless aims and ideals of our faith we present anew to a confused and troubled world. We call upon our fellow Jews to rededicate themselves to them, and, in harmony with all men, hopefully and courageously to continue Israel's eternal quest after God and His kingdom.



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Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective Adopted at San Francisco, 1976

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has on special occasions described the spiritual state of Reform Judaism. The centenaries of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seem an appropriate time for another such effort. We therefore record our sense of the unity of our movement today.

One Hundred Years: What We Have Taught

We celebrate the role of Reform Judaism in North America, the growth of our movement on this free ground, the great contributions of our membership to the dreams and achievements of this society. We also feel great satisfaction at how much of our pioneering conception of Judaism has been accepted by the Household of Israel. It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; and that change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality in Jewish life. Moreover, though some still disagree, substantial numbers have also accepted our teachings: that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; that women have full rights to practice Judaism; and that Jewish obligation begins with the informed will of every individual. Most modern Jews, within their various religious movements, are embracing Reform Jewish perspectives. We see this past century as having confirmed the essential wisdom of our movement.

One Hundred Years: What We Have Learned

Obviously, much else has changed in the past century. We continue to probe the extraordinary events of the past generation, seeking to understand their meaning and to incorporate their significance in our lives. The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress. The State of Israel, through its many accomplishments, raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion. The widespread threats to freedom, the problems inherent in the explosion of new knowledge and of ever more powerful technologies, and the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture have taught us to be less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching. We have learned that the survival of the Jewish people is of highest priority and that in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment.

Diversity Within Unity, the Hallmark of Reform

Reform Jews respond to change in various ways according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual. However, Reform Judaism does more than tolerate diversity; it engenders it. In our uncertain historical situation we must expect to have far greater diversity than previous generations knew. How we shall live with diversity without stifling dissent and without paralyzing our ability to take positive action will test our character and our principles. We stand open to any position thoughtfully and conscientiously advocated in the spirit of Reform Jewish belief. While we may differ in our interpretation and application of the ideas enunciated here, we accept such differences as precious and see in them Judaism's best hope for confronting whatever the future holds for us. Yet in all our diversity we perceive a certain unity and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together.

1. *God* -- The affirmation of God has always been essential to our people's will to survive. In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways. The trials of our own time and the challenges of modern culture have made steady belief and clear understanding difficult for some. Nevertheless, we ground our lives, personally and communally, on God's reality and remain open to new experiences and conceptions of the Divine. Amid the mystery we call life, we affirm that human beings, created in God's image, share in God's eternity despite the mystery we call death.
2. *The People Israel* -- The Jewish people and Judaism defy precise definition because both are in the process of

becoming. Jews, by birth or conversion, constitute an uncommon union of faith and peoplehood. Born as Hebrews in the ancient Near East, we are bound together like all ethnic groups by language, land, history, culture, and institutions. But the people of Israel is unique because of its involvement with God and its resulting perception of the human condition. Throughout our long history our people has been inseparable from its religion with its messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed.

3. *Torah* -- Torah results from the relationship between God and the Jewish people. The records of our earliest confrontations are uniquely important to us. Lawgivers and prophets, historians and poets gave us a heritage whose study is a religious imperative and whose practice is our chief means to holiness. Rabbis and teachers, philosophers and mystics, gifted Jews in every age amplified the Torah tradition. For millennia, the creation of Torah has not ceased and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the chain of tradition.

situational
laws

4. *Our Religious Obligations: Religious Practice* -- Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by which we strive to achieve universal justice and peace. Reform Judaism shares this emphasis on duty and obligation. Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; lifelong study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.

5. *Our Obligations: The State of Israel and the Diaspora* -- We are privileged to live in an extraordinary time, one in which a third Jewish commonwealth has been established in our people's ancient homeland. We are bound to that land and to the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties. We have been enriched by its culture and ennobled by its indomitable spirit. We see it providing unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression. We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security, and defining its Jewish character. We encourage *aliyah* for those who wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion. We demand that Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized in the State of Israel.

At the same time that we consider the State of Israel vital to the welfare of Judaism everywhere, we reaffirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue. It leads us beyond itself to cooperate with other Jews, to share their concerns, and to assume leadership in communal affairs. We are therefore committed to the full democratization of the Jewish community and to its hallowing in terms of Jewish values.

The State of Israel and the Diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.

6. *Our Obligations: Survival and Service* -- Early Reform Jews, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism, regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in terms of Jewry's service to humanity. In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism. The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic expectations.

Until the recent past our obligations to the Jewish people and to all humanity seemed congruent. At times now these two imperatives appear to conflict. We know of no simple way to resolve such tensions. We must, however, confront them without abandoning either of our commitments. A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations.

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbound confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have lived through terrible tragedy and been compelled to reappropriate our tradition's realism about the human capacity for evil. Yet our people has always refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, being granted life, seized it, nurtured it, and, rising above catastrophe, showed humankind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope.

We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny. We dedicate ourselves, as did the generations of Jews who went before us, to work and wait for that day when "They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."



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Reform Judaism ...

**A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism
Adopted at the 1999 Pittsburgh Convention
Central Conference of American Rabbis
May 1999 - Sivan 5759**

See Commentary on the Principles for Reform Judaism

Preamble

On three occasions during the last century and a half, the Reform rabbinate has adopted comprehensive statements to help guide the thought and practice of our movement. In 1885, fifteen rabbis issued the Pittsburgh Platform, a set of guidelines that defined Reform Judaism for the next fifty years. A revised statement of principles, the Columbus Platform, was adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1937. A third set of rabbinic guidelines, the Centenary Perspective, appeared in 1976 on the occasion of the centenary of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Today, when so many individuals are striving for religious meaning, moral purpose and a sense of community, we believe it is our obligation as rabbis once again to state a set of principles that define Reform Judaism in our own time.

Throughout our history, we Jews have remained firmly rooted in Jewish tradition, even as we have learned much from our encounters with other cultures. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship.

This "Statement of Principles" affirms the central tenets of Judaism - God, Torah and Israel - even as it acknowledges the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. It also invites all Reform Jews to engage in a dialogue with the sources of our tradition, responding out of our knowledge, our experience and our faith. Thus we hope to transform our lives through קדושה (*kedushah*), holiness.

God

We affirm the reality and oneness of God, even as we may differ in our understanding of the Divine presence.

We affirm that the Jewish people is bound to God by an eternal ברית (*b'rit*), covenant, as reflected in our varied understandings of Creation, Revelation and Redemption.

Social Justice / Ethical Laws

We affirm that every human being is created בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים (*b'tzelem Elohim*), in the image of God, and that therefore every human life is sacred.

We regard with reverence all of God's creation and recognize our human responsibility for its preservation and protection.

We encounter God's presence in moments of awe and wonder, in acts of justice and compassion, in loving relationships and in the experiences of everyday life.

We respond to God daily: through public and private prayer, through study and through the performance of other מצוות (*mitzvot*), sacred obligations -- בֵּין אָדָם לַמָּקוֹם (*bein adam la Makom*), to God, and בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵירוֹ (*bein adam la-chaveiro*), to other human beings.

We strive for a faith that fortifies us through the vicissitudes of our lives -- illness and healing, transgression and repentance, bereavement and consolation, despair and hope.

We continue to have faith that, in spite of the unspeakable evils committed against our people and the sufferings

endured by others, the partnership of God and humanity will ultimately prevail.

The trust in our tradition's promise that, although God created us as finite beings, the spirit within us is eternal.

In all these ways and more, God gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Torah

We affirm that Torah is the foundation of Jewish life.

We cherish the truths revealed in Torah, God's ongoing revelation to our people and the record of our people's ongoing relationship with God.

We affirm that Torah is a manifestation of אהבת עולם (*ahavat olam*), God's eternal love for the Jewish people and for all humanity.

We affirm the importance of studying Hebrew, the language of Torah and Jewish liturgy, that we may draw closer to our people's sacred texts.

Laws - Ritual

We are called by Torah to lifelong study in the home, in the synagogue and in every place where Jews gather to learn and teach. Through Torah study we are called to מצוות (*mitzvot*), the means by which we make our lives holy.

We are committed to the ongoing study of the whole array of מצוות (*mitzvot*) and to the fulfillment of those that address us as individuals and as a community. Some of these מצוות (*mitzvot*), sacred obligations, have long been observed by Reform Jews; others, both ancient and modern, demand renewed attention as the result of the unique context of our own times.

We bring Torah into the world when we seek to sanctify the times and places of our lives through regular home and congregational observance. Shabbat calls us to bring the highest moral values to our daily labor and to culminate the workweek with קדושה (*kedushah*), holiness, מנוחה (*menuchah*), rest and יעגג (*oneg*), joy. The High Holy Days call us to account for our deeds. The Festivals enable us to celebrate with joy our people's religious journey in the context of the changing seasons. The days of remembrance remind us of the tragedies and the triumphs that have shaped our people's historical experience both in ancient and modern times. And we mark the milestones of our personal journeys with traditional and creative rites that reveal the holiness in each stage of life.

Social Justice

We bring Torah into the world when we strive to fulfill the highest ethical mandates in our relationships with others and with all of God's creation. Partners with God in תיקון עולם (*tikkun olam*), repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age. We seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world. We are obligated to pursue צדקה (*zedek*), justice and righteousness, and to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor, to act against discrimination and oppression, to pursue peace, to welcome the stranger, to protect the earth's biodiversity and natural resources, and to redeem those in physical, economic and spiritual bondage. In so doing, we reaffirm social action and social justice as a central prophetic focus of traditional Reform Jewish belief and practice. We affirm the מצוה (*mitzvah*) of צדקה (*zedakah*), setting aside portions of our earnings and our time to provide for those in need. These acts bring us closer to fulfilling the prophetic call to translate the words of Torah into the works of our hands.

In all these ways and more, Torah gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Israel

We are Israel, a people aspiring to holiness, singled out through our ancient covenant and our unique history among

the nations to be witnesses to God's presence. We are linked by that covenant and that history to all Jews in every age and place.

We are committed to the מצוה (*mitzvah*) of אהבת ישראל (*ahavat Yisrael*), love for the Jewish people, and to כלל ישראל (*k'lal Yisrael*), the entirety of the community of Israel. Recognizing that כל ישראל ארעם זה בזה (*kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh*), all Jews are responsible for one another, we reach out to all Jews across ideological and geographical boundaries.

We embrace religious and cultural pluralism as an expression of the vitality of Jewish communal life in Israel and the Diaspora.

We pledge to fulfill Reform Judaism's historic commitment to the complete equality of women and men in Jewish life.

We are an inclusive community, opening doors to Jewish life to people of all ages, to varied kinds of families, to all regardless of their sexual orientation, to גרים (*gerim*), those who have converted to Judaism, and to all individuals and families, including the intermarried, who strive to create a Jewish home.

We believe that we must not only open doors for those ready to enter our faith, but also to actively encourage those who are seeking a spiritual home to find it in Judaism.

We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by supporting individuals and families in the creation of homes rich in Jewish learning and observance.

We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by making the synagogue central to Jewish communal life, so that it may elevate the spiritual, intellectual and cultural quality of our lives.

We are committed to מדינת ישראל (*Medinat Yisrael*), the State of Israel, and rejoice in its accomplishments. We affirm the unique qualities of living in ארץ ישראל (*Eretz Yisrael*), the land of Israel, and encourage עלייה (*aliyah*), immigration to Israel.

We are committed to a vision of the State of Israel that promotes full civil, human and religious rights for all its inhabitants and that strives for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbors.

We are committed to promoting and strengthening Progressive Judaism in Israel, which will enrich the spiritual life of the Jewish state and its people.

We affirm that both Israeli and Diaspora Jewry should remain vibrant and interdependent communities. As we urge Jews who reside outside Israel to learn Hebrew as a living language and to make periodic visits to Israel in order to study and to deepen their relationship to the Land and its people, so do we affirm that Israeli Jews have much to learn from the religious life of Diaspora Jewish communities.

We are committed to furthering Progressive Judaism throughout the world as a meaningful religious way of life for the Jewish people.

In all these ways and more, Israel gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

(*Baruch she-amar ve-haya ha-olam*).

Praised be the One through whose word all things came to be.

May our words find expression in holy actions.

May they raise us up to a life of meaning devoted to God's service

And to the redemption of our world.

DAILY LIFE

Living one's daily life as a Jew provides a multiplicity of opportunities for the transformation of the ordinary into the sacred. *Mitzvot* are not restricted to Sabbaths, festivals, the life cycle, and other ritual occasions. All of our traditional texts, in fact, devote chapters, if not volumes, to the opportunities for *mitzvah* in daily life.

It would be presumptuous to suggest that a few paragraphs in this concise booklet, which focuses primarily on the festivals and the life cycle, might adequately cover the daily life of a Jew. But we would be derelict if we did not provide at least a basic approach to such essentials of Reform Judaism as social justice, *tzedakah*, and the importance of Israel.

What follows is a brief review of these three basic issues and suggestions for how to make them a part of the life of every Reform Jew.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Reform Judaism has always placed primary emphasis on *tikkun olam*—the building of a just society in the image of God. Particularly in America, the Reform movement set out to invigorate the prophetic impulse in Judaism.³⁵

Reform Judaism did not invent Jewish ethics. The Jewish message of social justice is as old as Judaism itself; justice and Judaism are inseparable. But in the centuries preceding the origins of the Reform movement, rituals and ceremonies became the primary focus of Judaism, and the magnificent ethical lessons of the prophets were often ignored.

Reform Judaism teaches that a firm commitment to social justice, to the improvement of our society, is an essential part of our religion. In Jewish belief God is the creative force behind a purposeful universe. Men and women, created with the gift of free will, have a positive purpose to serve on God's earth. We are free to choose to do evil or good, to ignore God's commandments or respect them, to love our sisters and brothers or despise and distrust them.

Possibly the greatest achievement of Reform Judaism was the reestablishment of prophetic ethical idealism as the purpose and goal of Jewish faith and living. We take seriously Isaiah's compelling call to true religious living:

*When you lift up your hands,
I will turn My eyes away from you;
Though you pray at length,
I will not listen.*

*Your hands are stained with crime—
Wash yourselves clean;
Put your evil doings
Away from My sight.
Cease to do evil;
Learn to do good.*

*Devote yourselves to justice;
Aid the wronged.
Uphold the rights of the orphan;
Defend the cause of the widow.*

(Isaiah 1:15-17)

Why should this concise guide for Reform Jews focus on anything more than ritual *mitzvot*? Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, who put social action at the top of the Reform agenda, answered that question in a speech to Reform Jewish leaders in 1955:

A guide for Reform Judaism do we desire? Indeed we do. But not for ritual and rites alone—but for righteous conduct and decent behavior . . . not merely a mini-

mum code for liturgical worship but a minimal code of moral conduct incumbent upon anyone who calls himself a Reform Jew, presuming to be the heir of Hebrew prophet and sage. Even the prophet prefaced his command to "walk humbly" with the demand to "do justly and to love mercy."

There are literally hundreds of opportunities for the practice of social justice. We mention just a few:

- Recognizing that we are "partners with God" in the fashioning of a better world for all humanity, i.e., *tikkun olam*.
- Conducting our businesses, professions, and interpersonal relationships according to the highest standards of ethical behavior.
- Participating in congregational and communal efforts to house the homeless and feed the hungry.
- Teaching our children to accept responsibility for the welfare of the community.
- Reaching out to those new to Judaism, to interfaith couples, to singles, to nontraditional families, and to others who may not feel welcome or comfortable in our congregations.
- Providing care and companionship for the elderly and the ill.
- Making *tzedakah* (See below) an essential part of our weekly family routine.
- Getting involved in the political process and working for the healing of the environment and the rights of the disadvantaged.
- Encouraging our congregations to become involved in social-action projects.

TZEDAKAH ³⁶

The term *tzedakah* is derived from the Hebrew root *tzedek*, meaning "justice" or "righteousness," as found, for example, in Deuteronomy 16:20: "*Tzedek tzedek tirdof*—Justice, justice you shall pursue." The concept of *tzedakah* as a form of charity is an extension of the original concept of *tzedek* as justice and righteousness, so that the term *tzedakah* has been translated as "righteous giving."

According to the Torah and subsequent Jewish law, every Jew is obligated to extend a helping hand to a person in need—Jew or non-Jew—and it is the inherent right of every person to be helped, "for there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: Open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

The underlying Jewish philosophy is that "the earth is the Lord's and all its fullness." (Psalms 24:1) Since everything belongs to God, we are merely the stewards of God's infinite blessings, and it is, therefore, incumbent upon us—i.e., a *mitzvah*—to share God's substance with others who are in need. This idea is spelled out succinctly in the harvest laws in Leviticus 19:9-10, which command the landowner to leave the edges of his fields and the gleanings for the poor. They are entitled to a part of the harvest by sacred right. This is not charity, a gift of love, but *tzedakah*, an act of justice.

According to Maimonides, there are eight rungs on the ladder of *tzedakah*. The lowest is to give reluctantly; the highest is to help a needy person become self-sufficient.

Among the many opportunities for *tzedakah* are:

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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

39th Council
March 1946
Cincinnati, OH

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

"Resolved that the U. A. H. C. Executive Board establish a Social Actions Committee to deal with the suggest to our affiliated congregations ways and means of applying and implementing the prophetic teachings of our Religion. This Committee should cooperate with the social justice Commission of the C. C. A. R. and serve either separately or jointly in carrying out the imperatives of our faith. The Union suggests the employment of a full time Director for this joint Commission."



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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

49th General Assembly
November 1967
Montreal, Quebec

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEES

Seventeen years after the establishment of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism there remains a significant number of our congregations without social action or community affairs committees. We find this incongruous, particularly at a time when the religious aspect of our society is being challenged to more relevantly bring to bear its great prophetic message on the problems of our world.

We, therefore, urge the establishment of a social action committee in each of our congregations. Where such committees already exist, we call upon them to intensify and expand their activities.

We further urge that congregational boards of trustees, as well as the leadership of our various regions, take a more serious interest in and make a greater commitment to the work of their social action committees, both congregational and regional, so that the unfortunate gap which presently exists between them can be quickly closed.



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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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What is the Center?

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) has been the hub of justice and legislative activity in the nation's capital for over 40 years. It and mobilized the American Jewish community on legislative and social c advocate in the Congress of the United States on issues ranging from Isr Jewry to economic justice and civil rights, to international peace and relig

The RAC is the Washington office of the Union of American Hebrew Congr and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), representing 1.5 Jews and 1,700 Reform rabbis in 900 congregations throughout North A

Who operates the Center?

The Religious Action Center is under the auspices of the Commission on Reform Judaism, a joint instrumentality of the Central Conference of Ame and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with its affiliates: Ame Conference of Cantors, Association of Reform Zionists of America, Nation Temple Administrators, National Association of Temple Educators, Nation Temple Brotherhoods, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, North Federation of Temple Youth.

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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

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The Reform Jewish Belief About the Writing of the Bible

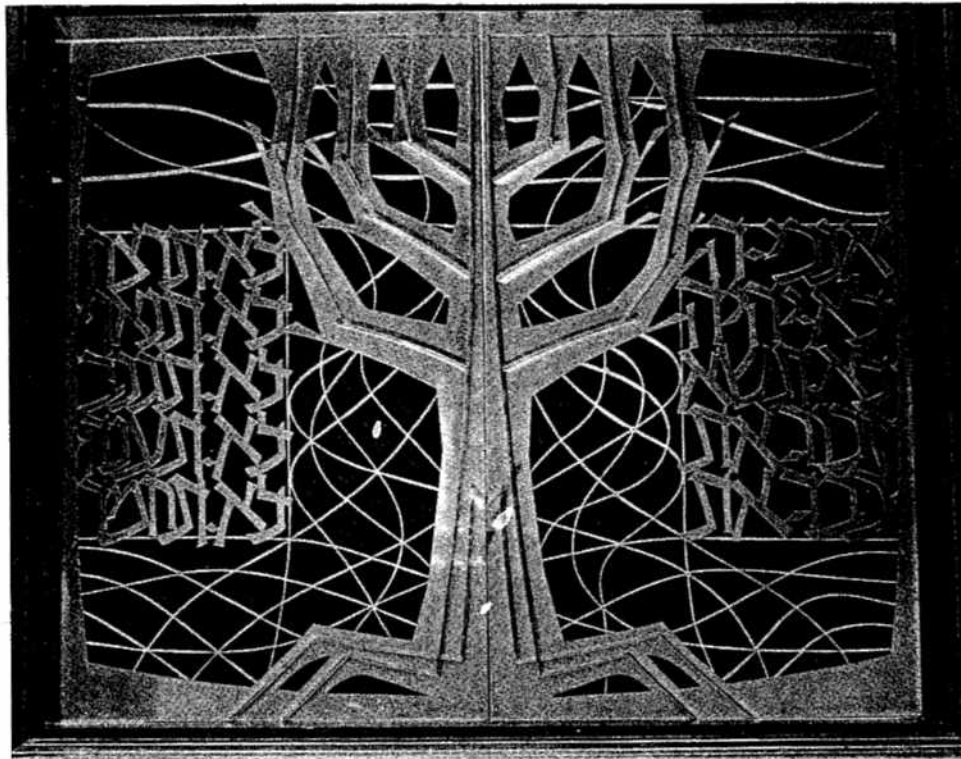
After the Emancipation, Jews who came into contact with modern methods of studying history and historical books found that they could not accept the idea that the Bible transmits God's own words. But if God didn't actually "speak" to Moses or the prophets, where did our ancestors get their extraordinary ideas about justice and mercy? What inspired their instructions, accepted by countless generations since, about how to live an upright and praiseworthy life? Why did the Reformers themselves continue to believe in the truth of the Bible's messages and its importance for their lives—particularly since they did not believe that God dictated it?

The Reformers looked for a modern explanation to show why the Bible was still holy. To understand the answer that satisfied them, think about the Bible's words for its creation: "And God said to Moses, 'Speak to the Israelites saying . . .'" The prophets report, "The word of God came to me" or "Thus says the Lord." Reform Jews came to the conclusion that when the Bible says "God spoke" it should be understood as "a religious genius sensed what God wanted."

We all know about musical geniuses who seem able to hear in ways no one else can and artistic geniuses who create beauty where others saw nothing. In religion, too, there are geniuses—individuals who are particularly sensitive to God. The biblical writers were geniuses of this sort. When a re-

Students at the New York School of HUC-JIR listen to Dean Paul Steinberg as he explains a passage from the Torah.



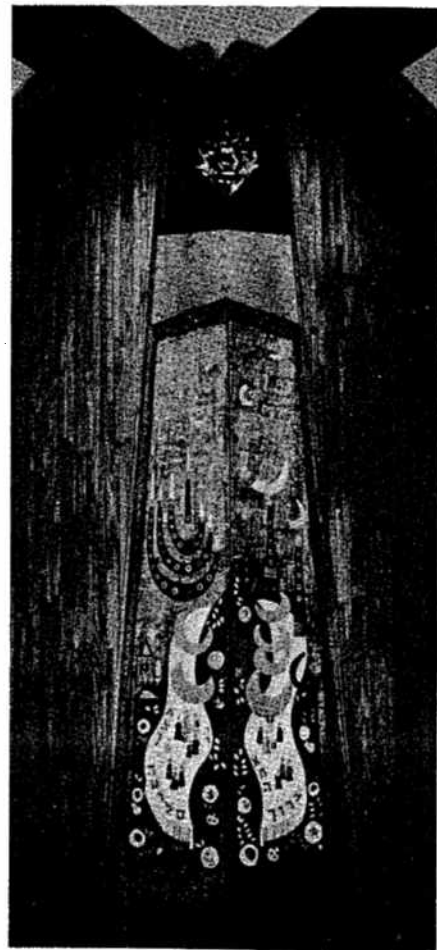
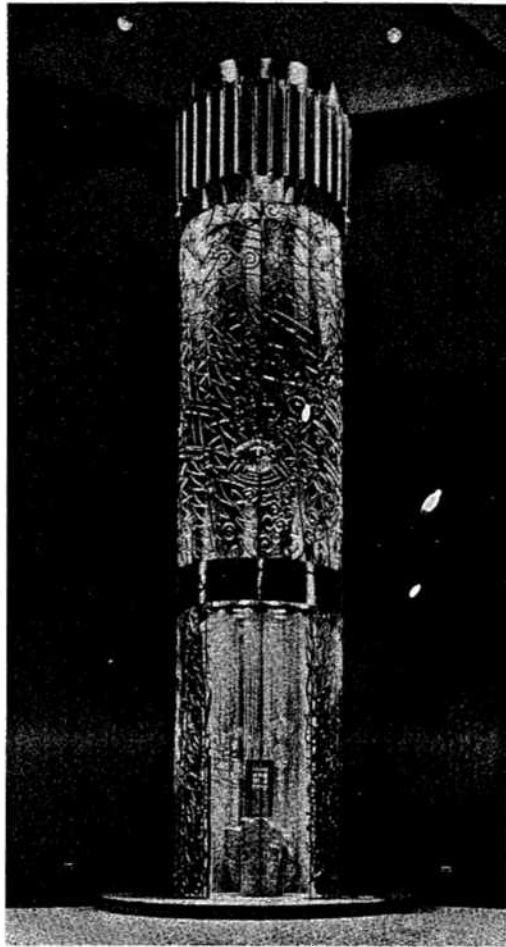


Every congregation has at least one Torah scroll in its *aron ba-kodesh*, or ark of the law. The ark itself is often decorated with words from the Torah.

Religious inspiration came to them and they put it into a law or poem or story or history they themselves were awed by their insights and felt them too grand to be merely their own ideas. They truly believed that the very words they used came from God. Even today, when we speak of being “inspired” we are saying that what we created was greater than anything we could do alone. *Inspired* literally means having a special spirit put into a person. Once in a while, everyone of us has insights greater than our normal thoughts—although most of us would hesitate to say “God told me” or claim to be religious geniuses.

An Imperfect Creation

The brilliant human beings who created the different parts of the Bible were geniuses. But they weren't perfect and they didn't have magic powers. They were people who talked in terms of what was going on in their own times. And like all people, even geniuses, they didn't know everything and they sometimes made errors. So did the people who finally put the Bible in written form. That is why sometimes letters are upside down in the Torah text or



One of these arks has an open feeling, with filigree work in metal; the other is decorated with brightly designed cloth. They are very beautiful, but what makes them important is the fact that they hold the Torah scrolls inside.

written wrongly. That is why it can say in one place that Noah should take two clean animals into the ark and in another that he should take seven.

Seeing the human factor in the Bible helps to explain why sometimes the Bible does not live up to its own high ethical standards. Our ancestors worked out the most humane laws about slavery that they could, but they didn't abolish slavery altogether. They tell the stories of Hagar and Ishmael being thrown out by Sarah, of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, of the sale of Joseph and other acts we would consider unholy. The people who wrote and the people whose lives they told about were often inspired human beings. They were able to reach toward God in ways we cannot—and to put their insights into words more brilliantly than anyone has been able to do since their time.

Consider the ideals these writers set before us. The Bible recognizes that all human beings, not just Jews, are God's "children." It does not favor rich

or famous or powerful people. It respects good people wherever they are found. The Bible calls for good societies and for countries to behave righteously. Indeed, the Bible's authors dreamt of a day when all people would live in justice and compassion, and nations would all live in peace. The Bible teaches an amazingly high standard of good and evil.

Because our ancestors were so much like the other peoples of the ancient Near East in everything else, their distinctive religious beliefs are extraordinary. Our ancestors believed in one God. They did not worship idols. They did not confuse God with any power or thing in nature, no matter how great. They knew God was mightier than whatever they could see or imagine. Although they saw confusion and conflict all around them, they continued to look for unity, harmony and peace. Despite the fact that their ideas seemed odd to others and their way of life peculiar, they knew that someday everyone would come to agree with them. They built their special sense of an invisible God into their way of life and created the distinctive Jewish way of being human and holy that Jews still accept today. No wonder that we, thousands of years later, who live in a country far different from the primitive agricultural community of old Judea, say in awe that the writers of the Bible—for all their failings—were true religious geniuses.

Adding to Torah in Every Generation

Traditional Judaism taught that religious inspiration of the highest level ended after the destruction of the First Temple. In some ways, Reform Jews agree with that. For Reform Jews, as for traditionalists, no book composed after the Bible has ever equaled that greatest of all works. For all that Jews respect the Talmud and Midrash, they are not as holy to us as is the Bible. The sort of geniuses the Jewish people had in the earliest centuries has never reappeared.

However, it would be a totally false impression of Judaism to believe that nothing religiously significant has happened during the nearly two thousand years since the Bible was completed. Quite the opposite is true. The Rabbis who created the Mishnah and Talmud devised and shaped the Jewish way of life. Most of our favorite celebrations—the Passover *seder*, *erev shabbat* candle lighting, *kiddush* and festive dinner, the wedding ceremony—were invented by them. They gave us the detailed laws which make justice and personal honesty so much a part of the way Jews are supposed to live. And they created the educational system that is still so important to Jews (although Jews now often turn their concern for a good education to university rather than *yeshivah* studies).

In the Middle Ages, European Jews created a rich spiritual life of their

own despite the fact that they were continually oppressed by their non-Jewish neighbors. Reproductions of old illuminated manuscripts show us how medieval Jews mixed what they found acceptable in their Moslem and Christian surroundings with their sacred yet constantly changing Jewish heritage.

With so many American Jews descended from East European families, we are particularly conscious of the many contributions to a deeply Jewish kind of life that the immigrant families brought here with them. The Yiddish language is one example. It is full of Hebrew words and biblical expressions. Yiddish proverbs and jokes teach the old Torah lessons in ways that suit the experiences and needs of the joke tellers and their audiences.

Once the definition of "Torah" is no longer limited to the "words" God spoke to our ancestors, we can appreciate not only the great philosophers and scholars but all those other people who have felt God in their lives and found a way to express it.

This dynamic view of Torah was particularly important to the early Reform Jews. They were changing traditions that no longer seemed useful, yet were trying at the same time to remain faithful to Judaism. The Western ideas of order and beauty that they brought into services seemed strange and "unJewish" to people accustomed to another style. But their innovations should not be called unJewish. In fact, as time went on, the successful experiments at modernizing Judaism have themselves become part of the Torah tradition (and show the genius of their creators).

Continuing the Growth of Torah Today

Many very talented people today create songs, paintings, prayers, ceremonies, and books that give fresh insights into Judaism and help people become newly sensitive to God. Some of our most brilliant modern Jewish achievements come in areas that seem at first glance very far from Torah. Jewish summer camps that give modern American Jewish young people a chance to "live" Judaism fall into that category. So does the *oneg shabbat* after services, when the congregation gets a chance to spend time together in a relaxed way. "At the *oneg*," people share ideas and experiences and enjoy the feeling of being an extended, caring Jewish "family." The vast network of charitable activities that modern Jews have created and the remarkable number and variety of volunteer activities through which we support them are also part of the brilliant ways modern Jews make Torah live in our day.

We remain the people of Israel, trying to serve God today as best we can. As continuers of a four thousand year spiritual quest, we have to know the Torah tradition. At the same time, it must make sense to us. Therefore we create our own way in the present as other Jews did in the past. Our ances-

Additional Teacher Resources (Provided)

Meyer, Michael and W. Gunther Plaut. The Reform Judaism Reader. UAHC Press: N.Y., 2001 “The First Social Justice Platform of the CCAR” (1918) and “The First UAHC Statement of Basic Principles on the Synagogue and Social Action” (1955) 146-149.

Segal, Abraham. One People. UAHC Press: N.Y., 1982 83-86.

“The Religious Action Center and Its Operation.” UAHC Resolution, 1961.

www.rac.org

NAACP president Kivie Kaplan, the UAHC was able to establish its Religious Action Center in Washington. In recent years, the center has broadened its purview to include matters of specifically Jewish concern such as antisemitism, Israeli issues, and Jewish rights around the world. It has also begun to address issues of personal moral concern such as bioethics, abortion, and sexual orientation.

The First Social Justice Platform of the CCAR (1918)

With the end of World War I in sight, Reform rabbis began to concern themselves about postwar American society. The resolution below, proposed by the CCAR Committee on Synagog and Industrial Relations, contains both general principles and specific desiderata. Some of the latter had recently been written into law, but nearly all remained the subject of controversy.

The next few decades will have as their chief concern the rectification of social and economic evils. The world will busy itself not only with the establishment of political, but also with the achievement of industrial democracy through social justice. The ideal of social justice has always been an integral part of Judaism. It is in accordance with tradition, therefore, that the Central Conference of American Rabbis submits the following declaration of principles as a program for the attainment of which the followers of our faith should strive:

1. A more equitable distribution of the profits of industry.
2. A minimum wage which will insure for all workers a fair standard of living.
3. The legal enactment of an eight hour day as a maximum for all industrial workers.
4. A compulsory one-day-of-rest-in-seven for all workers.
5. Regulation of industrial conditions to give all workers a safe and sanitary working environment, with particular reference to the special needs of women.
6. Abolition of child labor and raising the standard of age wherever the legal age limit is lower than is consistent with moral and physical health.
7. Adequate workmen's compensation for industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

8. Legislative provision for universal workman's health insurance and careful study of social insurance methods for meeting the contingencies of unemployment and old age.
9. An adequate, permanent national system of public employment bureaus to make possible the proper distribution of the labor forces of America.
10. Recognition of the right of labor to organize and to bargain collectively.
11. The application of the principles of mediation, conciliation and arbitration to industrial disputes.
12. Proper housing for working-people, secured through government regulation when necessary.
13. The preservation and integrity of the home by a system of mother's pensions.
14. Constructive care of dependents, defectives and criminals, with the aim of restoring them to normal life wherever possible.

Source: "Report of Committee on Synagog and Industrial Relations," CCAR Yearbook 28 (1918): 101-2.

The First UAHC Statement of Basic Principles on the Synagogue and Social Action (1955)

Although the UAHC had adopted resolutions dealing with social issues as early as the first decades of its existence, it did not until 1955 produce a general statement relating the Jewish prophetic heritage to the work of social justice. To a high degree this statement still reflects the movement's motivation for social activism.

We are the heirs of the great Jewish religious tradition which conceives of its ultimate goal as the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The God whom we serve is a God of righteousness who would have us be holy as He is holy. The Torah which we cherish is a guide for spiritual living concerned with every aspect of human experience. The prophets of Israel, dedicated to God and the welfare of their fellow men, bade us pursue justice, seek peace and establish brotherhood among all of God's creatures.

Judaism offers no easy escape from the problems of life. It rejects the device of passing all responsibility for social problems to God. In our

tradition, man is called the co-worker or partner of God in the creation of a better world. Judaism insists that we must apply constantly the sharp ethical insights of the prophets to the specific social problems of our generation, as well as to the personal and individual problems of our lives.

It is loyalty to this heritage, and in the furtherance of our ideal of righteousness, that Reform Judaism has developed a program of social action which relates the ethical and spiritual teachings of our faith to the problems of our communities, of our country and of the world, and which strives for a society guided by the principles of divine justice and mercy. . . . A synagogue which isolates itself from the fundamental issues of social justice confronting the community and the nation is false to the deepest traditions and values of the Jewish heritage.

What are these traditions? What are these values? And what are some of their implications for us today?

Judaism gave to the world the concept of the sanctity and dignity of the individual. All men are equal in that they are created in the image of God. "One law and one ordinance shall be both for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you." (Numbers 15:16) Respect for the civil rights of all men is each man's duty to God. We Jews are challenged by our religion to support the basic human rights of everyone: "What is hateful unto thee, do not do unto thy neighbor." (Talmud Shabbat 8) As Jews and as Americans, dedicated to the democratic tradition, we are impelled to join with our fellows in overcoming bigotry and prejudice; in seeking through education and legislation the elimination of discrimination and segregation because of race, religion or national origin; in demanding for ourselves and for all other Americans equality of opportunity in work, home, health and education.

Judaism teaches that each man has a right to express or keep private the dictates of his soul, for the soul is the divine element in man and cannot be interfered with by other men or governments of men. "The spirit of man is the light of the Lord." (Proverbs 20:27) The Talmud teaches that where honest differences prevail and agreements are difficult: "These and those are the words of the living God." It was that "flaming fire within" (Jeremiah 25:9) that impelled the prophet to speak out even at grave personal risk. These rights of conscience were enshrined in the Bill of Rights, the cornerstone of the American constitutional system.

We view with deep concern the growing attack upon these principles in American life today. Judaism is fundamentally antagonistic to tyranny—

whether it be totalitarian tyranny manipulated from abroad or a domestic tyranny foisted on the American people in the name of anti-communism. We believe that subversion and espionage can and must be effective opposed without destroying the tradition of individual freedom on which democracy is based. We have faith in freedom and in democracy. We believe that the religious ideals of justice and security for all men can be fulfilled only in an atmosphere of freedom and security, not in an atmosphere of fearful conformity and suspicion. We pledge ourselves to join with a freedom-loving forces in our community and nation to reverse the alarmist trend toward suspicion, recrimination, fear and the equation of dissent with disloyalty. We pledge our unremitting vigilance to the end that neither communist intrigue nor reckless demagoguery shall be allowed to corrode the fundamental liberties which have their origin in religious ideals.

Judaism has always emphasized that our ethical ideals must also be applied to the economic processes of society. Our society must be judged by the extent to which men are enabled to achieve, through their work, a decent standard of living, and to provide for themselves and their families the fullest possible protection of their mental and physical health. We pledge ourselves to the achievement of this ideal not only on the national and world scenes, but more particularly in the conduct of our individual business and professional lives.

Another of the most sacred of our Jewish religious teachings is the vision given us by the prophets of a messianic age of peace, the time when nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Motivated by our belief in world brotherhood, the Jewish community has supported enthusiastically the United Nations as the best available instrumentality for the gradual accomplishment of world peace. We have rejoiced in its constructive achievements in the improvement of health standards in many parts of the world, in the control of narcotics traffic, in child welfare in technical assistance to underdeveloped nations, in the United Nations' prophetic declarations on human rights, genocide and similar world problems. We have been deeply concerned about the lack of progress recorded within the councils of the United Nations in easing international tensions. Yet we have remained hopeful that our country, committed firmly to international cooperative action and backed strongly by our citizenry, could continue to exercise leadership in the United Nations in the direction of world peace. . . .

Jewish religious bodies—and certainly Reform synagogues—have a deep

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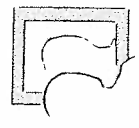
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In the eyes of Orthodoxy that definition still holds. If your mother is a Jew, you are a Jew. If not, you are not. So Statement No. 5 would be true if you were Orthodox.

In Reform Judaism, a child is Jewish if either parent is Jewish, provided the child is reared and educated as a Jew and becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah or is confirmed. Reform views men and women as equal and the potential religious influence of either as sufficient.

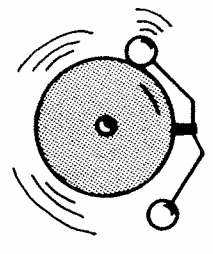


How do you feel?

_____ I agree with the CCAR position.

_____ I disagree with the CCAR position.

Give the reasons for your choice.



ROUND SEVEN

About the Torah

Genesis 1:1-2:3 describes the different and separate stages of the creation of the world.

Review the order of creation as told in Genesis.

DAY

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

How does this account of the creation of the world differ from the theories of creation that you studied in science? What do scientists think were the first steps in the creation process?

8

You were asked to make a choice of which version of creation to believe in, which one would you choose? Be honest now. Don't choose one or the other because you think your teacher or rabbi expects a certain answer.

If you were an Orthodox Jew (or a fundamentalist Christian for that matter) chances are that you would choose the Bible version over the scientific approach. This would be in line with the Orthodox view that everything in the Bible is absolutely true and that God dictated the text of the entire Bible to Moses.

Some modern Orthodox Jews admit they have some difficulty believing the Genesis story. Here is what Rabbi J. David Bleich, a modern Orthodox scholar, wrote about these lines from Genesis:

The biblical story of creation may be . . . difficult to understand. *Many Jews do not accept the theory of evolution.* (Emphasis ours). Those who do accept some aspects of evolution would speak, not of random occurrences or of the survival of the fittest, but of divine creation and a divinely guided evolutionary process. But even the most literalistic face the difficulty of explaining the phrase, "And it was evening and it was morning," which occurs in describing phases of creation which occurred prior to the creation of the sun and the moon. Remember that heavenly bodies were not created until the third day. But, then, to what does the word "day" refer when used in referring to the first days of creation? If there is no sun and no moon, what do the words "evening" and "morning" describe? Quite obviously, the reference is not to a day measured by sunset and sunrise. *The Torah is referring to stages of creation.* The use of the term "day," at least in this early period, is metaphorical. A metaphor is not a myth. It is not a "story" used to teach a moral, but a word

or phrase which has a meaning quite apart from its usual literal meaning. (From Borowitz, *Understanding Judaism*, UAHC.)

How do non-Orthodox Jews look upon the Bible if we do not believe it is the absolute truth—the literal word of God dictated to Moses? For us, the Torah and the rest of the Bible are a record of the searching of people to find God. Since the Bible, in the opinion of liberal Judaism, was written over many generations, it contains many different ideas. Some of them reflect the beliefs of the people among whom Jews lived. Others are a record of various attempts to understand the world.

The Jews were not the only ones who tried to understand how the world came to be. Here is another ancient creation story from an Akkadian epic dating about 2000 B.C.E.

Then the lord (Marduk) paused to view her (Tiamat's) dead body,

That he might divide the monster and do artful works.

He split her like a shellfish into two parts:

Half of her he set up and ceiled it as a sky,

Pulled down the bar and posted guards.

He bade them to allow not her waters to escape,

He crossed the heavens and surveyed its regions. . . .

He constructed nations for the great gods,

Fixing their astral likenesses as constellations. . . .

In her (Tiamat's) belly he established the zenith.

The moon he caused to shine, the night to him

enthrusting.

(Marduk reveals his plan to create man)

Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.

I will establish a savage, "man" shall be his name.

Verily, savage man I will create.

He shall be charged with the service of the gods that

they might be at ease! (From "Enuma Elish,"

Ancient Near Eastern Texts, ed. James B. Pritchard.)

Can you accept Rabbi Bleich's interpretation? What are the basic differences between the biblical version of creation and the Akkadian version?

You might say that the biblical version is more familiar; you might say that it is a bit less gory. From a scientific viewpoint, neither story can be described as terribly accurate.

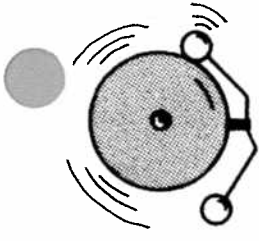
Now, go back and reread Genesis 1:1-2:3.

Clearly a very important difference is a moral, ethical dimension central to the biblical version, contrasting with the many other early attempts to figure out how the universe came to be.

Another major difference is the idea of rest—God rested after laboring for six days.

Is the importance of the Torah lessened because every word is not absolutely true?

Liberal Jews believe not. In fact, the acceptance of the Bible as a history of the Jews striving to find God sets the Bible on a higher level. We see the high minded and noble reaching for something beyond themselves.



ROUND EIGHT

On Living an Ethical Life

It's interesting how we Jews become upset when we read newspaper accounts of other Jews who have been accused or convicted of crimes.

This story from the *Jerusalem Post* (as told by an Orthodox rabbi, L. I. Rabinowitz) is an example.

In July, 1979, a sensational case of gold smuggling into Israel was exposed by the police. The arch-smuggler was a veteran pilot of El Al with a distinguished flying record to his credit. It was he who brought the last consignment of gold bricks, in the possession of which he was apprehended, to the apartment . . . where the police lay in ambush, waiting for other participants in the alleged crime to assemble. They swooped down on the apartment, and among those who were caught in the net were two young men, members of the fanatically Orthodox Jewish sect which inhabits the Meah Shearim Quarter of Jerusalem. When surprised, the men attempted to make their escape by fleeing in a car but were hotly pursued by the police, who had to fire at the tires in order to bring the car to a halt and to arrest them. This bizarre detail of what has been a massive, well-organized criminal activity which has been going on for years, and whose ramifications have not yet been fully revealed, was, of course, prominently featured in the local press and resulted in the following letter which appeared in the English language *Jerusalem Post* of July 25:

Sir, when you reported on the diamond (sic) smuggling incident (July 17), it was wrong of you to single out two of the suspects by describing them as "men from Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Meah Shearim." You did not de-



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

46th General Assembly
 November 1961
 Washington, D.C.

THE RELIGIOUS ACTION CENTER AND ITS OPERATION

We are the inheritors of the great Jewish religious tradition which has as its ultimate goal the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The God whom we serve is a God of righteousness who would have us be holy as He is holy. The Torah we cherish is a comprehensive guide for spiritual living concerned with every aspect of human behavior. The prophets of Israel, dedicated to God and their fellow men, bade us pursue justice, seek peace and establish brotherhood and loving kindness among all of God's creatures.

Judaism commands constant application of the sharp ethical insights of the prophets to the specific social problems of our time, as well as to our daily lives. Since its inception in 1873, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has been committed to the mission of building a society based on social justice and divine mercy.

To effectuate these religious aims, the UAHC joined with the CCAR in 1949 in establishing a Commission on Social Action, which relates the ethical and spiritual teachings of our faith to the concrete problems of our congregations, our communities, our country and the world. The Commission on Social Action, now a joint instrumentality of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and Brotherhoods and Youth, has urged the creation and development of social action (or community affairs) committees which now exist in some 300 Reform synagogues.

To strengthen our social action program, the 45th General Assembly of the UAHC, meeting in Miami Beach in November, 1959, voted overwhelmingly to accept the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Kivie Kaplan to provide for a Center for Religious Action in Washington, D.C.

Many Christian groups, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, have long maintained social action offices in the nation's capital. These bodies have hailed the establishment of our Center as an opportunity to consult and cooperate in Washington with their counterparts in the Jewish religious agencies on the great moral issues which face the nation and the world.

The 46th General Assembly of the UAHC herewith declares:

1. We commend the Commission on Social Action for its creative programming, for providing moral leadership and guidance to the Reform movement, and for strengthening the hands of the rabbis in quickening the social idealism of Reform Jews.
2. We urge that the decision of the 45th General Assembly of the UAHC in November 1959, concerning the establishment of a Center for Religious Action, be carried into effect as promptly as possible.
3. To assure the increasing effectiveness of the social action program and, at the same time, to continue to safeguard congregational autonomy and the right of dissent, we affirm these guiding principles:

- a. The Center for Religious Action is an agency of the Commission on Social Action and is to function under the direct supervision and control of the Commission on Social Action.
 - b. The Commission on Social Action, heretofore, will concern itself with those subjects which fall within the scope of resolutions adopted by both the General Assembly of the UAHC and the Convention of the CCAR. Statements will be made in the name of the Commission and not in the name of the Center for Religious Action.
 - c. Public statements shall reflect points of view and programs adopted by a majority of the delegates of Reform synagogues at biennial assemblies of the UAHC. Such pronouncements, resolutions and other actions of the general assemblies have, in the nature of the case, the status and weight of being neither more nor less than the corporate decisions of such a representative assembly. They are useful to the extent that they serve as a moral guide to our congregations and their members, to the nation and to the world. Such statements speak for the UAHC. They are not binding upon every Reform synagogue, each of which is autonomous, or upon every member of a Reform congregation. Every congregant and every member has the right and the duty to express conscientious dissent within the framework of our common commitment to Reform Judaism and to one another.
4. Social Action will succeed to the extent that in our synagogues, individually and collectively, we have the understanding and the daring to make Judaism relevant to the great issues of our time.

We therefore, call upon every Reform synagogue which has not yet done so, to create speedily a Committee on Social Action or Community Affairs. The historic imperatives of our faith, the insistent moral challenge of the contemporary world and the ethical commitments of our own beloved America—all combine with fresh urgency to enjoin us "to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God."

5. In order to implement and amplify these principles, be it resolved that:
- a. The Religious Action Center shall service the social action committees of the UAHC congregations, its national affiliates, federations and regional councils, along with their rabbis, sisterhoods, brotherhoods, youth groups, educators and administrators.
 - b. The service generally shall consist of furnishing informational materials about subjects best researched in Washington; suggestions regarding education of and action which might be taken by, local, regional and national social action committees; sponsor seminar workshops, pilgrimages and gatherings for youth and adult leaders of Reform synagogue bodies; establish and maintain a library. As occasion may require, representatives may appear before congressional committees or other governmental bodies, but, in such event, only in the name of the Commission on Social Action and subject to all other regulations governing the Religious Action Center and the Commission on Social Action. The foregoing shall not be considered to exclude other undertakings within the purview of actions taken by both the UAHC biennials and the conference of the CCAR.
 - c. (1) There shall be established an Advisory Committee of six persons, which Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of counseling and guiding the staff of the Center in connection with its operations. The said Committee shall be a subcommittee of the Joint Commission on Social Action. Three of the members of said Committee shall represent the UAHC and their appointments shall be by the Chairman of the Board of the UAHC, and three of the members shall represent the CCAR and their appointments shall be by the President of the CCAR.
 - (2) The Advisory Committee will counsel with, and advise, the director in developing the program of the Center. In connection with testimony before congressional committees or governmental departments where a public record is to be made, the director of the Center shall consult with the Advisory Committee, except that in the case of emergencies consultation with the Chairman shall be deemed sufficient.

Unit II: American Reform Jewish Synagogue Practice

Goals:

1. To show students that Reform Judaism is an evolving liberal expression of Judaism
2. To explain how the Reform synagogue was and continues to be influenced by ideas of modernity and interaction with outside religious and secular culture
3. To expose students to the practices of classical Reform synagogues and compare and contrast it to their modern synagogue experience
4. To present the diverse opinions regarding Reform synagogue practice and the complexity of re-forming it

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Define Reform Jewish synagogue practice as an evolving intentional liberal expression of Judaism
2. Articulate how Reform synagogue worship structures and liturgy were/are influenced by modernity and interaction with outside (religious and secular) culture
3. Identify that Reform Judaism believes in egalitarianism and explain how this idea affected synagogue practice
4. State key similarities and differences between a classical Reform synagogue experience and a modern Reform synagogue experience
5. Design an ideal synagogue worship policy based on the issues discussed in this unit

Enduring Understandings

- 1. Reform Judaism adopted many ideas and practices from other religious and secular culture. It continues to do so.**
- 2. Some classical Reform adoptions introducing pews, formal music (organ and mixed choir), sermon, shortened service, and confirmation. Evidence or remnants of these adoptions are visible in Reform synagogue architecture, music, and liturgy.**
- 3. Reform Jewish practice strives to reflect egalitarianism. Early innovations include mixed schooling, choir, and confirmation class.**

Suggested Activities

- Read “The Beginning of Reform, The Most Radical Reform: Beautifying Services,” (Source: Borowitz 6, 7, 9) which describes the changes involved in Israel Jacobson’s school. Then either:
 - A) Pretend your students are a couple or family in the late 1800’s deciding whether or not to send your child or you to this Reform school. Debate why this would and would not be a good place to educate your Jewish child. What are the advantages and disadvantages?
 - B) Pretend your students are responsible for promoting the new Reform school. Design a brochure advertising the unique learning environment.
- Examine the picture of the synagogue sanctuary of Lindenstrasse in Berlin (Source: Borowitz 8). What characteristics of Reform Judaism do you see? What elements do you think are influences from outside culture? Then, compare this picture to your

sanctuary. What has changed? Why? What in our modern culture influences your synagogue design?

- **MUSIC**

A) Listen to music from a classical Reform service and from a UAHC Camp service or NFTY service. **Key Questions:** What instruments are used? Who is singing (cantor, choir, or everyone)? What genre is the music? (What mood does it create?) Then compare to your synagogue service. What is your synagogue music like? What influences Reform Jewish worship music?

B) If possible, invite a Cantor who served in several types of worship settings and styles or a community member who remembers what the music was like at the beginning of the 20th century. Have them answer the questions above and describe the changes in Reform music and how it affected them personally.

Enduring Understandings

4. Reform Siddurim reflect a blend of Jewish tradition and American spirit

5. Reform liturgy is constantly examined and changed

Suggested Activities

- Read excerpt from “The New Union Prayer Book-Gates of Prayer.” Resolutions Adopted by the UAHC, November 1975, Dallas Texas. Focus on the Key Question: What do the authors state as the two major influences on this siddur? Brainstorm examples of possible American influence on a siddur. Then, examine the provided index of songs and hymns from this prayerbook (The New Union Prayer Book-Gates

of Prayer 1975). Make separate lists of all the Jewish songs and American songs you recognize. **Key Questions:** What does this show about the UAHC statement? What are the implications of this dual foundation for liturgy?

- Exploring Reform Liturgy Jigsaw Style. Divide the class into four small groups. Provide each group with a siddur from a different period in Reform Jewish history, such as Union Hymnal, Gates of Prayer, New Gates of Prayer, Gates of Prayer (Gender Sensitive). Have each group peruse the siddur and write down: Dominant language used (formal or modern English & role of Hebrew), Names used for God, Choir or Cantor? Is there a certain place for a sermon? Is the language male centered? Which prayers do you recognize? Which prayers are missing?) After each group has answered these questions, re-divide the class into small groups, providing each new group with a representative from each of the previous groups. Their job is to teach the others in the new group about the siddur they just studied. Join together at the end of class to discuss some of the changes made to Reform liturgy over the last century.

*Note: A new Reform siddur Mishkan Tefila will be published soon. If possible, use examples from it.

Enduring Understandings

- 6. Traditionally, Jews wore/wear ritual garb such as Kippah, Tallit, and Tefilin during prayer**
- 7. The Reform Jewish usage or non-usage of ritual garb has been influenced by outside culture**
- 8. Using ritual garb is still a debated practice**

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Enduring Understandings

6. **Traditionally, Jews wore/wear ritual garb such as Kippah, Tallit, and Tefilin during prayer**
7. **The Reform Jewish usage or non-usage of ritual garb has been influenced by outside culture**
8. **Using ritual garb is still a debated practice**

Suggested Activities

- Read about the Reform rationales opposing and supporting the usage of ritual garb such as kippah and tallit. {Source: “Style and Services” Borowitz 21, 23 & “The Kippah Syndrome” (1928) Meyer and Plaut 59.} Examine the official Reform position (you may have to tease out the positions more clearly for the students) on ritual garb in the two excerpts from two Reform Platforms, one from 1885 and one from 1976. **Key Questions:** What does each document say about the usage of Reform ritual garb? What are the arguments for and against its usage? How have policies changed over time?
- Taking it a step further: Explore the standard or various opinions and practices in your community. Speak with the clergy or key lay people on ritual or worship committee. **Key Questions:** Is there a policy on ritual garb for the clergy? Congregants? People who have Aliyot to the Torah? Bar and Bat-Mitzvahs? If so, how has it evolved? Are the policies enforced?

Unit Project/Memorable Moment:

You are now the worship committee of your synagogue. The committee is made up of both long time members who favor classical Reform practices and new young members who want the worship to reflect modern day values and culture. Your task as a committee is to redesign your synagogue's policy. The policy must reflect decisions and explanations of:

1. Worship Space (What will it look like? Will the structure be formal or informal?)
2. Ritual garb (Is ritual garb required? Encouraged? Excluded?)
3. Music (What style? Will there be a choir? A Cantor? Will it be participatory?)
4. Siddur (Which will be used? What language will dominate the service-English or Hebrew?)

Jews to convert to Christianity. The converts felt that one could be *either* modern or Jewish—but not *both* at the same time. For them, giving up Judaism was a small price to pay for the advantages they would gain from full participation in general society.

The Beginning of Reform

Some Jews disagreed with both the Jewish community leadership and with those who were converting to Christianity. They, too, thought that certain Jewish customs had become old-fashioned. But they suggested a new way of dealing with the problem. If Jews used modern culture to make Judaism more beautiful and meaningful, Jews wouldn't need to become Christian in order to be modern. They called their experiments in bringing Judaism up-to-date "Reform" because they were reforming ghetto Judaism to fit a free, modern society.

* The first Reformers were not rabbis but merchants. They felt the need to change Judaism most strongly since they were in contact with the Christian community and saw the exciting world now opening to all Jews.

A banker named Israel Jacobson was the most important of these early Reformers. He wanted to see German Jews ready to live as citizens as soon as they got their rights. The ghetto schools didn't teach math, science, or languages. There was no career preparation. So in 1801, Israel Jacobson started a modern Jewish school (at his own expense) in Seesen, the town where he lived.

This school was radical for its day. For the first time Jewish boys and girls were taught together. Most girls had never received any formal education. Their mothers taught them how to keep a good Jewish home and, perhaps, how to work in the family business. But they didn't go to school. Jacobson, like the other Reformers, took the idea of equality very seriously and applied it to male and female Jews alike, thus beginning the long struggle for women's equality in Judaism.

Jacobson also changed the traditional *yeshivah* curriculum. His pupils were taught secular subjects like arithmetic, science, and the German language. Most shocking of all, when Christian parents asked to have their children admitted to Jacobson's school, he gladly accepted them. He not only wanted Jews to get along with their Christian neighbors, he wanted at least some Christians to know and respect their Jewish neighbors too.

Of course Jacobson's school taught the Jewish religion—but in an unexpected way. Jacobson insisted that Judaism be taught with the same modern educational techniques used to teach other subjects. He wanted Judaism studied in an orderly, logical fashion. His idea helped to stimulate the modern rethinking of Judaism.

The Most Radical Reform: Beautifying Services

In the long run, nothing was more important than what happened at the weekly religious service in the school's "Temple," which was dedicated in 1810.

The service at Jacobson's school was very different from the normal pattern in the synagogue. It was well organized, orderly, and dignified—the Western European idea of what was beautiful and solemn—the decorum of most other Jewish services in Germany was an Eastern European one. While from time to time the cantor would chant a prayer, the worshipers were generally on their own, causing a hubbub. The service was so long that some people would "take a break" in the middle and others would come in very late—and begin at the beginning. In addition, because the cantor repeated certain prayers, there were usually many side conversations. This Eastern informality was embarrassing to the modernized Jews.

Jacobson shortened the service, mostly by omitting the repetitions. Many prayers were translated into German so the worshipers could understand what they were praying. People were expected to arrive on time, participate in unison, and be solemn and respectful at all times.

The Reformers also borrowed some of the church practices they considered most beautiful. Chief among these were the use of an organ and a "mixed" choir (men and women singing together—another early effort at

Israel Jacobson was the "father of Reform Judaism." His new programs modernized worship services, gave women an active role in religious life, and helped Jews cope with being both Jewish and modern.



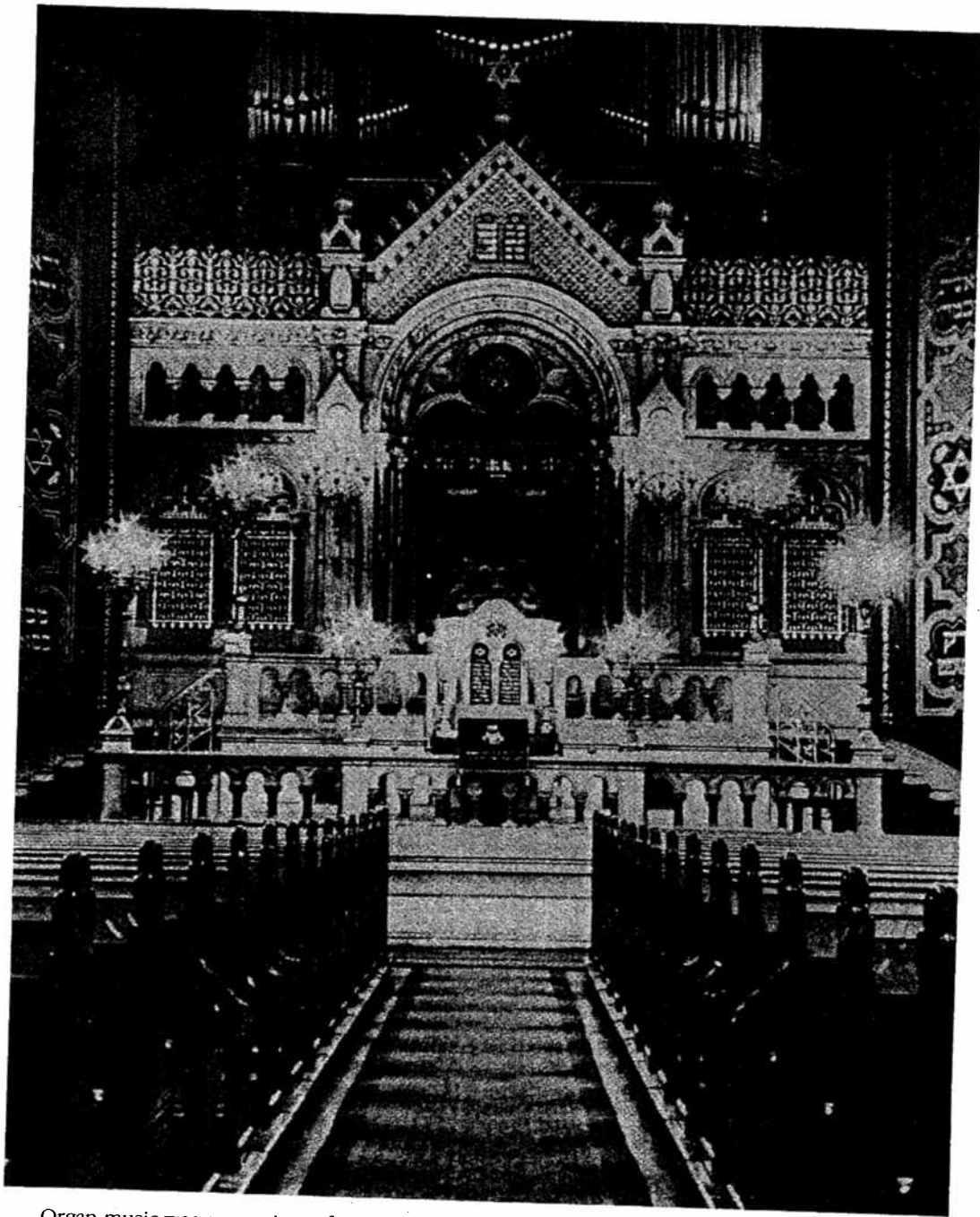
equality). Since only men sang at traditional Jewish services, these innovations opened a whole new direction for synagogue music.

Another practice Reformers borrowed was the sermon. Until this time, only a few sermons, in Yiddish and Hebrew, were preached at Jewish services, mostly before major holidays to remind people about particular rituals. At the new Reform temples, the sermons discussed the problems Jews faced every day, and because these sermons were in German the whole congregation could understand what was said.

Many adults found these changes so appealing that they began worshipping together with Jacobson's students at the weekly service.

By 1817 it was time for another creative step. People had accepted the idea of a whole class of young men (not just a single boy, as at the usual Bar Mitzvah ceremony) standing before the congregation to proclaim loyalty to Judaism and to their country (a very new idea in itself). Reformers in Berlin argued that since young women were being educated with the young men, they should be confirmed with them as well. They should formally be welcomed as worshipers and leaders in the synagogue ritual. A class composed of girls and boys was confirmed in Berlin in 1817. This innovation made such sense that in the following year, girls were confirmed with boys in the Hamburg congregation too.

These changes—and the very idea of daring to change—provoked great controversy in Jewish communities all over Germany, as we shall now see.



Organ music was a prominent feature in the new Reform congregations. Since traditional congregations did not use musical instruments, many people were horrified by this change, seeing in it an adaptation of church practices for synagogue use. The synagogue in this picture is the Lindenstrasse, in Berlin.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

53rd General Assembly
 November 1975
 Dallas Texas

THE NEW UNION PRAYER BOOK — GATES OF PRAYER

WHEREAS the Central Conference of American Rabbis has recently completed and published a New Union Prayerbook, Gates of Prayer; and

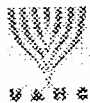
WHEREAS Gates of Prayer in its unique blending of Jewish tradition and and the American spirit is a significant contribution to American Jewish life; and

WHEREAS in producing Gates of Prayer the CCAR is continuing the tradition of Reform Judaism of constantly reexamining its ritual and its practices, yet never forsaking those fundamental truths and virtues which have sustained the Jewish people through the centuries; Now, Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that this UAHC 53rd General Assembly expresses its profound gratitude to the CCAR for its historic publication of Gates of Prayer, We commend the CCAR for providing "a significant contribution to American Jewish life"; be it further

RESOLVED that congregations of our Union be encouraged to accept this Reform Siddur and make use of its rich materials in connection with our worship; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Joint Commissions on Worship and Education be requested to provide programs, seminars and materials to assist our congregations and their members in understanding, utilizing and enjoying the rich heritage and abundant resources which Gates of Prayer offers.



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ditionalists—were providing the leadership for the whole American Jewish community. Let's see what their Reform Judaism looked like around the year 1900.

The Style of the Services

Services in Reform congregations were conducted in English, the language of most of the members of the congregation. A majority used the prayer book written by American Reform rabbis, published in 1895. Almost every Reform congregation used an organ, had a choir made up of men and women, and sang English hymns. The services were conducted with great formality and dignity. Sermons, preached every week, often dealt with general human problems as well as with Jewish concerns.

In Europe, most Reform Jews had continued to wear *kippot* at services. This custom followed the old Eastern tradition of keeping heads covered as a sign of respect. In Western countries, on the other hand, it has been considered disrespectful—particularly in the presence of someone important (and who is more important than God?)—for a man to wear a hat indoors. The American Reformers felt that praying bareheaded was the right way to show respect to God. They decided that at their services men should keep their heads uncovered.

Changing More than Styles

The European experiment in shortening the service had now been fully worked out. A number of new changes made the American service shorter still. Over the centuries, many intricate Hebrew poems known as *piyyutim* had been added to the prayer book. Nothing was omitted to make room for them since the rules prohibited dropping any of the regular prayers. Although the *piyyutim* were written in a particularly complicated style, and therefore almost incomprehensible, they were the lyrics of the cantors' most important (and longest) songs. Because they made the service drag on, the Reformers eliminated them.

They also cut out all repetition of prayers. The *tefillah*, or *amidah*, is the central part of the service. In traditional congregations, it is first said quietly by the worshipers and then chanted out loud by the cantor so that people who do not know Hebrew will have this most important group of prayers said for them. The repetition seemed unnecessary now that the Reformers' service was largely in English. It, too, was eliminated.

The Reformers shortened the Shabbat and festival services even further

mikdash me'at (literally, the small sanctuary) which invokes the image of the Sanctuary of old. Moses and Ezra expounded Torah in the presence of the people, and the reading of Torah on Shabbat and other occasions is a recurring enactment of those hallowed moments. The rabbi, as teacher of the community, expounds sacred texts and traditions, and does so before the *tzibbur*, the representatives of the Jewish people who have come to participate in common rites of prayer and learning. The *tzibbur* is indeed the proper context of certain liturgical rubrics, and by tradition these include, in addition to those mentioned, the reading of Torah from a scroll, and the Mourner's *Kaddish*.

It seems to us that the idea of a minyan deserves renewed attention. Reform Judaism has broken much new ground by giving individuals a measure of religious scope they did not previously have. Withal, we may not overlook the needs of the community which, when properly met, benefit all its members. Public worship belongs to these categories of Jewish life, and withholding certain individual prerogatives for the benefit of all has always been the context of Jewish prayer.

Thus, the obligation of *Kaddish* is traditionally fulfilled in community, and therefore the congregation at prayer is the proper locus for it. However, should there be no quorum or should the individual be unable to go to the synagogue, the need for the community does not simply fall away

We would therefore urge the Reform Practices Committee of the CCAR, together with the Liturgy Committee, to take up the need for devising alternate expressions for those who cannot worship in community, be it because of personal circumstances or because a minyan has not or cannot be brought together.

The maintenance of the requirement of a minyan has also a strong educational force: it reminds all those who are or might be affected by the rule of the importance of public worship. R. Freehof reminds us of the injunction of the *Shulchan Aruch* that it is the duty of the members of the community to exert pressure upon each other so that there should always be a minyan in the synagogue. "The feeling of piety at the time of *yahrzeit* is one of the justifiable motives which urges people to come to public worship." And R. Jacob adds that we should make "a more vigorous effort and assemble a necessary minyan, if it is at all possible, for a service whether public or private."

We heartily endorse these sentiments which reflect the abiding value of

a minyan in our liturgical structure, and we urge the inquiring congregation to devise ways and means to maintain and enhance this ancient Jewish institution.

Dissent

Three members differed somewhat from these conclusions. They felt that *Kaddish* deserves an exemption from the rule, and that perhaps in special circumstances the rule of three ought to be invoked (as at the *Birkat HaMazon*). One believes that the few should also not be deprived of reading (or hearing) the words of Torah from the scroll, and would have the leader of the service emphasize that the fewer-than-ten who are assembled do not constitute a proper congregation but rather a *chug*; a small group who have come together for study and edification.

Source: "Need for a Minyan," in *Teshuvot for the Nineties: Reform Judaism's Answers for Today's Dilemmas*, ed. W. Gunther Plaut and Mark Washofsky (New York: CCAR Press, 1997), 23-27.

The Kippah Syndrome (1928)

While in Europe the custom of covering the head remained firmly entrenched, in the United States—where Jews strove to be considered Americans in every respect—bare headedness spread from the last decades of the nineteenth century and achieved the status of identifying Reform Jews. A hundred years later the original, assimilatory motivation had lost its significance, and with the turn toward tradition, the kippah (or yarmulke), and often with it, the tallit (the prayer shawl) returned to the ranks of the movement. At the turn of the millennium, most Reform rabbis and cantors were traditionally accoutered at services, and a few of them at all times (like their traditional colleagues). Congregants, too, increasingly wore kippot and tallitot, though a large number still clung to the earlier practice of praying bareheaded. Jacob Zvi Lauterbach (1873-1942), for many years Professor of Talmud at Hebrew Union College, authored the definitive responsum on bareheadedness versus wearing the kippah. The following is an excerpt from a lecture he gave to a CCAR convention.

In the very early post-Talmudic times, . . . we find that the Babylonian Jews considered it already forbidden to utter the name of God in prayer with uncovered head. It is stated that one of the differences in custom and ritual

between the Palestinian and Babylonian Jews was that among the former the priests would recite their benedictions bareheaded while among the latter the priests were not permitted to recite their benedictions with uncovered head.

There was, accordingly, a difference in custom as regards wearing hats between Palestine and Babylon. In the former the people would not cover their heads while praying or when in the synagogue and in general would go bareheaded. In the latter, however, it was the custom of pious people to cover their head.

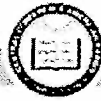
In France and Germany, following the Palestinian custom, there was no objection to praying or reading from the Torah with uncovered head. Thus R. Isaac b. Moses . . . of Vienna (1200–1270) expressly reports that it was the custom of the French rabbi to pray with uncovered head, though he does not favor it.

Beginning, however, with the thirteenth century the Babylonian-Spanish custom began to penetrate into France and Germany. We accordingly find Ashkenasic authorities of the thirteenth century and of the following centuries favoring the Spanish custom and recommending or requiring that one should cover his head when praying or reading from the Torah. But even as late as the sixteenth century it was in German-Polish countries not generally considered as forbidden to read the Torah or to pray bareheaded. R. Solomon Lurya, one of the greatest rabbinical authorities of his time (1510–1573), in his Responsa expressly says: "I do not know of any prohibition against praying with uncovered head."

The famous Gaon of Vilna . . . expressly says: "According to Jewish law it is permitted to enter a synagogue and to pray without covering one's head." And after some discussion in which he cites many proofs for his statement, he closes with the following words: "There is no prohibition whatever against praying with uncovered head, but as a matter of propriety it would seem to be good manners to cover one's head when standing in the presence of great men and also during the religious service."

In the nineteenth century, as a reaction to the first attempts of modern Reform which suggested the removal of the hat by the worshippers in the synagogue, the strict Orthodox Rabbinical authorities became more emphatic in their insistence upon the requirement of covering the head when entering a synagogue, and when praying or performing any religious ceremony.

In summing up the discussion I would say that from the point of view of Jewish law or ritual, there can be no objection to either covering or uncovering the head in the synagogue or when praying and when reading the Torah. The custom of praying bareheaded or with covered head not at all a question of law. It is merely a matter of social propriety and decorum. As such it cannot, and need not, be the same in all countries and certainly not remain the same for all times. For it depends on the ideas of the people as to what is the proper attire for worshippers in the Temples or what is the proper thing to wear or not to wear at solemn occasions and at public worship. These ideas are, of course, in turn subject to change in different times and in different places. Hence, in countries where the covering of the head is a sign of showing respect and reverence it certainly would be improper to appear before God in the house of prayer with an uncovered head. And even in countries where it is general regarded more respectful to remove the hat, if there be congregations who still feel like their grandfathers and consider it disrespectful to pray with uncovered head, they are within their right if they retain the custom of their fathers. We can have no quarrel with them and should rather respect their custom. In visiting them in their synagogues or when participating in some religious service at their homes, we should do as they do. For their motive and their intentions are good, and they observe these practices out of a feeling of respect and a sense of propriety misguidedly as they may appear on this point to the occidental and modern mind. On the other hand, no one should find any fault with those people who, living in countries where it is considered to be disrespectful to keep the hat on while visiting in other people's homes or in the presence of elders and superiors, deem it proper to show their respect for the synagogue by removing the hat on entering it. These people also observe their practice with the best intentions and with a respectful spirit. They are not prompted by the desire to imitate non-Jewish practice. Their motive rather is to show their respect for the synagogue and to express their spirit of reverence by praying with uncovered head. And although in the last century this question of "hat on or hat off" was the subject of heated disputes between the Conservative and Liberal groups of Jews we should know better now, and be more tolerant and more liberal towards one another. We should realize that this matter is but a detail of custom and should not be made the issue between Orthodox and



Declaration of Principles

1885 Pittsburgh Conference

Convening at the call of Kaufmann Kohler of New York, Reform rabbis from around the United States met from November 16 through November 19, 1885 with Isaac Mayer Wise presiding. The meeting was declared the continuation of the Philadelphia Conference of 1869, which was the continuation of the German Conference of 1841 to 1846. The rabbis adopted the following seminal text:

1. We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the Infinite, and in every mode, source or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers, in accordance with the moral and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended midst continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation, this God-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.

2. We recognize in the Bible the record of the consecration of the Jewish people to its mission as the priest of the one God, and value it as the most potent instrument of religious and moral instruction. We hold that the modern discoveries of scientific researches in the domain of nature and history are not antagonistic to the doctrines of Judaism, the Bible reflecting the primitive ideas of its own age, and at times clothing its conception of divine Providence and Justice dealing with men in miraculous narratives.

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

5. We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.

6. We recognize in Judaism a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason. We are convinced of the utmost necessity of preserving the historical identity with our great past.. Christianity and Islam, being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission, to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth. We acknowledge that the spirit of broad humanity of our age is our ally in the fulfillment of our mission, and therefore we extend the hand of fellowship to all who cooperate with us in the establishment of the reign of truth and righteousness among men.

7. We reassert the doctrine of Judaism that the soul is immortal, grounding the belief on the divine nature of human spirit, which forever finds bliss in righteousness and misery in wickedness. We reject as ideas not rooted in Judaism, the beliefs both in bodily resurrection and in Gehenna and Eden (Hell and Paradise) as abodes for everlasting punishment and reward.

8. In full accordance with the spirit of the Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relations

between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.

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Most recent update 22 Oct 1997*



Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective Adopted at San Francisco, 1976

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has on special occasions described the spiritual state of Reform Judaism. The centenaries of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seem an appropriate time for another such effort. We therefore record our sense of the unity of our movement today.

One Hundred Years: What We Have Taught

We celebrate the role of Reform Judaism in North America, the growth of our movement on this free ground, the great contributions of our membership to the dreams and achievements of this society. We also feel great satisfaction at how much of our pioneering conception of Judaism has been accepted by the Household of Israel. It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; and that change has been and must continue to be a fundamental reality in Jewish life. Moreover, though some still disagree, substantial numbers have also accepted our teachings: that the ethics of universalism implicit in traditional Judaism must be an explicit part of our Jewish duty; that women have full rights to practice Judaism; and that Jewish obligation begins with the informed will of every individual. Most modern Jews, within their various religious movements, are embracing Reform Jewish perspectives. We see this past century as having confirmed the essential wisdom of our movement.

One Hundred Years: What We Have Learned

Obviously, much else has changed in the past century. We continue to probe the extraordinary events of the past generation, seeking to understand their meaning and to incorporate their significance in our lives. The Holocaust shattered our easy optimism about humanity and its inevitable progress. The State of Israel, through its many accomplishments, raised our sense of the Jews as a people to new heights of aspiration and devotion. The widespread threats to freedom, the problems inherent in the explosion of new knowledge and of ever more powerful technologies, and the spiritual emptiness of much of Western culture have taught us to be less dependent on the values of our society and to reassert what remains perennially valid in Judaism's teaching. We have learned that the survival of the Jewish people is of highest priority and that in carrying out our Jewish responsibilities we help move humanity toward its messianic fulfillment.

Diversity Within Unity, the Hallmark of Reform

Reform Jews respond to change in various ways according to the Reform principle of the autonomy of the individual. However, Reform Judaism does more than tolerate diversity; it engenders it. In our uncertain historical situation we must expect to have far greater diversity than previous generations knew. How we shall live with diversity without stifling dissent and without paralyzing our ability to take positive action will test our character and our principles. We stand open to any position thoughtfully and conscientiously advocated in the spirit of Reform Jewish belief. While we may differ in our interpretation and application of the ideas enunciated here, we accept such differences as precious and see in them Judaism's best hope for confronting whatever the future holds for us. Yet in all our diversity we perceive a certain unity and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together.

1. *God*-- The affirmation of God has always been essential to our people's will to survive. In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways. The trials of our own time and the challenges of modern culture have made steady belief and clear understanding difficult for some. Nevertheless, we ground our lives, personally and communally, on God's reality and remain open to new experiences and conceptions of the Divine. Amid the mystery we call life, we affirm that human beings, created in God's image, share in God's eternity despite the mystery we call death.
2. *The People Israel*-- The Jewish people and Judaism defy precise definition because both are in the process of

becoming. Jews, by birth or conversion, constitute an uncommon union of faith and peoplehood. Born as Hebrews in the ancient Near East, we are bound together like all ethnic groups by language, land, history, culture, and institutions. But the people of Israel is unique because of its involvement with God and its resulting perception of the human condition. Throughout our long history our people has been inseparable from its religion with its messianic hope that humanity will be redeemed.

3. *Torah* -- Torah results from the relationship between God and the Jewish people. The records of our earliest confrontations are uniquely important to us. Lawgivers and prophets, historians and poets gave us a heritage whose study is a religious imperative and whose practice is our chief means to holiness. Rabbis and teachers, philosophers and mystics, gifted Jews in every age amplified the Torah tradition. For millennia, the creation of Torah has not ceased and Jewish creativity in our time is adding to the chain of tradition.
4. *Our Religious Obligations: Religious Practice* -- Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by which we strive to achieve universal justice and peace. Reform Judaism shares this emphasis on duty and obligation. Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; lifelong study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence. Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to exercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.
5. *Our Obligations: The State of Israel and the Diaspora* -- We are privileged to live in an extraordinary time, one in which a third Jewish commonwealth has been established in our people's ancient homeland. We are bound to that land and to the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties. We have been enriched by its culture and ennobled by its indomitable spirit. We see it providing unique opportunities for Jewish self-expression. We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security, and defining its Jewish character. We encourage *aliyah* for those who wish to find maximum personal fulfillment in the cause of Zion. We demand that Reform Judaism be unconditionally legitimized in the State of Israel.

At the same time that we consider the State of Israel vital to the welfare of Judaism everywhere, we reaffirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue. It leads us beyond itself to cooperate with other Jews, to share their concerns, and to assume leadership in communal affairs. We are therefore committed to the full democratization of the Jewish community and to its hallowing in terms of Jewish values.

The State of Israel and the Diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.

6. *Our Obligations: Survival and Service* -- Early Reform Jews, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism, regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in terms of Jewry's service to humanity. In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism. The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth while working toward the fulfillment of its messianic expectations.

Until the recent past our obligations to the Jewish people and to all humanity seemed congruent. At times now these two imperatives appear to conflict. We know of no simple way to resolve such tensions. We must, however, confront them without abandoning either of our commitments. A universal concern for humanity unaccompanied by a devotion to our particular people is self-destructive; a passion for our people without involvement in humankind contradicts what the prophets have meant to us. Judaism calls us simultaneously to universal and particular obligations.

Hope: Our Jewish Obligation

Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbound confidence in humanity's potential for good. We have lived through terrible tragedy and been compelled to reappropriate our tradition's realism about the human capacity for evil. Yet our people has always refused to despair. The survivors of the Holocaust, being granted life, seized it, nurtured it, and rising above catastrophe, showed humankind that the human spirit is indomitable. The State of Israel, established and maintained by the Jewish will to live, demonstrates what a united people can accomplish in history. The existence of the Jew is an argument against despair; Jewish survival is warrant for human hope.

We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny. We dedicate ourselves, as did the generations of Jews who went before us, to work and wait for that day when "They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

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Additional Teacher Resources (Provided)

Borowitz, Eugene. Exploring Reform Judaism. Behrman House: N.J., 1985. "Changing More than Styles" 21-23.

"Confirmation Grade." UAHC Resolution. November 1959, Miami Beach, FL.

Meyer, Michael and W. Gunther Plaut. The Reform Jewish Reader. UAHC Press: N.Y., 2001 "Musical Diversity" (1932, 1999) 72-77

Raphael, Marc Lee. "Sabbath Worship in the American Reform Synagogue 1970-2000." CCAR Journal, Winter 2003.

Washofsky, Mark. Jewish Living "The Worship Service." (Chapter 1). UAHC Press, N.Y., 2001

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The European experiment in shortening the service had now been fully worked out. A number of new changes made the American service shorter still. Over the centuries, many intricate Hebrew poems known as *piyyutim* had been added to the prayer book. Nothing was omitted to make room for them since the rules prohibited dropping any of the regular prayers. Although the *piyyutim* were written in a particularly complicated style, and therefore almost incomprehensible, they were the lyrics of the cantors' most important (and longest) songs. Because they made the service drag on, the Reformers eliminated them.

They also cut out all repetition of prayers. The *tefillah*, or *amidah*, is the central part of the service. In traditional congregations, it is first said quietly by the worshipers and then chanted out loud by the cantor so that people who do not know Hebrew will have this most important group of prayers said for them. The repetition seemed unnecessary now that the Reformers' service was largely in English. It, too, was eliminated.

The Reformers shortened the Shabbat and festival services even further

by cutting out a second double recitation of most of these prayers, called *musaf*, the "additional" service. That requires a bit of explanation.

In biblical times, in the Temple, the priests offered a special holiday sacrifice on Shabbat and festivals in *addition* to the daily sacrifice. After the destruction of the Temple, the Rabbis ruled that prayer services would substitute for the Temple sacrifices. (Much of the synagogue service to this day stems from this regulation.) So the Rabbis added a *musaf*, or "additional" set of prayers to each Saturday and festival morning service. The *musaf* service primarily repeats the regular morning *tefillah* (prayers), but adds some passages concerning the sacrifices.

The Reformers rejected the *musaf* service for two reasons. First, it meant reciting many prayers four times in a row. The second reason was that the Reform movement was against sacrifices. Killing animals and then skinning them, pouring their blood out at the altar and finally burning parts or all of them, seemed to these modern Jews no way to pray to God. It was certainly not anything they ever wanted to do themselves. Moreover, some prayers in the *musaf* service speak of our longing to "return" from our exile to the Land of Israel to rebuild the ancient Temple and once again offer sacrifices to God. Now that Jews were free and equal citizens of the country in which they lived, the Reformers felt that prayers which talk of our "exile" and "return" or our "longing for Zion" were out of place. The leader of the Reform congregation in Charleston, South Carolina put it this way at the service dedicating the first American Reform congregation (in 1825): "This country is our Palestine, this city our Jerusalem, this house of God our temple."

This use of the word "temple" was also something new. Until Reform began, the word "Temple" had always meant *the* Temple in Jerusalem, the one commanded in the Torah. But, since they did not feel that they were "in exile," the Reformers also did away with the traditional second day of the festivals. Again, a bit of explanation is necessary.

When Jews first lived outside the Land of Israel, they had no way of knowing in advance exactly when the holidays began. The Hebrew calendar was not yet "fixed." Each month, when the new moon was seen, the authorities adjusted the Jewish lunar calendar to the sun cycle and figured out the proper time to celebrate the holidays. Then they sent signals and messengers to the outlying communities. Jews who lived outside Israel, knowing approximately when the holiday would come, began to double the first and last days of the holiday—the full festival days. That way, even if the news got to them late, they were certain to be observing the festival at the right time. As early as the middle of the fourth century C.E., astronomy had become exact enough that the Rabbis could create a permanent Jewish calendar. Jewish communities around the world continued to observe a second major day of festivals anyway, as a reminder that they were "in exile." The Reformers felt that the repetition of festival services was no longer needed or religiously desirable.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

45th Council
November 1959
Miami Beach, FL

CONFIRMATION GRADE

Whereas, under the guidance of the Commission on Jewish Education, many congregations have increased the level of their grade of Confirmation to at least the tenth grade (public school equivalent) and have benefited thereby in being able to present the message of Judaism to young people more fully able to comprehend it, as well as with the background of an additional year of Jewish study.

Be it therefore resolved, that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations commends these congregations and their rabbis for their efforts to increase the scope and significance of their religious school programs, and that it calls upon all congregations to adopt this standard for their religious education programs.



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Musical Diversity

In the ancient Temple, a Levitical choir embellished public worship; in later centuries, a cantor (chazan) chanted the entire service, and the congregants joined him by "davening" individually. In earlier Reform services, a reader would lead the service and a choir supply the music, while congregational participation consisted primarily of joining in responsive English prayers and the singing of English hymns. A Union Hymnal for general congregational singing was created, but by the end of the twentieth century it had largely disappeared from the synagogue.

1. Union Hymnal (1932)

The following is taken from the introduction to the third edition of the Union Hymnal, published in 1932.

The present edition of the Union Hymnal is the second revision of a work published originally by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1892. At that time the need of a Hymn Book that would answer the religious requirements of Reform congregations was apparent. In the discussion of the subject, the founder and first president of the Conference, Isaac M. Wise, said: "It is not the prayer coming from the spirit of Judaism which is fundamental, so much as it is the indestructible element in the psalmody of the people." The late Maurice H. Harris added this significant word to the discussion: "The choir has driven the congregation out as far as worship is concerned. It is time the congregation be given a hearing before God." . . .

One of the main purposes kept constantly in view was to make it as Jewish as possible, and thus meet one of the needs of our modern synagogal life, namely the adaptation of Jewish traditional music to the usage and taste of our own days. This involves a two-fold question: what elements of synagogal melody best express our religious life in music employed by our congregations; and how shall we clothe them in harmony that shall reveal their own peculiar modal character and melodic contours? We would not assert that we have solved these two problems. Not only in this Hymnal, but in our religious-musical life in general, they are still far from solution. But we have made an earnest effort to proceed

in this direction. We have called upon Jewish composers for aid. As noted elsewhere in this Preface, a considerable number of them contributed compositions to this collection. Composers were urged to utilize some of the wealth of synagogal melody. This plea found a ready response. Even a superficial glance through the contents of this volume indicates how many of the hymns are based upon traditional melodies. . . .

It has been our aim to combine Jewish and general musical values. Such a Hymnal as this is not an end, but an advance on the road toward the achievement of a difficult goal. It is our ardent hope that it will help educate our congregations in the beauties of our musical heritage, and lead them God-ward "on the wings of song."

Source: Union Hymnal, 3rd ed. (CCAR, 1932), v-vii.

2. The Cantorate (1999)

In European Liberal congregations, the cantor retained his traditional role of chanting the service, but in North American Reform practice the rabbi led the reading, while a choir dominated the singing with its renditions. For many years, non-Jews sang in such choirs, but in recent years this practice has diminished. Instead, the musical leadership has fallen once again—as it does in traditional synagogues—to cantors, especially after HUC-JIR began to train them in its School of Sacred Music. Female cantors have enjoyed full equality and have been unreservedly accepted by Reform congregations. Here, Howard Stahl, a leading figure in the American Conference of Cantors who currently serves Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, New Jersey, discusses changing forms of music in the Reform synagogue.

The American reform synagogue is at a crossroads today. The rabbinic, cantorial, and lay leadership is in the hands of men and women who are products of our movement. We are the true beneficiaries of the legacy of Wise and Sulzer. When cantors lead worship, we create sacred moments in sacred space. Through *chazanut*, the art of the cantor, we link past, present, and future as *klei kodosh*. Though those around us may demand that we sing friendly tunes that create a high comfort level for them, our goal must be to create a sense of *k'душah*, not *klezmer*. We cannot be afraid to disturb the comfortable. After all, the Hebrew word for worship, *avodah*, is the very same

word for work. Wise and Sulzer were not concerned with winning popularity contests. They were committed to instilling reverence for the Divine through worship experiences which were at once artistic, intellectually honest, authentic, and enduring. Wise's paradigm animated my teachers, and they, in turn, transmitted it to their students.

Yet the turbulent sixties shook the rigid and formulaic approach to life. The baby-boomer generation protested the archaic forms of its forebears and sought to tear down the established walls of order and propriety. The synagogue did not escape this modern-day reformation. The classical Reform models of a dignified service read in sententious tones by a black-robed rabbi, interspersed with a thirty-two bar choral piece with an eight bar solo for an operatic, voiced cantor or baritone soloist, no longer found favor in the ears or hearts of the worshiper. Responsive readings and hymn singing in English seemed stilted and arcane. The "king of instruments," the organ, was dethroned—it seemed better suited for cathedrals rather than suburban synagogues that began to spring up in rapid order. With increased Hebrew literacy, fueled by the growing commitment to the state of Israel, congregants wanted to read and sing less and less in the vernacular. Reform's commitment to universalism was replaced by a return to ethnic pride. We were not embarrassed by our unique rituals and customs, and we were no longer concerned with homogenizing worship. The pursuit of freedom and creativity supplanted the quest for dignity and predictability. God was still in His/Her holy Temple, only now sitting beside us in the pew. We needed to re-think and re-tool *Minhag America* to meet contemporary needs. We had come a long way from Albany circa 1846.

And so the pendulum swung radically, plunging us into a swaying, hand-holding, sing-along-with-Mitch, neo-chassidic modality—a kind of Pete Seeger meets Nachman of Bratslav. If liturgical music didn't meet the severely delimited criteria of being singable by all, accessible to all, instantaneously gratifying to all, it was condemned and rejected as being at best off-putting, at worst sacrilegious. We were quick to abandon Wise's plea for "uplifting solemnity." We were equally quick to engage in self-serving, self-gratifying forms which nostalgically reminded us of the good old days—our good old days. But what about the previous generation's good old days? Or for that matter, how *chutzpadik* of us to presume that the next generation might relate to what made us feel good. As young adults, my grandparents danced to Rudy Vallee's m. My parents thought he was arcane—they danced to Benny

Goodman. We thought he was square—we danced to a disco beat. My children laugh at the polyester-clad vision and dance to their own drummer. This is as it should be. We need to allow for diversity of form, permitting people of all ages, of all musical tastes, people who seek an immanent God and those who look towards a transcendent one, to feel comfortable and included. We need to look for that rainbow in the sky rather than simply a patch of blue.

Source: Howard Sahl, "A Wise Legacy," *Kolenu Byachad—Our Voices as One: Envisioning Jewish Music for the 21st Century* (New York: ACC, 1999), 31.

A Revolution in Worship (1999)

At the end of the twentieth century, renewed attention was focused on worship. New initiatives sought ways to make the synagogue more attractive and the service more meaningful, especially to younger people. In his 1999 Biennial Assembly address excerpted here, the president of the UAHFC, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffe, urged nothing less than a revolution.

I propose . . . that at this Biennial Assembly we proclaim a new Reform revolution. Like the original Reform revolution, it will be rooted in the conviction that Judaism is a tradition of rebellion, revival, and redefinition; and like the original too, this new initiative will make synagogue worship our Movement's foremost concern.

I further propose that this worship revolution be built upon the premise of partnership: rabbis will be its architects, cantors its artists, and lay people its builders. This has always been the way of our Movement. No other religious movement in Jewish life has ever been as democratic, as open, and as rooted in the collective partnership of rabbi, cantor, and lay person.

And what is generally true is especially important in this case. Because prayer is not a noun but a verb, it is not something that is done to us or for us, but by us; it is not something that you create and give to the congregation, but something that the congregation creates with you. So it is critical that vested interests be put aside and that the laity be admitted into the dialogue, even as we acknowledge that Jewish wisdom is ultimately the rabbis' expertise.

Reform. It is a detail that is not worth fighting about. It should not separate Jew from Jew and not be made the cause of breaking the Jewish groups or dividing Jewish congregations.

Source: Jacob Zvi Lauterbach, "Covering the Head in Prayer," in *The Growth of Reform Judaism*, ed. W. Gunther Plaut (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965), 307-8.

The Changing Prayer Book

In the 1890s the CCAR began to publish the Union Prayer Book, which subsequently underwent three revisions. The current version, now called Gates of Prayer, is again under review by the Liturgy Committee. In the past, theology was the main issue; today, gender-sensitive language, inclusion of the Matriarchs along with the Patriarchs, increased use of Hebrew texts, healing prayers, and choices of different kinds of services mark the latest attempts.

1. Are We Retired Philanthropists? (1928)

Samuel S. Cohon (1888-1959) was a severe critic of the early prayer books. Professor of Theology at Hebrew Union College, he was instrumental in shaping both the Columbus Platform of 1937 (see chapter 12) and a newly revised edition of the Union Prayer Book (1940). Cohon represented a growing desire on the part of many Reformers to return to some traditions that had been discarded by an earlier generation and especially to prayer as a true dialogue with God.

The Union Prayer-book unconsciously reflects the present apathy and scepticism toward prayer. Therein lies its chief distinction from the traditional Book of Prayer. It does not present "the prayer of the afflicted when he fainteth, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." It expresses for the most part only rhetorically the heart's hunger for God and lacks much of the creative character of the historical *Tefillah*. Like most of the older Reform rituals, it is not designed as a book of daily devotion for private as well as for congregational use. The few meager prayers for the individual are printed as afterthought. The weekday public services are in reality

arranged for public use on Sundays and for houses of mourning. These as well as the Sabbath and Holy Day services are so arranged as to turn the worshiper into an auditor. They are—with but few exceptions—formal in character. In many synagogues they are consciously used as a mere introducer to the rabbi's discourse.

As if to avoid embarrassment the petitionary prayers have been toned down. This is particularly true of the first volume. God is allowed only as much as the current textbooks of science cannot possibly deny Him. Prayer does not function as an expression of deep felt human needs, as a cry for health, for sustenance and for relief from pain, sorrow and distress, but only as a vague meditation on an ethical theme. An examination of the Union Prayer-book leaves the impression that "the intrusion of the scientific mood" into its fabric has done the mischief against which Dean Sperry warns us. Worship appears as "a means to some good other than itself" and "is justified by its reference to the better control of the world and the better conduct of life." Hence the homiletical nature of most of the additions to the traditional prayers, not only in the opening meditations, but also in the body of the services.

This further explains the persistent and often clumsy appeals to the worshiper. For instance in the special prayer for the evening of the fifth Sabbath of the month, we read:

May we so use this gift (of labor) that day by day we may look back upon our work and declare it good. May the fruit of our labor be a service acceptable unto Thee. May each new Sabbath find us going from strength to strength, so that whatever of good we have done we may do still better and wherever we have failed, we may by Thy grace be helped to worthwhile work.

The Union Prayer-book conveys the impression that it was especially written for a people composed of retired philanthropists and amateur social workers. The aged are provided with this prayer on Yom Kippur: "Give me the sweetness of that joy which is reserved for those who serve others through the counsel and guidance learned in the school of life's experience" (Vol II, p. 184). Compare it with the traditional plea: "*Al tashlichenu let zikhrah kichlot kohenu al ta'azuenu*—Cast us not away in old age, when our strength shall be spent do not forsake us." In the grace after meals, we have the sentence: "While we enjoy Thy gifts, may we never forget the needy, nor allow those who want, to be forsaken" (Vol. I, p. 344). How largely this self-sat

Sabbath Worship in the American Reform Synagogue 1970–2000

Marc Lee Raphael

In 1994, the Reform movement introduced its latest Sabbath liturgy, *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays: A Gender Sensitive Prayerbook*. Among its many intriguing characteristics are translations from Hebrew into English, a feature already present in an earlier version, *Gates of Prayer for Shabbat*, as well as in *Gates of Prayer for Weekdays*. But most striking about the transliterations, and a subject of comment by congregants everywhere, is that the well-known prayers are the ones chosen for transliterations, whereas the lesser-known prayers and responses are left in their original Hebrew. For example, the blessing said over the Sabbath candles and the prayer called the *shema*, both familiar even to Jews who rarely attend synagogue, are transliterated, but the prayers known as the *r'izey* and the *shalom rav*, read or sung in nearly every Sabbath service in America (but rarely known by heart by the occasional worshipper), appear only in Hebrew.¹ The result is that for those congregants who do not read Hebrew and do not attend services very frequently, *Gates of Prayer* is not user friendly. And those who attend regularly do not need the transliterations.

The transliteration phenomenon points to a paradox among Reform congregations: most worshippers who attend on a typical Friday evening, when there is no "special event" such as United Jewish Appeal Sabbath with a talk by the head of the local philanthropic federation, or an Interfaith Sabbath with a talk by a local black minister, are not in need of transliterations of the most familiar prayers. And those who attend infrequently, but come to the synagogue for a Sabbath evening service, do not find the prayerbook useful.

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I know this by observing congregants at scores of Reform synagogues while they pray. I notice that the regular worshippers do not look at their book at all when familiar Hebrew responses are read or sung, and that occasional worshippers stare blankly at their page during the same reading or hymn. I also talk to congregants after the worship services.

For several years, I have informally interviewed congregants at the *Oneg Shabbat* following worship at dozens of temples.² The complaint about the transliterations is a frequently heard response to a question about the usefulness of the prayerbook, but it offers a window to another feature of Sabbath eve services in Reform congregations, the great variety of worship styles.³

There are, as the new century unfolds, three distinct types of Friday evening worship experiences in American Reform congregations. And each of them, with slight variations, may be found in numerous synagogues. Unlike Orthodoxy, where Sabbath eve services are quite standard, and even unlike Conservatism, where Sabbath services from coast to coast are rather homogeneous,⁴ there is no such thing as "a Reform Jewish service."

The least common is the rather old-fashioned, or "classical," service, usually found in larger sanctuaries with elevated pulpits and hidden choirs, and much solemnity. These are formal and full of displays of status, with rare spontaneity or informality at any time during the services. The worshippers at these congregations tend to be middle-aged and elderly, and have frequently been attending this type of service for many years. The rabbi constantly gives directions for rising, sitting, reading responsively, and the like, although these are explicit in the text, and the rabbi never asks a question that might elicit a response from the rather passive congregation. The Torah is rarely read; the rabbi delivers a formal sermon; very little Hebrew is used, and when it is, the Hebrew responses are those familiar to everyone, including those who do not read Hebrew. The setting (pews, decor, physical layout) is permanent, and the officiants, in Erving Goffman's words from another context, "cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it."⁵ They are "services that were made into performances," in the words of Rabbi Harvey J. Fields, with "worship leaders who reduce congregants into passive and bored spectators."⁶ Worshippers at such services dress more formally than at other synagogues (rare is the man without coat

and tie)⁷ more are without head-covering than have their heads covered; hymns from the early part of the twentieth century, if not sometimes earlier, open and close the services; and when something that has been commonplace in hundreds of synagogues for a decade (rabbi wearing head-covering; the cantor or song-leader teaching a new hymn; reading and discussing the Torah portion) is carefully introduced into the service, bulletin and pulpit announcements prepare the way so as to cause the least possible stir.

These congregants frequently tell me, when attending a service not their own, that the service was "cold." This is true even when the service is especially participatory, or what most observers call "warm." But they rarely, if ever, speak of "spirituality" in connection with their own service. They are content with a service that has been the same for years, and express sadness at a new liturgy that uses gender-neutral language and new English translations for familiar readings.⁸ They do not attend for spiritual sustenance, or for the sermon, but mostly out of comfort in coming to something that rarely changes. They do not have much to say about the liturgy, or about the sermon (more about this later), but enjoy the community of fellow worshippers who also appear regularly and who share weekly socializing at the lengthy refreshment hour after the service. Mostly they complain if the service is too long: they look forward to its completion in the shortest amount of time possible to maximize fraternizing.

The most common type of Sabbath worship in American Reform congregations is what I will call "middle-of-the-road." These services are frequently in medium-size sanctuaries, with a mixture of (mostly) well-dressed and (some) informally dressed worshippers, and a mixture of elderly and middle-aged worshippers. The service combines a more or less equal amount of Hebrew and English, and there are clearly many people who are able to read the Hebrew prayers that do not have transliterations. The rabbi frequently removes the Torah from the ark during the service and reads and translates, albeit briefly, some verses from the weekly Torah portion. The rabbi also delivers a talk, less formal than the sermon at the "classical" congregation, but generally from a detailed outline. The musical parts of the service are routinely conducted by a cantor, who mixes solo selections with familiar melodies that maximize congregational participation. Stage directions (rise, sit, join with the rabbi or cantor) are frequently done by hand motions or subtle body movements, interfering only modestly

with the flow of the liturgy. Spontaneous insertions, while not abundant, are not out of place, either, including asking worshippers for additional names for the memorial prayer, or even asking if anyone has any announcements of upcoming events.

These worshippers are likely to comment on the sermon after the service (more on this later), and to wonder if the type of service they have attended maximizes "spirituality." They are the most comfortable with attending other Reform services, in their own city or far away, as they seem to find the variety of services interesting. They wonder why there are not more younger worshippers (except at special events) at their own services, but seem to be content with the liturgy and with their fellow worshippers.

The third type of worship experience in Reform synagogues is not nearly as common as the middle-of-the-road service but is considerably more common than the formal service. It is a service marked by informality, abundant Hebrew, maximum congregational participation, Torah reading and discussion, and occasional commentary about, or explanation of, the liturgy by the rabbi. The rabbi hardly needs to give any stage directions, as the worshippers are expected to read the instructions in their book or simply follow what others (more familiar with the service) are doing. The cantor is much more of a congregant, initiating hymns and responses but rarely singing them alone. The rabbi frequently greets the worshippers at the door of the sanctuary prior to services,⁹ conducts the service informally, pausing from time to time to explain a prayer or an interesting word within a prayer, clearly trying to choreograph a service maximizing spirituality. The rabbi will also be more likely to take out the Torah, read it, and discuss the weekly portion with the congregation, or to deliver a talk that permits either responses or, at the very least, questions. The worshippers tend to dress casually,¹⁰ more younger worshippers are present than in the other worship environments; and the rabbi is more likely to come off the pulpit (usually not elevated in any significant manner) and read or talk among the congregants, who themselves are more likely to be in chairs that are movable, in contrast to the fixed pews or seats in the other congregations. This is possible, in large part, because these services are held in synagogues built in the past three decades with sanctuaries intentionally designed without fixed pews.¹¹

The worshippers with whom I spoke or to whom I listened after these services seemed much more likely to engage the subject of the rabbi's talk or the themes of the Torah portion, and to make com-

ments about the level of spirituality the service achieved. They are also much more prone to be critical of services not like their own, especially those that do not maximize congregational participation, which they call "cold." They are the Reform Jews that Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, then president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, described as having a "hunger for God," a "yearning for the human warmth of the congregation."¹²

In synagogues with either the "classical" or "middle-of-the-road" service, Friday evening worship is usually viewed as an "event." The large majority of congregants do not worship regularly, and it takes something special (a jazz service; a city-wide Reform service with multiple congregations and their rabbis present; a youth group service; a Holocaust memorial service) for them to even consider attending a Friday evening service. There is virtually no sense of an obligation to worship regularly (e.g., monthly) among Reform Jews, and whether someone attends or not seems to have little to do with either the type of service or the rabbi's sermon, but rather with what "event" takes place that night. Attendance, at 8:00 or even 8:30 P.M., requires considerable preparation for an early (and usually rushed) Sabbath dinner as well as travel to the synagogue. But this is hardly the problem. The same adults who do not attend the synagogue manage to complete their Sabbath dinner, if they have one, and arrive at a cinema in time for an 8:45 P.M. film. There is simply little motivation, from either the liturgy or the sermon, to attend the synagogue, and without a sense of obligation to pray regularly, most synagogues are poorly attended on Friday evening.

Of course, "poorly attended" is, to some extent, in the eye of the beholder.¹³ I assume, for purposes of discussion, that a synagogue with 750 family units has at least (and there is abundant information to suggest this is a very low figure) 1.5 adults for each member unit, or about 1100 adult members. If so, there is rarely a Sabbath, without a featured "event," when there are as many as 10 percent of the adult members present, whether on the East Coast, the West Coast, or in the Midwest, South, or New England.¹⁴ And this figure, consistent with national surveys, is strikingly low when compared to church attendance.¹⁵

The exception is the synagogue with the participatory liturgy. These are usually congregations with a few hundred member units, not the medium or giant-sized synagogues, so perhaps more congregants feel an obligation to attend services as each member

"counts" more. But it is also clear that these Reform Jews are attracted by the liturgy as well as the Torah discussion, and that these rank as high in their eyes as almost any Friday evening alternative.¹⁶ At these services, one counts a regular attendance of about 25 percent of the members.¹⁷

If the picture on Friday evening is not optimistic, it is far less hopeful on Saturday mornings. At most of the medium and giant-size congregations I attend, a bar or bat mitzvah takes place each week. The result is a sense on the part of most of the Friday evening worshippers that Saturday morning is for "bar mitzvah families." Of course, each synagogue holds a Sabbath morning service, not a "bar mitzvah service." But the regularity of *b'nai mitzvah*—and the prominent role the *b'nai mitzvah* have in conducting the service and reading the Torah on Sabbath mornings—lead congregants to perceive this service as "private." Only in those congregations where an "alternative" Sabbath morning service takes place (usually conducted by a second rabbi or led by congregants) is there much evidence that Saturday morning will ever come to be, as it is among Conservative and Orthodox Jews, a primary day of worship for Reform Jews.

Curiously, at many congregations more members attend the Torah study hour, usually led by the rabbi, prior to the *b'nai mitzvah* ceremony, than remain for the service. It is not at all uncommon for me to witness 25 to 30 people present for Torah study from 8:30 to 10:00 A.M., and then watch most of them get into their cars and drive home as the Saturday morning service begins. Lawrence A. Hoffman has observed that "the likelihood that they will appear at a Shabbat service where they do not know the bar/bat mitzvah is only slightly higher than the probability that they will be found at a randomly selected funeral where they know neither the mourner nor the deceased."¹⁸ Congregants feel as if the premises have been rented to a specific bar mitzvah family for their private celebration rather than joining with the congregational family as is appropriate for a bar or bat mitzvah. They tell me, over and over, that they feel like "outsiders" at these services, although they all know that they are just as "public" as those on Friday evening.¹⁹

Where Reform Jews do remain, and others arrive, is at the increasing number of Saturday morning (usually called "alternative," "minyán" or "anti-bar mitzvah") services held concomitantly with the (increasingly invitation only) *b'nai mitzvah*. These are informal, lacking the "setting" so much a part of the sanctuary

service,²⁰ and frequently led by laypersons. However, when there is more than one rabbi at the synagogue, one of them usually drops in, although as a worshipper, not a leader.²¹ Whether lay or rabbinic, these have been growing in popularity since 1990 or so, when Rabbi Sanford Selzer noted "the resurgence of the Shabbat morning service."²² In more and more Reform congregations around the country, there are sufficiently knowledgeable laypeople for someone to prepare the Torah reading for that Sabbath. Much of this service's popularity comes from the Torah reading and discussion, something that does not take place in the medium and giant-sized congregations on Friday evenings, rather than the liturgy or sermon. And it is this service, if any, that finds Reform Jews davening—investing each word and melody (mostly known by heart) with all one's physical, emotional, and spiritual energy ("looseness") that the individual, transformed into one who is hoping to experience God directly, may call upon. And this service, which empowers so many laypeople, is the fastest growing Reform worship experience as the new century begins.

In city after city, Reform synagogue families consist of adult men and women with careers, frequently in the professions. Even if they live in the city (rare), few are the couples who find it possible to arrive home from work in time to have a modicum of Sabbath dinner and arrive at worship services on time, or even close to the start. And if they live in the suburbs (the norm), this is even more unlikely for these dual-career couples, as neither husband nor wife is home in time to prepare dinner and for the family to finish eating in time for worship.

For the most part, this simply eliminates the large majority of congregants from worship attendance except on special occasions when, with considerable planning, one of the adults is able to leave work early and have dinner ready in time for hurried eating and driving to the synagogue. Since Sabbath morning is perceived as a "bar or bat mitzvah service," this helps to explain the absence of most members from Sabbath morning worship as well. Although informal, I have found a strong correlation between those families where one of the parents is home on Friday, or at least on Friday afternoon, and worship attendance on Sabbath eve.

An increasing response to this situation is the "early" Sabbath eve service, an attempt to attract at least one of the two adult members on his or her way home from work to Sabbath dinner.²³ Starting somewhere between 5:30 and 6:30 P.M., depending on the

location of the synagogue and the major areas of employment, this service is much more likely than any other (except the Saturday morning "minyan") to elicit a positive response *re* "spirituality" from those who attend. Frequently it is mostly sung by the worshippers, with little direction from rabbi, cantor, or layleader, and the "sermon" is, at most, a brief five- or ten-minute "message."²⁴ Sometimes this service replaces the "late" service,²⁵ in other synagogues, it is in addition to the later service.²⁶ Everywhere, the worshippers are enthusiastic: a brief but meaningful worship experience; a modest "sermon"; and a relaxed Sabbath dinner with spouse and (when applicable) children lies ahead.

Rabbis, too, for the most part, seem delighted with the format, especially when the early service replaces the later service and they, too, may enjoy a Sabbath dinner at home. At one congregation, all Sabbath eve services, save three or four a year, begin at 5:45 P.M., so that congregants as well as the rabbi can "get home for dinner."²⁷ Rabbis seem less pleased with the obligation to conduct both an early and a late service, so most rabbis have trained laypersons to lead the former. Rabbis seem equally split between the advantage of less preparation to conduct the early service, with its minimal "message," and the later service, with its "sermon" requirement but the opportunity to reach larger numbers. But, since the sermon has largely become minimalist anyway, the early service is growing in popularity among rabbis as well as congregants. The brief message at 6:00 P.M. is not much less than the brief sermon at 9:00 P.M.

I have remarked on the minimal importance of the sermon in attracting worshippers to any type of Reform congregation, and the general lack of interest among worshippers in discussing the sermon following the service. It was once not so; from the 1920s to the 1960s, the power of charismatic preachers drew large crowds.²⁸ In 1962 lectures to rabbinic students at the HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman of Hartford, Conn. could argue that "the preaching ability of the rabbi is considered first and primary among the qualifications of the modern rabbi."²⁹ Even in the 1970s, Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson of Beth-El in Great Neck, New York, could note, in discussing his preparation for Sabbath eve services, that he was "driven to speak well, to enunciate everything so meticulously, to develop a commanding style."³⁰ In bulletins from Reform congregations all over America in the 1950s and 1960s, rabbis regularly announced sermon titles in advance (and Reform Jews came to hear a particular message), and took preaching far

more seriously than today. At their seminary they were consistently taught, not just in the first half of the century but in the quarter-century after World War II, the "truly arduous and painstaking self-discipline upon which effective preaching is built."³¹ After my first chapel sermon in the seminary, an instructor wrote at the end of the text that "the growth of your preaching ability is the most important goal you can set yourself during the remainder of your student days." And following my final chapel sermon, the homiletics teacher pointed out to me that "the rabbi has to be first and foremost a preacher."³² Most rabbis today have, as Rabbi Karff observed, "devalued preaching,"³³ and boast that they need not write out their sermon; they speak either from a detailed outline or from a few notes.³⁴

This is especially true of recently ordained Reform rabbis, so it is not simply a matter of years of preaching. These rabbis generally note that homiletics is a dying art;³⁵ that they have never been exposed to the few remaining great preachers (in contrast to many Protestant seminaries where great preachers are videotaped and studied by students); that they were not taught by men (or women) who have made serious public speaking a high priority in their rabbinate; that congregants, whose "attention span after a week of work is about the length of a gerbil," seem quite satisfied (here they are correct) with the brief, informal talks of most Friday evenings; that the "twenty-minute sermon is mostly passé,"³⁶ and, anyway, they do not have the time to "prepare rigorously and mobilize [their] best energies,"³⁷ and that teaching and counseling (in the widest sense) are much higher priorities.³⁸

Most striking, week after week, is the lack of any critical evaluation of rabbinic preaching. At many congregations, a reception line follows the Sabbath service, and congregants regularly say "I liked your sermon very much," "That was an interesting sermon," or, as congregants would tell Rabbi Martin Siegel of Lawrence, N.Y., "The sermon was beautiful."³⁹ Rare is the congregant who engages the rabbi at the *Oneg Shabbat*, and rare are the congregants who feel sufficiently stimulated to discuss the talk among themselves.⁴⁰ The worshippers are far more apt to discuss the liturgy than the rabbi's talk, as "spirituality" (or the lack thereof) is of more post-worship interest than the words of the preacher. And rabbis, sensing this, have given the sermon a rather low priority for Friday evening and Saturday morning services.

For the most part, however, the well-being of the synagogue and the worship services seem quite unrelated to rabbinic preaching. Reform congregations are frequently large and always busy; they flow along independent of the learning and homiletical skills of the rabbi (although not without his/her "managing" skills).⁴¹ In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s Reform Jews came from all over the city to "Silver's temple,"⁴² "Brickner's temple,"⁴³ or "Goldman's center"⁴⁴ (to use only Cleveland as an example) to hear the nationally celebrated preachers.⁴⁵ It was, as Rabbi Samuel E. Karff of Houston correctly observed, the "power of a charismatic preacher" that drew the people.⁴⁶ Today, though plenty of rabbis are equally gifted, it is mostly a dedicated core of members (Friday night) and relatives/friends of the *b'nai mitzva* who attend. Few are drawn because of the rabbi; the attachment is institutional.

There are two exceptions to this vacuum of sermon discussion. The first is in the congregations where the Torah reading includes a discussion, or where the sermon topic is interactive, eliminating what Rabbi Karff described as "the passive spectator mode of one-directional communication between pulpit and pew."⁴⁷ In these situations, time constraints force the rabbi to halt the discussion or stop taking questions. Those who don't get to speak, or those who have more to say, frequently continue the exchange with the rabbi (or each other) following services.

The other exception to this is the jam-packed High Holydays, where a great many rabbis announce their sermon titles in advance, spend considerable time in preparation, and where congregants, at various venues, often discuss the sermons. The most popular forum for such discussions seems to be the "break the fast" following Yom Kippur, either at the synagogue or at various homes. Where once (so congregants report) they might have discussed what the rabbi's wife wore during the holydays, they are much more likely to talk about the liturgy (what was meaningful, what was boring) and the sermons (whether or not they agreed with the rabbi on some issue about which he or she spoke). There is still almost no constructive feedback for the rabbi, except for the occasional letter; yet most rabbis I interviewed consistently report that their sermons "went over well."⁴⁸ They draw this conclusion largely from the perfunctory comments made by worshippers as rabbi and congregants greet one another following one or more of the services.

So what of the future? Where will Reform Sabbath worship be in 2010? There is the well-known rabbinic adage that prophecy is given only to children and fools. In my field, we remember the unfortunate prophecy of Jacob Rader Marcus, who ventured to predict, in 1934, that "the Jewish genius for survival" will manifest itself in [Nazi] Germany.⁴⁹ Although I hesitate to predict, I think it is likely that concern for intimacy, search for spirituality, and growing interest in Torah discussions will continue. It is difficult for me to envision the decade ahead with pressure on rabbis to increase English responsive readings at the expense of Hebrew singing. I cannot imagine a desire to return to prayers that represent the divine as "He who is Lord and Master," or a yearning for the carefully prepared, typescript lecture on a Friday evening. American Reform Judaism is moving in a direction that seems at present irreversible, a fundamental diminution of a much more formal past.

Notes

1. For a strong critique of these transliterations (Transliterations "declare for all to see, 'Reform Jews can't read Hebrew. Reform Judaism has abandoned Hebrew.' Say [Kaddish] for Hebrew"), see H. Gamoran, "Say Kaddish for Hebrew?" *Central Conference of American Rabbis Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* (Spring 1997), pp. 82-92.
2. I have been informed by *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 13ff.
3. My observations have been informed by the work of Ronald L. Grimes, especially *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982).
4. One observer, who studied two suburban Minneapolis Conservative synagogues for a year, concluded that their "Shabbat morning services are virtually identical liturgically." Riv-Ellen Prell, "Late Twentieth Century Conservative Synagogues: An Ethnographic View," in *Jewish Identity and Religious Commitment: The North American Study of Conservative Synagogues and Their Members, 1995-96*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), p. 39.
5. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 22.
6. "Gates of Prayer: Ten Years Later—A Symposium," *Journal of Reform Judaism* (Fall 1985), p. 21.
7. Someone dressed casually is likely to be "ignored, snubbed, gossiped about, or frowned at" (Grimes, *Beginnings*, p. 40).

8. Rabbi Samuel E. Karff described such worshippers well, as "a core of classical Reform Jews, weaned on the old *Union Prayer Book*, who maintain the discipline of regular worship and to whom the cadence of that liturgy is a warm balm" (Samuel E. Karff, "The Rabbi as Religious Figure," in *Tanu Rabbanan: Our Rabbis Taught: Essays on the Occasion of the Centennial of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, ed. Joseph B. Glaser [New York: The Conference, 1990], p. 71).
9. In the 1940s, Rabbi Reuben J. Magli of Harrisburg, Pa. would "greet each member as he goes out" at the "entrance door of the Temple" ("The Rabbi in a Small Community," *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly* 49 [1949], p. 171).
10. Although I did not witness any rabbi wearing something analogous to the priest who wears "a sweatshirt instead of a robe when saying Mass" (Grimes, *Beginnings*, p. 40), some rabbis conducted Sabbath eve services without a tie.

11. In a study of worship and ritual practices conducted in the early 1980s and which I will discuss below, two researchers already noted that the "central, fixed pulpit has been replaced or modified by more flexible arrangements." They made a connection between "fixed central pulpits" and the absence of "warm, communal feeling" (Ronald N. Ashkenas and Todd D. Jick, *Coping With Change: The Reform Synagogue and Trends in Worship* [New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1984], pp. 10 and 14).
12. "Report of the President of the UAHJC to the Board of Trustees, Southbury, Conn., May 30-June 1, 1975, 9, UAHJC" (New York City).
13. Marshall Sklare expressed disappointment over Sabbath worship attendance in Providence and Philadelphia in the early 1970s, but his criterion was whether Conservative Jews attended services "once a week or more" (Marshall Sklare, "Recent Developments in Conservative Judaism," *Midstream* [January 1972], pp. 13-14). A survey, twenty years earlier, found attendance at Friday evening services (then the "main service of the week") at Conservative synagogues "at an appalling disproportion with the congregational membership" (*National Survey United Synagogue of America*, 1950, p. 10).
14. For an extended argument that concludes that my 10 percent is an inflated figure, see Lawrence A. Hoffman, "From Common Cold to Uncommon Healing," *CCAR:RIQ* (Spring 1994), pp. 27-28, n. 13. Exceptions to this dominate pattern include Late Shabbat at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.
15. George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People's Religion: American Faith in the 90s* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 16, 30, 34.
16. These worshippers do indicate that they would give a higher priority to an occasional play, sporting event, or concert, but that on a weekly basis they attend cultural events on other nights and reserve Friday evening for the temple.

3. *The Afternoon Service (Minchah)*

The "*Ashrei*," Psalm 145 introduced by Psalms 84:5 and 144:15.

Readings for Shabbat and festivals.

Chatzzi Kaddish.

The *Tefillah*, essentially the same as for *Shacharit*.

On Shabbat, the reading of the Torah is traditionally the first section (*aliyah*) of the portion for the following Shabbat.

Concluding Prayers: Aleinu, Mourner's Kaddish, Benediction.

Kippah, Tallit, Tefillin

Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments throughout the ages . . . That shall be your fringes; look at it and recall all of God's commandments. (Num. 15:38-39)

Bind [these words] as a sign upon your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead. (Deut. 6:8)

On Traditional Observance. For many years, one of the most characteristic features of American Reform Jewish worship was that it did not "look Jewish." When assembled in their synagogues, Reform Jews by and large did not cover their heads with a hat or a skullcap (called a *kippah* or a *yarmulke*), nor did they don the *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *tefillin* (phylacteries). In Europe, to be sure, most Reform Jews continued to wear *kippah* and *tallit*, even as some Reform thinkers called for the abandonment of these observances as outmoded vestiges of a bygone age. In the United States, however, their absence became synonymous with Reform practice. In 1963 it could be stated without controversy that in Reform temples "the congregation and the rabbi worship with uncovered head." The *tallit* was reduced to a ceremonial object worn by rabbis while leading services. *Tefillin* virtually disappeared. Today, by contrast, these trends have been reversed. An increasing number of American Reform Jews wear the *kippah* and the *tallit*, and some have even begun to observe the practice of *tefillin*. There are indeed few more visible signs of a "return to tradition" within the American Reform

synagogue than the reappearance of these items of "Jewish religious apparel."

How do we explain these developments, the rejection of these symbols and their subsequent recovery? Although an adequate answer to that question would require a much more detailed look at Reform Jewish history than can be attempted here, it would surely point to the shifting tides of culture and outlook in which Reform Judaism developed during the past two centuries. The movement came of age in an era characterized by a generally negative attitude toward traditional ritual practice, an age when liberal religious discourse was dominated by the great themes of reason, science, and aesthetics. During this period, enlightened believers were taught that the moral teachings of Judaism were infinitely more significant than its ritual practices. The former were the "essence" of our faith; the latter were its ceremonial trappings, externals which at best may serve to protect the "essence" but which at worst can distort the message of Judaism and divert our spiritual attention away from the things that truly matter. Proceeding from this starting point, Reform thinkers understandably dismissed much of traditional ceremonial law and custom as "totemism," "fetishism," and "talismans," remnants of primitive cults totally out of line with the progressive outlook of a modern religion. The classic expression of this attitude is undoubtedly contained in the Pittsburgh Platform, adopted by an assembly of Reform rabbis in 1885, which served for many years as the authoritative summary of American Reform doctrine:

We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and to-day we accept as binding only the moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

Jewish tradition, in other words, had ceased to be self-justifying. No longer was it sufficient to defend a religious practice on the grounds that it was old. To survive in this era, a custom or observance would

have to prove its meaningfulness before the bar of an enlightened and elevated "modern civilization."

By the middle of the twentieth century, matters had substantially changed. A new generation of Reform rabbis pressed for a new statement of religious doctrine. The Columbus Platform, adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1937, reflected the theological stance of this new generation. Defining Judaism as "the historical religious experience of the Jewish people," it abandoned much of the rationalism of its predecessor and portrayed Jewish faith in more overtly traditional terminology. Where the Pittsburgh document had written off the bulk of the "Mosaic legislation" as irrelevant to modern religious life, its successor could declare that

Judaism as a way of life requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands, the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies as possess inspirational value, the cultivation of distinctive forms of religious art and music and the use of Hebrew, together with the vernacular, in our worship and instruction.

If the Columbus Platform did not entirely reverse Pittsburgh on this point—ritual must still be "inspirational" to justify its preservation—the rejectionist tone of the earlier platform had disappeared. Traditional Jewish ritual had now been accepted as a legitimate aspect of religious life even for the progressive, modern Jew. This theme was amplified in the CCAR's Centenary Perspective of 1976:

Judaism emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life . . . The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life . . . and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence.

These later platforms speak as they do, of course, because the rabbinical bodies that issued them no longer shared the negative attitude toward traditional observance of the Pittsburgh rabbis of 1885. History, in other words, has led us to reconsider and even to reverse some of the decisions on religious practice made by past generations of Reform Jews. This most certainly does not mean that we reject the heritage of our movement, let alone that we have somehow turned our backs upon

Reform Judaism in favor of a "return to Orthodoxy." It means rather that we in our time have developed a way of thinking and talking about Reform Judaism that differs in some important respects from that of our forebears. Reform Judaism has always recognized the tendency of Jewish practice to change over time in response to its environment. In the past, this quality of adaptation has led to the abandonment of traditional observances which are no longer found to be meaningful as well as to the creation of new rituals to reflect the aspirations of our time and place. We have championed this process of change as a positive good, a sign of Judaism's responsiveness to the needs of each generation. We have cited it in order to justify and defend on historical Judaic grounds our own efforts toward religious reform. Our predecessors may well have understood "change" as a one-way street, a progressive movement away from a religion steeped in ritual toward a more rational and enlightened conception of faith. In our own day, however,

we willingly move also in the other direction as history and the mood of our people re-emphasize older customs . . . Nothing would, therefore, hinder us as Reform Jews from readopting customs once omitted if a new generation finds them meaningful and useful in its practice of Judaism. We have always understood that such customs, when adopted by us, do not represent a divine enactment. In other words, we are willing to change in both directions.

Many Reform Jews and their congregations have in fact chosen to restore rituals that previous generations had eliminated. Such changes have made it customary to speak of a "return to tradition" in Reform Jewish life. Yet this "return" is more than just the tendency to choose traditional over non-traditional approaches to practice. It also signifies a sharp change in the religious discourse of the Reform movement, that is, in the way that Reform Jews talk about issues of faith and observance. The rhetoric of modernism has given way to that of religious and spiritual meaning. Reform Jews today base their religious choices not so much upon appeals to reason, science, and aesthetics, as upon the language of religious and spiritual meaning. "Meaning," as we know, can spring from any number of sources, and one of the most important of these is tradition. True, the fact that a particular practice is "traditional" does not guarantee that a Reform Jew will find it meaningful. Still, an observance can be meaningful simply *because* it is traditional, because it evokes the religious experience of the Jewish people through the ages, and because we find strength in our identification with that experience.

The “return to tradition” means that, when confronting questions over specific religious practices, Reform Jews are more likely today than before to ask: “Is it *Jewish*? Does it fit within the broad contours of Jewish tradition as we understand it?” For this reason, appeals to tradition are more common and more acceptable in Reform Jewish discourse now than in generations past.

Kippah. As noted above, praying with uncovered head was the rule for many years in American Reform synagogues. This rule, at odds with traditional Jewish custom, was evidently based on the prevailing standards of honor and respect in the general culture which dictated that one remove one’s hat when inside a building and during solemn occasions such as worship. In 1928, Rabbi Jacob Z. Lauterbach, a professor at the Hebrew Union College and chair of the CCAR Responsa Committee, wrote a richly-detailed study in defense of the Reform practice, declaring that “there is no law in the Bible or Talmud prescribing the covering of the head for men when entering a sanctuary; when participating in the religious service, or when performing any religious ceremony.” The practice of covering the head is not based upon any explicit statement in Jewish legal sources; it “is merely a custom, a *minhag*, that first appeared among the Jews in Babylon” during the rabbinic period (roughly, from the beginning of the Common Era to 500 C.E.). In Palestine, by contrast, the sources indicate that “people would not hesitate entering a synagogue, reading from the Torah, and participating in the religious service with uncovered head.” This difference in custom made its way to medieval Europe: in Spain, which tended to follow the Babylonian practices, authorities required that the head be covered during prayer, while in France and Germany, which were more influenced by Palestinian ritual traditions, there is some evidence that Jews would pray bareheaded. Although by the thirteenth century the northern Europeans (Ashkenazim) had begun to adopt the Spanish (Sefardic) custom, later authorities in central and eastern Europe continued to write that the prohibition against worshipping bareheaded “has no foundation in the Talmud.” As one of them remarked (in Lauterbach’s translation): “There is no prohibition whatever against praying with uncovered head, but as a matter of propriety it would seem to be good manners to cover one’s head when standing in the presence of great men, and also during the religious service.” From all of this, Lauterbach concluded that the custom of praying with covered head “is merely a matter of social pro-

priety and decorum”; since in our own culture it is considered “good manners” to remove the hat as a sign of respect, there can be no objection to praying bareheaded. He writes:

Although in the last century the question of “hat on or hat off” was the subject of heated disputes . . . we should know better now and be more tolerant and more liberal towards one another. We should realize that this matter is but a detail of custom and should not be made the issue between Orthodox and Reform. It is a detail that is not worth fighting about. It should not separate Jew from Jew.

One may quibble over Lauterbach’s interpretation of a number of his sources. Some of them do not say precisely what he tells us that they say, and this tends to weaken his argument somewhat. His central point is certainly correct: Jewish law makes no absolute requirement that one cover the head to pray, to study Torah, or to participate in other religious acts. On the other hand, his conclusion—that covering the head “is merely a custom, a *minhag*”; “merely a matter of social propriety”—hardly reflects what is at stake in this issue, for surely he was aware there is no such thing as “mere” custom in Judaism. Much of Jewish ritual practice is based upon custom rather than upon Toraitic commandment or rabbinic decree, yet the tradition does not regard it as unimportant or irrelevant for that. As the old Ashkenazic saying puts it, “the custom of our ancestors is Torah.” Jews have always related to their customs with intensity and seriousness. Fierce debates in Jewish religious life are as likely to take place over matters of “mere” custom as they are over issues of Torah law and theological doctrine. This is no less true of Reform Judaism. Disputes over *this* particular custom at times took center stage in a number of synagogues. This was because it was widely held that bareheaded worship was an essential sign of Reform identity; just as traditionalists asserted that one was not a “good Jew” if one prayed bareheaded, many liberals believed that one could not be a “good Reform Jew” and wear a hat or *kippah* during prayer. Lauterbach may be right in pleading that the *kippah* is “not worth fighting about,” but the fact is that Reform Jews *did* fight about it, raucously, for years. Many congregations went so far as to prohibit the wearing of headcovering during worship. Were the issue as marginal and unimportant as Lauterbach described it, such rules would never have been made.

Nor does Lauterbach’s argument speak to the religious concerns of many contemporary Reform Jews, who no longer find spiritual meaning in worship conducted in accordance with a certain notion of decorum

and solemnity, that is, a style that conforms to Western standards of propriety and “good manners.” This is not to say that these Reform Jews are indifferent to “good manners” or that they have turned their backs on modern culture. It is rather that they are apt to discover a more profound sort of meaning in precisely the kind of traditional worship experience which previous generations rejected. These Jews have come full circle; they want a religious service that “looks” and “feels” Jewish, one that draws deeply upon traditional forms of worship and religious life. It is no surprise that the *kippah* has reemerged in the Reform synagogue. Though it may not be an absolute requirement of Jewish law, it can serve those who wear it as an unmistakable sign of the tradition with which they seek to identify.

Other Reform Jews continue to regard the *kippah* either as irrelevant to their religious experience or reject it as a reminder of a style of observance that the movement has long since left behind. Today, therefore, many choose to wear a *kippah* during worship and study, while others do not. According to Reform doctrine, neither choice is necessarily the better one; both are legitimate exercises of the personal religious autonomy that the movement holds dear. But if the movement is officially neutral on the choice, this does not mean that the issue is a trivial one, nor worthy of careful thought. To wear or not to wear the *kippah* is no simple, flip-the-coin choice of “hat on or hat off.” Indeed, because it partakes deeply of the realm of symbolism, because it can serve as a concrete expression of the way in which an individual approaches Jewish prayer and Jewish life, the decision to wear the *kippah* or not to wear it can be the most serious kind of religious decision a Reform Jew can make. For those concerned about building strong and vital religious communities, the challenge is to create the kind of atmosphere in which individuals can make these decisions freely, without being subjected to the sort of pressure that says: “there is only one right answer for a good Reform Jew.”

Tallit and Tefillin. Gates of Prayer offers the appropriate benediction “for those who wear the *tallit*”:

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kidashanu
bemitzvotav vetezivanu lehitatef bartsitzit.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us through the *mitzvot* and commands us to wrap ourselves in the fringed *tallit*.

The blessing is recited while standing, immediately prior to donning the *tallit*. Then, holding the *tallit* directly in front of you with both hands, let your right hand bring the corner of the garment around your back to the right shoulder. If the *tallit* is large enough to cover the head and most of the body, it is customary to wrap the head completely with its right side, so that the *tzitzit* (the long fringes on the *tallit*'s corners) of that side lie across the back while the left-side fringes remain in place. It is then draped across the shoulders, two *tzitzit* in front and two in the back, so that “one is surrounded by *mitzvot*.”

The observance of *tzitzit* pertains to the daylight hours. The *tallit* is therefore worn by worshippers during the morning service and not at night. The major exception to this rule is the night of Yom Kippur (*Kol Nidrei*), when it is customary to wear white as a symbol of the purity of our repentance. In addition, it has become customary for participants in the Torah service and for those who lead services even at night to wear the *tallit*, and this is the practice in many Reform congregations.

Women wear the *tallit* on the same occasions that men do; the *tallit* is not a specifically “male” garment. In traditional practice, women do not wear the *tallit*. This is because the observance of *tzitzit* is a positive commandment (*mitzvat asah*, a commandment to perform an act, as opposed to *mitzvat lo ta'aseh*, a prohibition against an act) which pertains to a particular time (daylight), and women are said to be exempt from all such obligations. “Exempt” means that, technically, women are not forbidden to wear *tzitzit* if they so choose. In practice, however, it was considered a sign of arrogance and an unsuitable display of piety for women to perform this *mitzvah*, and “we do not allow women to wear the *tallit*.” Reform Judaism rejects the logic which draws any ritual distinctions between women and men, and with regard to this particular ritual we certainly do not think it arrogant for any Jew to choose to wear the *tallit* at its appropriate time.

Gates of Prayer also provides the benedictions “for those who wear *teffilin*.” After donning the *tallit*, fix the *tefillah shel yad* (the box for the arm) upon the bicep of your weaker arm (i.e., the left arm of a right-handed person, and the right arm of a left-handed person) and recite:

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kidashanu
bemitzvotavu vetezivanu lehaniach tefillin.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us through the *mitzvot* and commands us to wear *teffilin*.

Tighten the loop around the upper arm and then wrap the *retzu 'ah* (the strap) seven times around the arm between the elbow and the wrist. Place the *tefillah shel rosh* (the headpiece) upon the head at a point slightly above the original hairline. Then say:

*Barruh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kidsbanu
benizvoanu vezivanu 'al mizvat tefillin.*

... and commands us concerning the *mizva'ah* of *tefillin*.

Barruh shem kevod malkhuto le'olam va'ed.

Blessed is God's glorious realm forever.

The straps of the *shel rosh* should extend downward in front of you. At this point, wrap the *retzu 'ah* of the *shel yad* three times around your middle finger, twice below the knuckle, once around the middle joint, and recite Hosea 2:21-22 ("I will betroth you to Me forever..."). Wrap the remainder around the palm, with the end of the strap snugly tucked in.

The *tefillin* are square-shaped leather boxes containing parchments upon which are written the following sections of the Torah: Exodus 13:1-10; Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (*Shema* and *ne'inhanta*); and Deuteronomy 11:13-21. Each of these sections mentions the "sign," "symbol," or "memorial" that one is to place upon the hand or the forehead, references that tradition interprets as *tefillin*. Taken together, they call to mind many of the foundations of Jewish faith: God's unity, sovereignty over our lives, and mighty works of redemption in Jewish history. Thus, the wearing of the *tefillin* upon the head and on the arm in the direction of the heart can be understood as a concrete demonstration of our resolve to direct both head and heart toward the service of God. The *shel rosh* contains four compartments; each of the Torah sections is written on a separate piece of parchment and is inserted into one of the compartments. For the *shel yad*, which is made up of a single compartment, the Torah sections are written on a single piece of parchment.

Tefillin are not worn at night. Nor are they worn on Shabbat and festivals, that is, the first and last days of Pesach, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, and Shavuot. The reason is that *tefillin* are referred to as "a sign upon the hand" (Deut. 6:8) while Shabbat and festivals are themselves a sign of the eternal covenant between God and

Israel; since these special days are filled with visible evidence of our relationship to God, we need not display another sign upon our hands and heads. There is a dispute concerning *chol hamo'ed*, the intermediate days of Pesach and Sukkot. Some say that these days are themselves visible "signs" of the covenant, in that we eat *matzah* or dwell in the *sukkah* and therefore, *tefillin* should not be worn. Others say that since the Torah does not prohibit work on the intermediate days, they are not "signs" and we should put on *tefillin*. The Sefardic rite follows the first of these positions, while many Ashkenazim adopt the latter.

Prayer in the Vernacular

From its early days in Europe, the Reform movement conducted much of its worship service in the native language of the congregation. The use of the vernacular, to be sure, was not unprecedented in Jewish liturgical practice. But public worship, particularly the recitation of the *Shema* and the *Tefillah*, had been conducted in Hebrew from time immemorial. The substitution of translations for these and other sections of the liturgy therefore marked a radical break with ancestral custom. For this reason, vernacular prayer quickly became one of the sharpest points of contention between the reformers and their opponents.

The reformers defended their innovation on grounds of religious principle and of *halakhabh*. As a matter of principle, the change to vernacular prayer seemed an obvious necessity. If prayer is to be a service of the heart, it seemed only natural that the liturgy be performed in a language that the worshipers understood and in which they could express their innermost thoughts and feelings. This was true, it was argued, not only for those worshipers unlearned in Hebrew, but also for those who had studied it, because a second language, no matter how well one knows it, remains an acquired, artificial mode of speech. As for the *halakhabh*, the reformers noted that the Talmud and the halakhic literature explicitly permit one to recite the *Shema* and the *Tefillah* "in any language" and that according to some authorities it is preferable to pray in a language one understands if one does not know Hebrew. In the view of the reformers, the legal sources reinforced the basic conviction that the essence of prayer is understanding. One must know what one is reading; one must be able to say what one means to say before

God. To require that people pray in a language they do not know is to defeat the very purpose of worship.

The Orthodox critique of vernacular prayer took several lines of attack. First of all, the reformers were criticized for abandoning ancestral *minhag*, or custom. As we saw in our discussion of the *kippah*, custom is a potent force in the shaping of Jewish practice. This was always true, but the new "Orthodox" Judaism which rose in response to the Reform movement went much farther than did previous generations in its devotion to *minhag*. In the Orthodox view, all of the tradition, custom no less than the law of the Torah or the decree of the talmudic rabbis, possessed an equal measure of authority. All of the tradition was to be regarded as sacred and had to be preserved in its entirety. Since public prayer had long been conducted in Hebrew, that practice was a sanctified *minhag* which could not be altered, even if formal Jewish law allows prayer to be recited in the vernacular. Second, it was argued that the reformers wished to pray in the vernacular tongue because that is how their Gentile neighbors conducted their worship services. As such, this violated the biblical prohibition against adopting "the statutes of the nations," of imitating Gentile religious practices. This argument fails, however, because halakic authorities have generally restricted this rule to those practices adopted *solely* out of a desire to imitate the Gentiles; "practices which reflect legitimate purposes . . . are not covered by the prohibition." Reform Jews believe that the use of the vernacular strengthens the worship experience and thus counts as a "legitimate purpose." Finally, opponents of reform noted that both the *Shema* and the *Tefillah* are texts whose wording is fixed by biblical or rabbinic authors. To render them into any other language requires a translation of the ultimate precision, one that captures the exact sense of the original Hebrew. This, by definition, is impossible, since every language is unique in its nuances, character, and shades of meaning. A translation of the prayer cannot substitute for the prayer itself. If the *halakhab* apparently permits one to recite the *Shema* or *Tefillah* in any language, this must apply only to unusual or emergency situations as, for example, when one needs to pray but does not have a prayer book at hand. But surely this permit cannot apply to the worship service of a congregation; such worship must consist of the recitation of the actual prayer texts in their original Hebrew language. The reformers responded that however imaginative and intriguing this argument might be, the halakic sources contain no trace of it. In this case, perhaps ironically, the Orthodox

utilized a "creative" interpretation of the talmudic texts in order to defend traditional practice, while the reformers justified their innovation with a more conservative reading of those texts, whose plain sense permits the worshiper to pray in any language.

While the early reformers introduced the practice of vernacular prayer, Hebrew never totally disappeared from Reform liturgy. The last several decades, in fact, have witnessed a reverse trend. The "return to tradition" and the acceptance of Zionism within the movement have combined to spark something of a Hebrew renaissance in the synagogue. In part, this renaissance reflects the movement's commitment to Hebrew as a medium of Jewish expression. Thus, "it is a *mitzvah* to learn and teach the Hebrew language." In terms of quantity, the amount of Hebrew used in the worship services of North American Reform congregations has dramatically increased. In terms of quality, the structure and content of *Gates of Prayer* reveal a deep commitment to the importance of the Hebrew language in the liturgy of the movement. The prayer book's "bilateral symmetry"—Hebrew as well as English title, Hebrew as well as English subtitles, the availability of a "Hebrew binding" (a book opening from the right cover rather than from the left)—along with its wide-ranging selection of Hebrew sources suggests that the book's Hebrew sources "have as much claim to our attention as do the English translations and paraphrases." Hebrew has thus attained the status of equal partnership with the vernacular as a language of Reform Jewish worship. If Hebrew prayer texts were once viewed as a hindrance to spiritual devotion, today's Reform Jews find in the Hebrew language a source of religious strength, an essential expression of identity for a generation that wishes to affirm its Jewishness in its experience of public prayer.

Music

Like vernacular prayer, the use of instrumental music at worship services was one of the first innovations introduced by the European reformers in the early nineteenth century. And like vernacular prayer, this reform touched off a storm of opposition from the rabbinic leaders of what would become "Orthodox Judaism." Their opposition centered around three key elements. First, *halakhab* forbids the playing of musical instruments on Shabbat and festivals. Second, even on weekdays we do

not allow instrumental music into synagogue worship, for music is an expression of gladness while we are still in mourning over the destruction of the Temple. Third, since the musical instrument of choice was almost invariably the organ, which was a prominent feature of Christian worship, its introduction violated the biblical prohibition against imitating Gentile religious practices. The reformers rejected the halakhic argument, and they noted that even for those who (unlike Reform Jews) still mourn for the Temple, Jewish law permits the use of musical instruments "for purposes of *mizvah* such as the celebration of a wedding." And what greater *mizvah* is there than prayer? Instrumental accompaniment, they declared, would help greatly to beautify and dignify the worship service and to intensify the *kavanah* (devotion) of the worshippers. The Orthodox objections certainly did not dissuade the reformers from pursuing their course, "and in the meantime instrumental and vocal music have become a permanent part of Reform Jewish worship."

Jewish liturgical music stems from many sources, both sacred and secular, highbrow and popular. Often, we can trace the origin of a familiar synagogue melody to the folk music tradition of a surrounding culture. The melody becomes "Jewish" due to its many years of association with Jewish ritual use, an association which survives long after the song's non-Jewish roots have been forgotten. It is therefore no surprise that the synagogue music of Reform Judaism reflects many influences: the heritage of Eastern European musical styles followed by all Ashkenazic communities, the music of nineteenth-century Germany, American and Israeli popular music, the music of the annual Israeli "Chassidic Festival," and other styles. But liturgy is art as well as history; Reform synagogue ritual, in its music as well as its prayer-texts, is the product of conscious choices made by Reform communities that both work within the liturgical tradition and attempt to expand upon it. A community will decide to accept certain styles of music for its services while rejecting others, just as it accepts and rejects various approaches to liturgy and observance. A piece of music will be regarded as inappropriate when it is seen as destructive of the mood of sanctity we seek to establish in our worship. At other times, music that originates in non-religious popular culture may be deemed acceptable for use when the community finds that it successfully serves its Jewish liturgical purpose. Such decisions are by their nature matters of judgment, and like all matters of judgment they can be contested and controversial. Yet given

our desire to create a proper mood for prayer, these are judgments that we must make. The task is to make them carefully and responsibly, with a reverence for musical tradition that is balanced by an openness to innovation.

Much Jewish liturgical music shares common roots with the sacred music of other faiths. A piece of music is therefore not rejected for synagogue use simply because it borrows from motifs found in non-Jewish religious music. Nor does the fact that a song is written by a non-Jewish composer automatically render it unacceptable for Jewish worship. However, a musical selection firmly identified with another religion—for example, a Christian hymn—should indeed be rejected, both because it falls under the traditional prohibition of imitating Gentile religious practices and because there are ample resources of Jewish music which we can and ought to use in its place.

The Minyan

I will be sanctified in the midst of the people of Israel. (Lev. 22:32)

Judaism places great emphasis upon the value of public prayer. While the individual is entitled and encouraged to turn to God at all times, the tradition teaches the importance of communal worship (*tefillah betzibur*), of joining one's prayer to that of a congregation. And though the law permits one to say the *Tefillah* privately, one is traditionally encouraged to do so at the same time that the congregation recites its prayers. The most striking sign of this emphasis is the rule that certain sections of the liturgy are not to be recited privately by the individual worshiper. These sections are referred to as "matters of sanctification" (*devarim shebebedushah*). They include the *Kedushah*, the *Kadish*, the reader's repetition of the *Tefillah*, *Barekhu*, and the reading of the Torah and the *Hafarah*. None of these can be recited without a congregation, that is, a *minyan* (quorum) of ten adult Jews (under traditional *halakhah*, ten adult Jewish males).

The requirement of a *minyan* is consistent with the idea that Jewish prayer is a "service of the heart" that combines fixed and formal elements with spontaneous, private ones. The formal "service" aspect of prayer is evident in the fact that the Rabbis modeled the structure of Jewish liturgy along the lines of the service in the ancient Temple. This

Unit III: Is Judaism a Religion and/or a Peoplehood?

The Reform Approaches to Zionism/Connection to Israel

Goals:

1. To trace and understand the evolving Reform Jewish positions on the question “Is Judaism a Religion and/or a Peoplehood?” through the example of Zionism
2. To explain the connection between viewing Reform Judaism as religion only with an anti or non--Zionist approach and between viewing Reform Judaism as both a religion and peoplehood with a Zionist approach
3. To expose students to the evolving Reform Zionist liturgy
4. To explore personal relationships with a) The People Israel (*Am Yisrael*) b) The Land Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*) and c) The State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael*)
5. To expose students to the Reform Jewish Zionist organizations and youth Israel trips

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Explain that the majority of American Classical Reform Jews approached Judaism as the Religion of American Jews. Therefore they did not actively support Zionism
Explain that a minority of Jews including Stephen S Wise was a Zionist
2. After the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel most Reform Jews “fully” accepted Judaism as a religion and peoplehood; it began supporting Israel
3. Describe the differences in Zionist liturgy between Reform siddurim (prayerbooks) and more traditional siddurim
4. Define a contemporary Reform Jew’s obligations/expectations towards Israel
5. Identify a Reform Jewish Zionist organization and youth opportunities in Israel

Note to Teacher: Studying Reform Jewish Zionism is one clear way to explore the effects of the answer to, Is Judaism a religion or peoplehood? When Reform Judaism considered itself a religion only, it did not see the need for a national homeland in Israel so it did not support a return to Zion. As its view evolved, primarily after the Holocaust, to seeing Judaism as both a religion and peoplehood, the Reform Jewish approach to Zionism changed to one of support. This example is essential in understanding Reform Judaism's evolving definition of itself and of its attitude towards Israel.

Enduring Understandings (3 out of 6)

- 1. The majority of Classical Reform Jews saw Judaism as a religion, not a nation or peoplehood. It did not support Zionism**
- 2. Few Classical Reform rabbis were active Zionists such as Stephen S. Wise**
- 3. After the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, Reform Judaism officially changed its approach and now viewed Judaism as both a religion and peoplehood. Therefore it embraced Zionism**

Suggested Activities

- Read the marked excerpts from "Zionism and Israel" The Reform Judaism Reader (provided) and Sections: Preamble, I, and II from "Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform." CCAR: Miami, 1997. **Key Questions:** How did Reform Jews in the late 19th century view Judaism? As a religion? or As a peoplehood/nation? Why? How did this view change over time? Why? How did this view affect the Reform approach to Zionism? How and why did it evolve?
- Contact the American Jewish Archives at HUC in Cincinnati www.huc.edu Request a speech and videotape of Stephen S. Wise preaching Zionism. **Key Question:** What were his reasons for supporting Zionism?

Enduring Understanding

4. Reform Liturgists excised traditional Jewish liturgy promoting a return to Zion and have not yet reintroduced it.

Suggested Activities

- Handout the provided page marked “Translating the Prayerbook Bring us in Peace”
Have students read the Hebrew line. Tell them that this is an excerpt from the traditional version of the prayer Ahavah Rabbah. Compare the English translations from the siddurim listed. Note the absence of translation from Gates of Prayer 1975.
Key Question: From what you know about Reform Judaism’s stance on Zionism, Why do you think the Reform movement removed this line of the prayer? Why do you think it has not been reinstated? Would you want it to be reinstated? If so, which translation would you want and why?
- Design a new insert for Ahavah Rabbah, a short new prayer, or personal statement about the state of Israel, reflecting the Reform movement’s evolving stance on Israel. Try using them in school tefila (services) or synagogue tefila.
- Handout the provided page marked “Translating the Prayerbook Sound the Great Shofar.” Examine in Hebrew and English the prayer in the Amidah/Tefila that begins, “*Tikah B’shofar*” in Artscroll (Orthodox), Sim Shalom both versions (Conservative), and Gates of Prayer (Reform) (provided). *Note: You may want to examine the new Reform siddur Mishkan Tefilah. This prayer traditionally calls for an ingathering of the exile and a return to Zion (Israel). Read the different English versions of the prayer and compare them. **Key Questions:** What Hebrew words are

different between the two Hebrew versions? How has Sim Shalom and Gates of Prayer changed its English versions? Why do you think they did? Of all four English versions, which do you identify with? Why?

Enduring Understandings

5. Reform Jews (I) have obligations/expectations towards Israel

Suggested Activities

- Brainstorm and list (potential) ways you and the class can support Israel, a) The People Israel (Am Yisrael) b) The Land Israel (Eretz Yisrael) and c) The State of Israel (Medinat Yisrael). Read sections III, IV, and V from “Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform.” Compare your class list with these principles. How and why are they similar/different? Select **one** potential and **feasible** way of supporting Israel and have the class complete the task from start to finish. Suggested tasks include, but are not limited to: a) writing letters of support to soldiers, peers, or American and Israeli government officials, b) designing a community wide education program on Israel (with or without outside presenters), c) selling Israeli products at snack time/community events
- Read weekly excerpts from the “Galilee Diary,” a web resource designed for Reform congregational schools to teach about Israel from a personal viewpoint. The diary belongs to Rabbi Marc Rosenstein, an educator who made Aliyah in 1990. If the classroom has internet access, respond (each week from now on) as a class to his weekly entry www.uahc.org/educate/galilee

Note to teacher: Forming a personal relationship with an Israeli Reform Jew can have a tremendous positive influence on how your students personalize their views on Israel.

Enduring Understandings

6. Today several Reform Zionist organizations and youth trips to Israel exist

Suggested Activities

- If computers are accessible in class or at home, assign a group of students to research one of the Reform Zionist organizations and/or youth trips to Israel. Prepare a 2-3 minutes presentation about the organization or one of the current issues it is addressing. Possible organizations include: ARZA www.arza.org ; IMPJ (Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism) www.reform.org.il ; IRAC (Israel Religious Action Center) www.ira.org ; Seeking Peace, Pursuing Justice www.uahc.org/peace . Possible Trip sites include: NFTY L'dor V'dor www.nfty.org/travel/israel ; NFTY EIE High School in Israel www.nfty.org/eie
- Invite a local staff or lay representative of a Reform Zionist organization from the list above or Israel youth trip to speak to the class.
- Invite a passionate alumnus of a Reform youth trip to Israel to speak with the class
- If both of the above are not feasible or you want more exposure to Israel trips, call the NFTY office (212) 650-4073 and request a videotape of its Israel trip.

Memorable Moments

- Class project on Israel for the community (as listed above)
- Visit with ARZA representative or alumnus of NFTY trip

ZIONISM AND ISRAEL

★ Reform Jews in the nineteenth century believed that the Jewish people's dispersion among the nations was providential, that it possessed a mission to bring the essence of Judaism, ethical monotheism, to the nations of the world. They defined themselves as a religious community, not as a present-day or potential nation. Hence, when political Zionism came into being at the end of the century, Reform Jews, along with most of their American coreligionists, rejected it. They not only believed that supporting the World Zionist Organization might cast doubt on their loyalty to America, but more fundamentally that it undermined their cherished belief in the security of their future in the New World and that their presence in North America was a purposeful religious endeavor, not a political exile.

Nonetheless, there were always Zionists within the Reform community, among both rabbis and laypeople. When, in the 1930s, the situation of the Jews in Central Europe grew more perilous and as more ethnic Jews of East European background entered the movement, Reform shifted its position completely, officially endorsing both political and cultural Zionism. The non-Zionists became a diminishing, if sometimes vocal, minority. Among the Reform Zionists, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver (a Republican) and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise (a Democrat) used their political influence to urge U.S. support for the Zionist enterprise.

The Reform movement welcomed the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. In the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel became central in the consciousness of American Reform Jews. HUC-JIR students began to spend their first year of studies there in 1970. The UAHC created its own Zionist organization, ARZA, and

officially encouraged those of its members who desired to fulfill themselves Jewishly and Hebraically to undertake *aliyah*, immigration to Israel.]

Official Opposition

The First World Zionist Congress was convened in Basle by Theodor Herzl in August 1897. In anticipation, the CCAR seven weeks earlier unanimously adopted a resolution condemning Zionism as a mischievous misconception of Jewish destiny. A few months after the Congress, the UAHC followed suit, proclaiming, without qualification, that America was the new Zion and that American Jews required no other.

1. The Resolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (July 1897)

Resolved, That we totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish state. Such attempts show a misunderstanding of Israel's mission, which from the narrow political and rational field has been expanded to the promotion among the whole human race of the broad and universalistic religion first proclaimed by the Jewish prophets. Such attempts do not benefit, but infinitely harm our Jewish brethren where they are still persecuted, by confirming the assertion of their enemies that the Jews are foreigners in the countries in which they are at home, and of which they are everywhere the most loyal and patriotic citizens.

We reaffirm that the object of Judaism is not political nor national, but spiritual, and addresses itself to the continuous growth of peace, justice and love in the human race, to a messianic time when all men will recognize that they form "one great brotherhood" for the establishment of God's kingdom on Earth.

2. The Resolution of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (December 1898)

While we are aware of and deplore the abject conditions to which many of our brethren are subjected in foreign lands, and which have naturally, but unfortunately, aroused in some of them a yearning for a re-establishment in Zion, yet we delegates of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in convention assembled, in view of the active propaganda being made at present for the so-called Zionist movement, deem it proper and necessary to put ourselves on record as follows:

We are unalterably opposed to political Zionism. The Jews are not a nation, but a religious community. Zion was a precious possession of the past, the early home of our faith, where our prophets uttered their world-subduing thoughts, and our psalmists sang their world-enchanting hymns. As such it is a holy memory, but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion. Here, in the home of religious liberty, we have aided in founding this new Zion, the fruition of the beginning laid in the old. The mission of Judaism is spiritual, not political. Its aim is not to establish a state, but to spread the truths of religion and humanity throughout the world.

Source: *Proceedings of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations* 5 (1898–1903): 4002.

Early Reform Zionists

Until after World War I it was commonly believed that Zionism and Reform Judaism were mutually exclusive. To leave one movement for the other was regarded as a kind of "conversion." To be both Zionist and Reform was to live a contradiction. However, as indicated, from the very beginning there were persons active in both movements who tried to reconcile the two. They included Rabbis Maximilian Heller of New Orleans and Gustav Gottheil of New York. Among Hebrew Union College graduates, early active Zionists were Max Raisin (class of 1903), a prolific author in Hebrew, English, and Yiddish, and Abba Hillel Silver (class of 1915).

I. Max Raisin: Two "Movements of Liberation" (1914)

Logically, if not theologically, these two great Jewish movements have many things in common which makes them not only not adverse to one another,

but even brings them into a kinship of spirit and makes them common heritors of certain great Jewish truths which both of them predicate and postulate. When taken together, Reform and Zionism instead of forming an antithesis rather fuse into a synthesis. There is, to begin with, the emancipatory element in each of them. Both Zionism and Reform are movements of liberation. Reform came to emancipate the Jew from the oppressive legalism of the Shulchan Aruch; Zionism from his civil and social disabilities. The one as the other is an attempt to terminate the two thousand-year-old tragedy of the Jew. . . .

Now, Reform proclaims itself as a return to Prophetic Ideals, and as such it implies that to make possible and feasible the ideals taught and propagated by the Hebrew Prophets it is, for the Jew at least, necessary to re-create the very normal atmosphere which alone made those ideals and hopes possible and available. If such an atmosphere is impossible of creation in the Occidental environment where the Jew today lives, it is clear that he must go back to his ancient Oriental moorings. From this point of view Reform in Judaism certainly does stand, if only in its potentialities, upon national ground. From Prophetism to the land where Prophetism was born, and to the conditions which favor the rebirth of Prophetism, is but one short step. . . .

When I say that Reform is a return to Prophetism, I mean that it lays the greatest stress upon social justice as the true and only keynote of all faith. Righteousness and not ritualism, the service of the heart rather than the sheer worship of the lips, justice here and now more than salvation in the hereafter, these are what constitute the genius of Judaism from the Prophetic and the Reform standpoint. Need I tell you my fellow Zionists, that herein we are wholly at one with our Reform brethren? . . .

And right here permit me to indulge in a very fond hope, which some of you will perhaps regard as a chimera, but which I sincerely believe will actually come true, namely, that it is Liberal Judaism which will be the predominant phase of Jewish religious life in the Jew's future home in Palestine. . . .

Such is the declaration of faith of one who is both a Reform Jew and a Zionist, and who feels and believes that, far from antagonizing one another, the two movements are here to complete and to complement each other. Judging from personal experience, I am convinced that Zionism goes a long way towards strengthening and furthering Judaism, and I likewise know that Liberal Judaism will form a not inconsiderable

set in the spirit of the economy of the new Jewish life now in the process of creation in Palestine. The Jewish state of the future will, as it must, be more than a mere political entity; its spiritual and moral function in the uplift work of its own people and of the entire world must never be lost sight of. It is towards the fulfillment of this function that Liberal Judaism will exercise the greatest influence.

Source: Max Raisin, "Convention Sermon: Zionism and Liberal Judaism," *The Jewish Exponent*, 3 July 1914.

2. Abba Hillel Silver: A "Total Program of Jewish Life and Destiny" (1935)

The Jewish people produced the Jewish religion, but people and religion are not synonymous terms. The Jewish religion—and I use the term in its customary sense, for I do not believe that a clever neology—the use of a word in a new and unsanctioned sense—is equivalent to a new neology—is a colossal and world-revolutionizing concourse of spiritual ideas unfolding itself in the life of a people of a particular character and temperament, but the Jewish religion does not exhaust the full content of the Jewish people. In relation to its religion, Israel is both immanent and transcendent as is every great artist in relation to the creation of his genius. לוֹא בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא הִתְּרָה הַתּוֹרָה. "If there had been no Jews there would have been no Torah, and the Jews did not derive their high estate from Moses but Moses derived his high estate from the Jews" (Cuzari 11.56).

The Jewish religion is the crowning achievement of our people and our supreme gift to civilization. It possessed such vast reservoirs of spiritual truth that it has been able to sustain and inspire generations upon generations of our people and to retain their sacrificial loyalty under all circumstances and upon all levels of culture. It thus became the strongest factor in the survival of our people, the קִשְׁרֵי שֶׁל קִיּוּמָא, the enduring tie. It is doubtful whether the Jewish people can long survive in the diaspora without it—unless the other survival factors are reinforced to a degree which will compensate such a major loss. Jewish secular cultural autonomy may be possible in countries where the Jewish groups achieve minority rights. In such countries the Jewish group may survive even if

divorced from religious loyalties. This is possible, though not probable. But in countries where minority rights are not possible, where there exists no active anti-Semitism which forces the Jew back upon himself, the task of Jewish survival will become increasingly difficult as religion loses its influence upon Jews and therewith also its power of national conservation. Those religious leaders, therefore, who are, today, teaching the religion of Israel to their people are not only leading them to fountains of living truth which can sweeten and refresh their individual lives, but are also conserving the most potent force which, throughout the ages, has sheltered and preserved the Jewish people.

But such religious leaders should not attempt to substitute a part for the whole—even if it is the major part. Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to J. K. Huysman's *A Rebours* makes the interesting observation that the essential distinction between the classic and the decadent in art and literature is to be found in the fact that in the classic the parts are subordinated to the whole, whereas in the decadent, the whole is subordinated to the parts. "The classic strives after those virtues which the whole may best express; the later manner (the decadent) depreciates the importance of the whole for the benefit of its parts, and strives after the virtue of individualism."

Jewish life also possessed in its great epochs this classic balance, and the aim of religious leaders today should be to restore it. Many tributaries flow into the historic channel of Jewish life. In recent years some zealous and mostly uninformed partisans have attempted to reduce Jewish life to what is only a fraction of itself—to race or nationalism or folkways or theologic abstractions. Quite unconsciously they are all falsifying Jewish life. It is a mark of decadence in the diaspora that so many of our people have lost the sense of the classic harmony in Jewish life and are attempting to substitute a part for the whole.

It is the total program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today—the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the Jewish people itself, and all its national aspirations. Thus the strength and security of our life will be retrieved, and, whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, we shall move forward unafraid upon the road of our destiny.

Source: Abba Hillel Silver, "Israel," *CCAR Yearbook* 45 (1935): 341-42.

Official Reversal

The commonly held view that Reform Judaism officially endorsed Zionism only after World War II is refuted by documents from the 1930s. In 1935 the CCAR reversed its stand of 1897 and assumed a neutral position. Two years later, in the Columbus Platform of 1937 (see chapter 12), it explicitly came out in favor of a "Jewish homeland" and a "center of Jewish cultural and spiritual life" in Palestine. A few months before the rabbis adopted their new platform, as the second selection indicates, the UAHC had already taken a similar position.

1. CCAR Neutrality Resolution (1935)

Whereas, At certain foregoing conventions of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, resolutions have been adopted in opposition to Zionism, and

Whereas, We are persuaded that acceptance or rejection of the Zionist program should be left to the determination of the individual members of the Conference themselves, therefore

Be It Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis takes no official stand on the subject of Zionism; and be it further Resolved, That in keeping with its oft-announced intentions, the Central Conference of American Rabbis will continue to co-operate in the upbuilding of Palestine, and in the economic, cultural, and particularly spiritual tasks confronting the growing and evolving Jewish community there.

Source: "Report of Committee on Resolutions," CCAR Yearbook 45 (1935): 103.

2. UAHC Pro-Zionist Resolution (1937)

RESOLVED that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, in council assembled, expresses its satisfaction with the progress made by the Jewish Agency in the upbuilding of Palestine. We see the hand of Providence in the opening of the Gates of Palestine for the Jewish people at a time when a large portion of Jewry is so desperately in need of a friendly shelter and a home where a spiritual, cultural center may be developed in accordance with

Jewish ideals. The time has now come for all Jews, irrespective of ideological differences, to unite in the activities leading to the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and we urge our constituency to give their financial and moral support to the work of rebuilding Palestine.

Source: UAHC, Where We Stand: Social Action Resolutions Adopted by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (New York: UAHC, 1980), 24-25.

Zionist Activism

Although until after the Six-Day War the American Reform movement's involvement in Israel was peripheral, it assumed centrality in the 1970s. In 1976, the UAHC Board of Trustees came out in favor of aliyah. A year later, the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA) and its Canadian counterpart, Kadima (now combined as ARZA/World Union), were created to represent Reform Jewish ideology and interests in the World Zionist Organization. Finally, in 1997, upon the hundredth anniversary of the First Zionist Congress, the CCAR adopted a comprehensive resolution detailing the Reform commitment to Zionism and to Israel.

1. The Encouragement of Aliyah (1976)

The land of Israel, which is Zion, and the children of Israel who constitute the Jewish people and the God of Israel are all bound together in a triple covenant. As Reform Jews, we perceive the political entity of the State of Israel, together with the Jewish people the world over, as constituting a means for the continued evolution of this covenantal relationship.

Our movement has a unique and critical role to play in shaping Israel's future as a Jewish state. We can do this both by enriching Jewish life in our community and by participating in the fabric of Israeli society. Hence the Israel Commission affirms the value of *aliyah* as a valid option for contemporary liberal Jewish commitment and self-fulfillment. A Reform *aliyah* will expand our role in Israel and further our rightful contribution to the life and religious expression of the State and the Jewish people.

Therefore, be it resolved: We affirm a special duty to encourage and assist those Reform Jews who, individually or in groups, wish to participate more

ully in the develpment of the State of Israel and in the development of
'rogressive Judaism in Israel by making *aliyah* and settling there.

source: UAHHC, *Where We Stand: Social Action Resolutions Adopted by the Union of American Hebrew
Congregations* (New York: UAHHC, 1980), 119.

2. The Birth of ARZA (1977)

Ne Reform Jews—ideologically and programmatically, as individuals, as
ongregations and as a movement—have manifested our commitment to the
state of Israel and its future.

Despite this commitment, Reform Judaism has remained outside the
organizational framework of Zionism. The World Zionist Organization is
oday the one forum in which broad segments of Israeli and Diaspora Jewry
ave constructive dialogue. Until this day, the only voices in that world-wide
Zionist forum affecting programs, funding, quality of Jewish life and educa-
ion have been those of Orthodoxy and of secularism. The time has come
or Reform Judaism to join in this dialogue. The UAHHC Board of Trustees
as created an opportunity for such dialogue by establishing, subject to
ratification by this biennial, national affiliates of the Union to be known in
he United States as ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) and
n Canada as Kadima. The purpose of these affiliates would be "to seek
individual members from amongst our congregations and to seek full voting
membership in the World Zionist Organization through its territorial bodies,
the American Zionist Federation and the Canadian Zionist Federation."

By giving Reform Judaism a full voice in the councils of the World Zionist
Organization, the proposed new affiliates will enable us as Reform Jews to
communicate more effectively our concerns regarding Israel and the Jewish
future, in particular the status of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism.
It will also increase potential for a more equitable distribution of funds allo-
cated in Israel and throughout the world for educational and cultural projects.
The affiliates would add to the deliberations of world Jewry a flexibility to meet
the needs of each generation and the combination of prophetic ideology and
relevant action which is the cornerstone of Reform Judaism.

Within our own ranks, ARZA and Kadima will provide the long-awaited
vehicles for those who have been frustrated in seeking a channel for their
Zionist commitment.

The Board recognized that there are members of our Union who may not
wish to seek affiliation with ARZA or Kadima. As is the case with all UAHHC
affiliates, membership in either is voluntary. Since diversity is an essential
strength of Reform Judaism, non-membership in these affiliates will in no
way reflect upon any UAHHC member's commitment to our Union.

THEREFORE, this Biennial Assembly ratifies the action of the UAHHC
Board of Trustees, which established ARZA and Kadima. In so doing, we
reaffirm the essential freedom of choice of our individual members to join
the new affiliates.

Source: UAHHC, *Where We Stand: Social Action Resolutions Adopted by the Union of American Hebrew
Congregations* (New York: UAHHC, 1980), 125.

3. "We stand firm in our love of Zion" —the Reform Zionist Platform (1997)

I. Judaism: A Religion and a People

The restoration of *Am Yisrael* to its ancestral homeland after nearly two
thousand years of statelessness and powerlessness represents an historic
triumph of the Jewish people, providing a physical refuge, the possibility of
religious and cultural renewal on its own soil, and the realization of God's
promise to Abraham: "to your offspring I assign this land." From that distant
moment until today, the intense love between *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael* has
not subsided.

We believe that the eternal covenant established at Sinai ordained a
unique religious purpose for *Am Yisrael*. *Medinat Yisrael*, the Jewish state, is
therefore unlike all other states. Its obligation is to strive towards the
attainment of the Jewish people's highest moral ideals to be a *mamlechet
kohanim* [a kingdom of priests], a *goy kadosh* [a holy people], and *l'or goyim*
[a light unto the nations].

II. From Degradation to Sovereignty

During two millennia of dispersion and persecution, *Am Yisrael* never
abandoned hope for the rebirth of a national home in *Eretz Yisrael*. The Shoah
[Holocaust] intensified our resolve to affirm life and pursue the Zionist
dream of a return to *Eretz Yisrael*. Even as we mourned for the loss of



Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform

ACCEPTED BY THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

June 24, 1997

Miami, Florida

PREAMBLE:

In recognition of the centenary of the first World Zionist Congress (August 29, 1897), the Central Conference of American Rabbis hereby issues its first platform dedicated exclusively to the relationship between Reform Judaism and Zionism.

In 1885 the framers of the Pittsburgh Platform of Reform Judaism declared that they no longer expected Jews to return to a national homeland in Palestine. The Platform's authors proclaimed: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and, therefore, expect neither a return to Palestine...nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

By 1937 the CCAR had reversed its stand on Jewish peoplehood, and declared in its "Columbus Platform" that "Judaism is the soul of which Israel [the people] is the body." The document further states: "We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its [Palestine's] up-building as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life." This affirmation of Jewish peoplehood was accompanied by a reaffirmation of Reform Judaism's universal message: "We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal."

The CCAR returned again to the question of Zionism in 1976, asserting in its "Centenary Perspective": "We are bound to...the newly reborn State of Israel by innumerable religious and ethnic ties...We have both a stake and a responsibility in building the State of Israel, assuring its security and defining its Jewish character." The "Centenary Perspective" also affirmed the legitimacy of the Diaspora and the historic universalism of Reform Judaism: "The State of Israel and the diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity, which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals." Here again, the CCAR embraced Zionism as a means of fulfilling its universal vision and its opposition to narrow nationalism.

A century after Theodor Herzl called for the creation of a modern Jewish state and nearly fifty years since the State of Israel joined the family of modern nations, the fundamental issues addressed in the previous CCAR pronouncements continue to challenge us, making this a fitting time to re-examine and redefine the ideological and spiritual bonds that connect *Am Yisrael* [the People of Israel] to *Eretz Yisrael* [the Land of Israel] and to *Medinat Yisrael* [the State of Israel]. The CCAR affirms through this Platform those principles which will guide Reform Judaism into the 21st century.

I. Judaism: A Religion and a People

The restoration of *Am Yisrael* to its ancestral homeland after nearly two thousand years of statelessness and powerlessness represents a historic triumph of the Jewish people, providing a physical refuge, the possibility of religious and cultural renewal on its own soil, and the realization of God's promise to Abraham: "to your offspring I assign this land" . From that distant moment until today, the intense love between *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael* has not subsided.

We believe that the eternal covenant established at Sinai ordained a unique religious purpose for *Am Yisrael*. *Medinat Yisrael*, the Jewish State, is therefore unlike all other states. Its obligation is to strive towards the attainment of the Jewish people's highest moral ideals to be a *mamlechet kohanim* [a kingdom of priests], a *goy kadosh* [a holy people], and *I'or goyim* [a light unto the nations].

II. From Degradation to Sovereignty

During two millennia of dispersion and persecution, *Am Yisrael* never abandoned hope for the rebirth of a national home in *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Shoah* [Holocaust] intensified our resolve to affirm life and pursue the Zionist dream of a return to *Eretz Yisrael*. Even as we mourned for the loss of one-third of our people, we witnessed the miraculous rebirth of *Medinat Yisrael*, the Jewish people's supreme creation in our age.

Centuries of Jewish persecution, culminating in the *Shoah*, demonstrated the risks of powerlessness. We, therefore, affirm *Am Yisrael's* reassertion of national sovereignty, but we urge that it be used to create the kind of society in which full civil, human, and religious rights exist for all its citizens. Ultimately, *Medinat Yisrael* will be judged not on its military might but on its character.

While we view *Eretz Yisrael* as sacred, the sanctity of Jewish life takes precedence over the sanctity of Jewish land.

III. Our Relationship to the State of Israel

Even as *Medinat Yisrael* serves uniquely as the spiritual and cultural focal point of world Jewry, Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are inter-dependent, responsible for one another, and partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny. Each *kehilla* [Jewish community], though autonomous and self-regulating, shares responsibility for the fate of Jews everywhere. By deepening the social, spiritual, and intellectual relationship among the *kehillot* worldwide, we can revitalize Judaism both in Israel and the Diaspora.

IV. Our Obligations to Israel

To help promote the security of *Medinat Yisrael* and ensure the welfare of its citizens, we pledge continued political support and financial assistance.

Recognizing that knowledge of Hebrew is indispensable both in the study of Judaism and in fostering solidarity between Israeli and Diaspora Jews, we commit ourselves to intensifying Hebrew instruction in all Reform institutions. Hebrew, the language of our sacred texts and prayers, is a symbol of the revitalization of *Am Yisrael*.

To enhance appreciation of Jewish peoplehood and promote a deeper understanding of Israel, we resolve to implement educational programs and religious practices that reflect and reinforce the bond between Reform Judaism and Zionism.

To deepen awareness of Israel and strengthen Jewish identity, we call upon all Reform Jews, adults and youths, to study in, and make regular visits to, Israel.

While affirming the authenticity and necessity of a creative and vibrant Diaspora Jewry, we encourage *aliyah* [immigration] to Israel in pursuance of the precept of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* [settling the Land of Israel]. While Jews can live Torah-centered lives in the Diaspora, only in *Medinat Yisrael* do they bear the primary responsibility for the governance of society, and thus may realize the full potential of their individual and communal religious strivings.

Confident that Reform Judaism's synthesis of tradition and modernity and its historic commitment to *tikkun olam* [repairing the world], can make a unique and positive contribution to the Jewish state, we resolve to intensify our efforts to inform and educate Israelis about the values of Reform Judaism. We call upon Reform Jews everywhere to dedicate their energies and resources to the strengthening of an indigenous Progressive Judaism in *Medinat Yisrael*.

V. Israel's Obligations to the Diaspora

Medinat Yisrael exists not only for the benefit of its citizens but also to defend the physical security and spiritual integrity of the Jewish people. Realizing that *Am Yisrael* consists of a coalition of different, sometimes conflicting, religious interpretations, the Jewish people will be best served when *Medinat Yisrael* is constituted as a pluralistic, democratic society. Therefore we seek a Jewish state in which no religious interpretation of Judaism takes legal precedence over another.

VI. Redemption

● We believe that the renewal and perpetuation of Jewish national life in *Eretz Yisrael* is a necessary condition for the realization of the physical and spiritual redemption of the Jewish people and of all humanity. While that day of redemption remains but a distant yearning, we express the fervent hope that *Medinat Yisrael*, living in peace with its neighbors, will hasten the redemption of *Am Yisrael*, and the fulfillment of our messianic dream of universal peace under the sovereignty of God.

The achievements of modern Zionism in the creation of the State of Israel, in reviving the Hebrew language, in absorbing millions of immigrants, in transforming desolate wastes into blooming forests and fields, in generating a thriving new economy and society, are an unparalleled triumph of the Jewish spirit.

We stand firm in our love of Zion. We resolve to work for the day when waves of Jewish pride and confidence will infuse every Jewish heart, in fulfillment of the promise: When God restores the fortunes of Zion we shall be like dreamers. Our mouths will fill with laughter and our tongues with songs of joy. Then shall they say among the nations God has done great things for them.

Submitted by CCAR Tripartite Zionist Platform Committee:

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch - Chair - (*See his introductory comments*)

CCAR Representatives:

Rabbi Stanley Davids
Rabbi Dow Marmur
Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

HUC-JIR Representatives:

● Dr. Susan Einbinder
Rabbi Ezra Spicehandler
Rabbi Gary Zola
Dr. Michael Meyer - alternate

UAHC Representatives:

Constance Kreshtool
Norman Schwartz
Rabbi Eric Yoffie

Additional Representatives:

Dr. Leon Jick
Rabbi Norman Patz

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions of:

Aron Hirt-Manheimer - Drafter and Editor
Rabbi Harvey Fields - Drafter



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TRANSLATING THE PRAYERBOOK

"Bring us in peace"

וְהִבִּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מֵאַרְבַּע פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ,
וְתוֹלְכֵנוּ קוֹמְמֵיּוֹת לְאֶרֶצֵנוּ

Orthodox
P. BIRNBAUM 1949

Orthodox
ARTSCROLL 1984

Conservative
RAB ASSEMBLY 1946

O bring us home in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and make us walk
upright to our land

Bring us in peacefulness
from the four corners
of the earth
and lead us with
upright pride to our land

O gather us home in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and restore us
triumphantly to our homeland

Reform
GATES OF PRAYER 1975
ISRAEL INDEPEND.

RECONSTRUCTION 48
HH

RECONSTRUCTION 1965
SABBATH

O bring the homeless - *not American*
of our people
in peace from the four corners
of the earth
and enable them to march
erect into our land

O bring us in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and enable us to march
erect into our land.

MEDIA JUDAICA 1951

Conservative
UNITED SYN. 1956

Conservative
BOXER 1957

O bring us in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and lead the homeless
of our people
triumphantly to our land

O bring us in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and lead the homeless
of our people
triumphantly to our land

Gather Thou the homeless
of our people
from the four corners
of the earth
and lead them in dignity
and in peace
to our holy land.

Conservative
RAB ASSEMBLY 1961

SIM SHALOM 1985

O bring us safely
from the corners
of the earth
and lead us in dignity
to our holy land.

O bring us in peace
from the four corners
of the earth
and lead the homeless
triumphantly to our land

TRANSLATING THE PRAYERBOOK
"Sound the Great Shofar"

Conservative

SIM SHALOM 1992
Sound the great shofar to herald our freedom
raise high the banner to gather our exiles.
Gather us together
from the ends of the earth
Praised are you
who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.

Orthodox

Artscroll 1988
Sound the great shofar for our freedom
Raise the banner to gather our exiles and
Gather us together
From the four corners of the earth.
Blessed are You, Hashem,
Who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel

Orth/Cons. Hebrew

תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו
שא נס לקבץ גליותינו,
וקבצנו יחד
מארבע כנפות הארץ.
ברוך אתה יי,
מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל.

Conservative

SIM SHALOM 1985
Sound the great shofar to herald our freedom
raise high the banner to gather all exiles.
Gather the dispersed
from the ends of the earth.
Praised are you
who gathers our dispersed.

Reform

Gates of Prayer 1975
Sound the great horn to proclaim freedom
inspire us to strive for the liberation of the oppressed,
and let the song of liberty be heard
in the four corners of the earth
Blessed is the Lord
Redeemer of the oppressed.

Reform Hebrew

Gates of Prayer 1975
תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו
שא נס לפדות עשוקינו
וקול דרור ישמע
בארבע כנפות הארץ
ברוך אתה יי,
פודה עשוקים

Reform Gates of Prayer 1994

Sound the great shofar to proclaim freedom, raise high the banner of liberation for the oppressed, and let the song of liberty be heard in the four corners of the earth.

We praise You, O God, Redeemer of the oppressed.

Additional Teacher Resources (Provided)

Note to Teacher: Some of the printouts have words cut off on the right side. For full texts, please refer to the websites listed

Arza Homepage & Mission Statement www.arza.org

Galilee Diary Excerpts www.uahc.educate/galilee

Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism Homepage www.reform.org.il

Israel Religious Action Center Homepage www.irac.org

NFTY High School in Israel Homepage www.nfty.org/eie

NFTY L'dor V'dor Homepage www.nfty.org/travel.israel

Seeking Peace, Pursuing Justice Homepage www.uahc.org/peace



ARZA/WORLD UNION North America

An Affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The representative of the W

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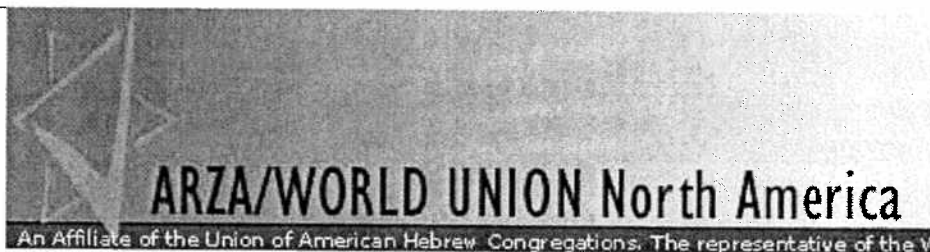
The mission of ARZA/WORLD UNIO

America is to further the development of Judaism in Israel and throughout the world. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America strives to strengthen Jewish communities by encouraging Jewish solidarity, promoting religious pluralism and furthering Zionism.

ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is working to strengthen the relationship of North American Reform Jews with Progressive Jewish communities in Israel and throughout the world and to educate and inform our constituency on relevant matters of Jewish importance. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is the representative of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.



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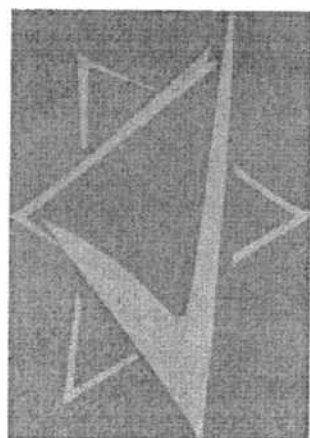
MISSION STATEMENT

ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is the official representative of the A community for all issues pertaining to Israel, Zionism and Reform Judaism of ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is to further the development of Israel, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world by supporting the and activities of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. ARZA/WORLD strives to strengthen the relationship of North American Reform Jews in communities in Israel, the former Soviet Union and throughout the world, solidarity, promoting religious pluralism and furthering Zionism.

As an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the umbrell Reform congregations in North America) and the representative in North Am Union for Progressive Judaism, ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America repres million North American Jews in over 900 Reform synagogues.

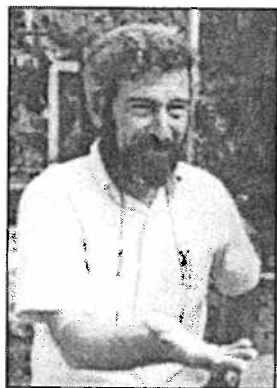
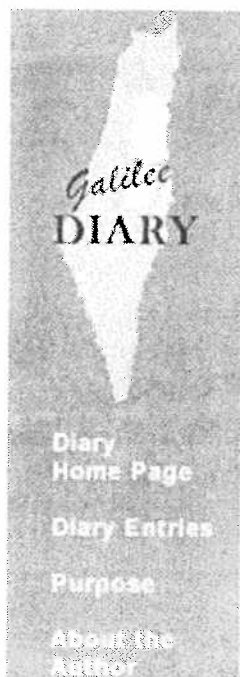
ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America is committed to seeking the acceptanc pluralism in Israel and around the world. It encourages the State of Israel t human and religious rights to all its citizens, thus enriching Israel as a mode

WORLD UNION, North America educates Reform Jews on the principles and Progressive Judaism. It communicates its message through the World Refor provides regular information on Reform Judaism in Israel, the former Soviet throughout the world. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North America organizes missi to meet with American government officials and Jewish activists to promote of religious pluralism and Reform Judaism. ARZA/WORLD UNION, North A rabbinic missions to the Middle East, providing an opportunity for Reform ra both Israeli and Middle Eastern policy makers.





About the Author



Marc Rosenstein grew up in Highland Park, IL, at North Shore Congregation Israel. His first visit to Israel was as a high school student in the first exchange of the Eisendrath International Exchange (EIE) program in 1962. He was ordained at HUC-JIR in 1975, and then served as an assistant rabbi at Community Synagogue, in Port Washington, NY.

Rabbi Rosenstein was a teacher and a principal at the Solomon Schechter Secondary School in Skokie, IL. He also served as the principal at Akiba Hebrew Academy in Lower Merion, PA.

In 1990, he made *aliyah*, moving to Moshav Shorashim, a small community in the central Galilee, founded in the early 1980's by a group of young American immigrants. He is presently the director of the Makom ba-Galil, a seminar center at Shorashim, which engages in programming that fosters pluralism and coexistence. Marc is married to Ta (originally from Waukegan, IL), who is a speech clinician working with handicapped infants and children. They have three children; Josh, Ilana, and Lev.

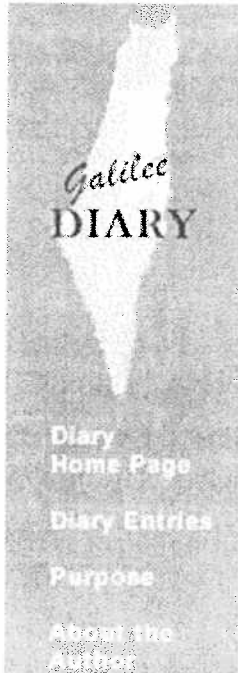
Email correspondence regarding "Galilee Diary" entries should be sent to Marc at hamakom@galilan.com.

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Purpose



The *Galilee Diary* is designed especially for Reform congregational schools to teach about Israel, by means of more personal viewpoint. Rather than limit our teaching about Israel to crises or the "victimization" of Reform Jew there, this diary offers an alternative perspective – person and direct.

You may consider the following options for use in your school:

1. Devote 5 minutes of each class session to read and respond to the weekly diary entry.
2. Compare news reports with the diary entries.
3. Have students respond to Marc Rosenstein's entries with comments and questions. (Please feel free to email responses to Marc at, hamakom@galilan.com.)
4. Copy the Galilee Diary entries for your school's faculty to use at their discretion.

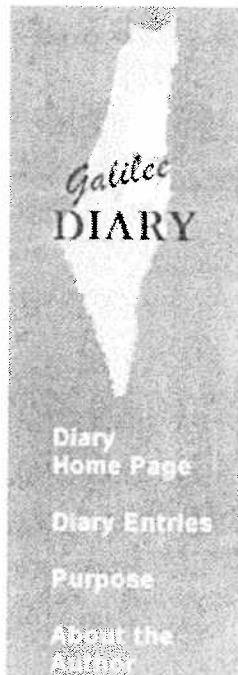
The *Galilee Diary* is a deliberate attempt to humanize and normalize our teachings about Israel. It is precisely when it is difficult to understand Israel that Jews have a responsibility to love Israel.

Diary entries are written by Marc Rosenstein, an educator who made *aliyah* with his family in 1990.

We appreciate your candid feedback. Please email us with your comments at educate@uahc.org

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Country Living

March 2, 2003

Marc Rosenstein

Prev En

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This morning when I walked the dog, we encountered a donkey standing next to the garbage dumpster. Just standing there, calmly, as if someone had parked him there. The dog seemed uninterested, and half an hour later, the donkey had disappeared. He has been making appearances around the moshav for over a week; he turns up munching someone's flowers; they chase him away and call the co-animal warden, and nothing happens until the next sighting...

Saturday, there were two cows grazing among the weeds just behind our vegetable patch. In this season of lush growth, the Arab cowherds from the neighboring village take their herds out in the morning to enjoy the vegetation on the hillsides, and call them back together at sunset. We have gotten accustomed to their incursions into Shorashim, which are actually most annoying, as one hoofprint in the soft mud is enough to decimate half of our garden, and the cows' leavings on lawns and paths are rather a nuisance. It seems that there is no way to keep them out, short of installing a cowproof barrier at the moshav gate, and improving and maintaining the perimeter fence. Since nothing is simple in this country, we find ourselves wondering if it is purely accidental that the cows wander into Shorashim - or if that is a political statement here (by the owners, not the cows) something like, "we grazed our herds on this hill for generations before you arrived, and we don't intend to stop now..."

When we arrived here 13 years ago, the foxes that lived among the rocks carried rabies, and were responsible for an epidemic that coincided with the First (?) Gulf War, no small inconvenience. Since then, they have all been vaccinated, eating bait laced with oral vaccine. We see them occasionally crossing the entrance road at dawn or dusk; apparently they have gotten at least partially domesticated, drawn closer to the moshav by the ready availability of food.

around the garbage dumpsters, so they do not stay as far out of sight as they used to.

The mongooses, on the other hand, seem to have disappeared. For our first few years, we often saw them rooting in the compost heap; and when our daughter kept her horse on the moshav, they would appear on the rock around the stable, preying on the mice hanging around the grain bin. Long, gray, and cute, they looked like oversized ferrets. We miss seeing them. I suspect the proliferation of dogs, cats, and paving drove them away.

When Shorashim was established in the mid-80s, one of the founders was a landscape architect. He planned the landscaping of the whole community, and executed his plan over a period of ten years. The results are with us every day: we live in a botanical garden. Aside from the tranquility and the beauty of the setting, and the microclimate the plantings create, the birds love it here. Especially noteworthy are the numerous hummingbirds that we often watch hovering outside our office window.

In this, the rainy season, there are always frogs hopping across the sidewalks at night. The other members of the lower orders of fauna prefer warm, dry weather: for example, just before the rainy season started this fall, we encountered a large yellow scorpion in the kitchen sink when we came down in the morning. Where had he come from? How had he gotten up onto the counter considering that he couldn't climb out of the sink? The mysterious Middle East. Yellow scorpions are the more poisonous kind. Our daughter, of course wouldn't hear of harming it, so we set it free in the wild, as we had the little brightly colored non-poisonous snake that I met on the stairs coming down from the bedrooms to the living room. We meet a scorpion in the house, usually the less scary black ones, about once a year and perhaps slightly more often the large, yellow, thoroughly disgusting poisonous centipedes (6-8 inches long), which move quickly and are harder to catch.

The good news is that the mosquitoes that plagued us for years have all but disappeared with the containment of the sewage that used to flow through the dry riverbed in the Hilazon valley below us.

Ah, Nature!



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UAHC/NFTY

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SEEKING PEACE,
PURSUING JUSTICE

"Seek peace and pursue it"
Psalm 34:15
 "בקש שלום ורדפהו"

שָׁלוֹם

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SEEKING PEACE, PURSUING JUSTICE is the Reform Movement's campaign to educate and mobilize North American Jewry to support **peace efforts** and **social justice causes** in Israel.

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 Action Alert, March 25, 2003 NEW
- **Reform Jewish Leader Applauds White House Efforts to Advance Middle East Peace**
 Press Release, March 14, 2003 NEW
- **Reform Jewish Leader Movement Urges President Bush to Grant Supplemental Aid to Israel**
 Press Release, March 5, 2003 NEW
- **Letter to PM Sharon on his reelection**
 By Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, President of UAHC, February 13, 2003 NEW
- **Silence is Alienation**
 Jerusalem Post Op-ed by Rabbi David Saperstein and Mark Pelavin, February 25, 2003 NEW

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High School in Israel



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All downloaded files require the Adobe Acrobat Reader plug-in or application for viewing. This software is available free from Adobe.



For additional information, please send an e-mail to nfty-eie@uahc.org or call 212-650-4073.

Since 1961, NFTY's elite academic and leadership semester in Israel, fully accredited by high school across North America.

Outstanding high school students spend a challenging semester (fall or spring), based in Jerusalem, immersing in the culture and history of Israel and the Jewish people. NFTY's English speaking faculty offer a wide range of American High School courses to meet virtually every student's academic course requirements. Two generations of "EIE" program alumni have become leaders of Jewish communities across the globe. No other program in Israel offers so much to the dedicated student.

Forty Years of Excellence

Since 1961, over a thousand exceptional high school sophomores, juniors and seniors have spent an unforgettable semester immersed in the culture and history of Israel. This experience has had a profound effect on the lives of participants, many of whom are leaders of North American Jewish communities. The NFTY High School in Israel has, as the decades pass, evolved into an exceptional living and learning experience, responding to the needs and expectations of participants, parents and home high schools.

No other program in Israel offers so much to the dedicated student:

- **Celebration of Reform Judaism and progress of Jewish life in Israel.**
- **Israeli Family Living - Jerusalem.**
- **Campus Living - NFTY High School Campus Jerusalem.**
- **Program filled with Reform values and ideas.**

- **Intense course in the History of the Jewish People - Israel, integrated with challenging field trip throughout Israel.**
- **Pioneering Experience on Kibbutz.**
- **Fully Accredited by North American High School Accreditation Council.**
- **Hebrew Ulpan.**
- **“Gadna”:** - Army Experience, Negev Desert and “Sea to Sea” expeditions.
- **The Modern Jewish Experience - a course of exploring the critical issues facing Israel and Jewish people.**
- **Week long Prague-Poland Pilgrimage**

Quality Academics and High School Credits

The key to the success of the NFTY High School in Israel is the special relationship that exists between NFTY and the Department of Education of the Jewish Agency for Israel. The NFTY High School in Israel is accredited by the States Association of Colleges & Schools and is recognized by the Ministry of Education in Israel. The NFTY High School in Israel is under the careful supervision of a full time Rabbinic staff in Israel.

For any overseas high school semester to succeed, the confidence and cooperation of participants, parents and home high schools is required. Students must be assured that, upon returning home, they can easily be reintegrated into their home high school academic program without concern for falling behind in their course of study.

The NFTY High School in Israel assures academic accomplishment and the full accreditation of the course of study in Israel by the student's home high school.

Students receive home high school credit for:

1. All Israel-Jewish History related courses (Hebrew Ulpan and the Core Curriculum - The Study of Ancient and Modern Israel).
2. Personalized instruction in small general studies classes to ensure that students are current with being done in their home high schools. Students register for 3-5 general studies courses. NFTY submits a detailed curriculum for each general study course.

- studies course to the high school for its approval broad range of courses (including Honors and A offered to guarantee that almost any qualified st can participate on the NFTY High School in Isra
3. While in Israel, students may take the PSAT, SAT II, ACT or AP exams. NFTY offers a special "mini" course to help prepare students for the SAT exam.

How Can Families Afford the NFTY High School in Israel?

Scholarship assistance is available from a variety of sources:

UAHC Congregations.

Local Jewish Federations-Bureaus of Jewish Education.

Many Federations provide special scholarships for students programs in Israel.

NFTY has a *liberal* scholarship fund for the NFTY School in Israel - Eisendrath International Exchange Program. Please request a scholarship application

Who Participates in the NFTY High School in Israel

- Entering High School Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors.
- Bright, capable Jewish young people who have achieved a high level of academic success at school
- Personal qualities of leadership that have earned the respect of both peers and adults.
- Self-confidence, self-reliance, emotional maturity and an ability to establish warm, friendly relationships with diverse kinds of people in new surroundings.
- Active involvement in Reform congregations, religious schools, youth groups, and camps.
- Good physical health.

The Goals of the NFTY High School in Israel

- To learn more about and strengthen one's feelings towards Judaism, Jewish History and the Jewish people.
- To build Jewish self esteem and enhance personal Reform Jewish identity.

- To learn more about and better appreciate Israel Zionism, and Progressive Judaism in Israel.
- To learn as much Hebrew as possible.
- To widen one's horizons through living in a different culture.
- To gain more independence and to foster maturity flexibility living away from one's family.
- To impart one's values and experiences as an American Reform Jew to members of Israel's Progressive Jewish Community.
- To enable one to be a resource person for temple youth group, UAHC camp, and to the general Jewish community upon return.

Partial List of General Studies Courses

English Pre-Calculus
 Biology Trigonometry
 Chemistry American and World History
 Physics Economics
 Geometry Government
 Algebra II Foreign Languages

Program Calendar

February ~ June or September ~ January

WEEKS 1-8:

In residence at the NFTY High School in Israel-Hebrew Union College Campus in Jerusalem. Program Focus Intensive course in the History of the Jewish People integrated with extensive field trips. Hebrew Ulpan, general studies courses. Celebration of the Jewish holidays and festivals

WEEK 9:

EIE Students join together in a week-long pilgrimage Prague in the Czech Republic and to Krakow and Warsaw in Poland, including a moving visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration camps. Students will explore the European Jewish experience from the Medieval period to the Holocaust.

WEEK 10:

Kibbutz Experience at Reform Kibbutz Yahel or Lota

NFTY High School in Israel
UAHC Youth Division
633 Third Avenue 7th Floor
New York, NY 10017-6778
or call
212-650-4073
fax: 212-650-4199
e-mail: nfty-eie@uahc.org

minutes north of Eilat. A rewarding week of volunteer projects and insight into the egalitarian values of kibb and culture. In addition to the Kibbutz Experience the Four Day Desert Camping Adventure which includes camel riding, snorkeling in the Red Sea and Bedouin hospitality.

WEEK 11:

Gadna, a challenging week offering a taste of one of most significant institutions of Israeli life—the IDF, Isr Defense Forces. Just as Israeli teens do before enter the army, join in a mini "basic training" program desig heighten your understanding not only of the army but nature of Israel today.

WEEKS 12-17:

While residing with Israeli families in Jerusalem, the program focuses on contemporary life in Israel and t challenges and critical issues that face Israel and the Jewish people. Hebrew Ulpan, touring and general st courses continue. During this portion of the program, students will join the NFTY "Sea to Sea" expedition, exciting and challenging trek from the Sea of Galilee Mediterranean Sea.

In Their Own Words

This past year, nearly 100 students from hometowns across North America joined the NFTY High School i Israel. They have all volunteered to speak with prosp students.

The Academic Program

"Jewish History was absolutely amazing, we learned experienced so much."

"I got a real understanding of the history of the Jewis people and Israel."

"Intense, changed my life and perspective on the Je life and Jewish people."

"It altered my views of how I live and see myself."

"It gave me an in-depth study of Jewish history and it allowed me to get to know my roots and gave me an into my Judaism."

The Group Experience

"I got to know the other 30 people more than I ever w
to know anyone."

"Helped me learn how to live and deal with others."

"Gave me an idea of what living in a dorm would be li

The Travel-Tour Experience

"Fun, so much fun, interesting."

"Best way to see the country, inspiring and intense."

"Hiked everywhere from Eilat to the Golan and enjoy
every minute of it."

"Absolutely amazing."

"The most enjoyable way to learn."

General Studies

"Excellent teachers, they really cared about us."

Personal Growth

"Living in our community enabled me to learn about
and how to act with other people."

"It changed the person I am, my outlooks and views.
much more positive person now."

"I learned more about myself than anything else. I
discovered who I am."

"I feel more in touch with Judaism."

"I am more comfortable around groups and other peo

The Family Experience in Jerusalem

"Wow...such an amazing experience. It showed me t
real people live in Israel."

"The best part of the program was living with the fami
wanted to stay longer."

"I made connections with the people of Israel."

"I learned to speak the language."

The Kibbutz Experience

"I really enjoyed my job and I got to learn what kibbut
like... I met some really nice people."

"I felt I was making a contribution to the country."

"We felt the soil, got our hands dirty, a real participan
Israel."

"I experienced an integral part of Israeli life."

NFTY Summer Travel Programs

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NFTY L'dor V'dor *From Generation Generation* Five Weeks in Israel and Europe!

3 Days in Prague, Czech Republic
3 Days in Krakow and Warsaw, Poland
28 Days in Israel



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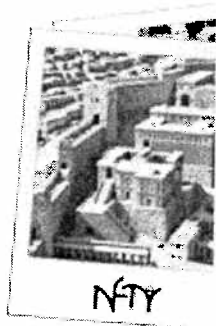
Experience for yourself the epic story of the journey Jewish people. Together with NFTY friends from all over North America, begin your adventure in Europe, explore more than one thousand years of our rich European heritage. Truly appreciate the beautiful community and culture our ancestors created and its virtual destruction during the holocaust. With an intimate understanding of the importance of Israel in our time, enjoy four wonderful weeks discovering your personal connection to our people and their history.

Spend the next four weeks together with teens from the continent exploring incredible Israel, ancient and modern, from border to border and from sea to sea.

With NFTY's renowned tour guide educators leading the way, walk on the walls of the old city of Jerusalem, make your pilgrimage to the Kotel, the western wall, travel 2000 years in time as you explore the ancient tunnel around the foundation of the Temple Mount. Wear a hat in a Roman-style restaurant; and see the ancient Dead Sea Scrolls at the Shrine of the Book.

Tour Highlights:

- Prague –the old town square, the famous astrol clock, Charles Bridge, and the historical Jewish quarter
- Moving pilgrimage to Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps
- Oskar Schindler’s factory from “Schindler’s List”
- Make your pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Kot Western Wall
- Sunrise from the top of Massada
- Float in the Dead Sea
- A real Archeological dig Explore the Galilee a Golan
- Swim in the Kineret, the Sea of Galilee
- Visit the mystical city of Safed
- Ride a camel and stay overnight at a Bedouin te Explore the underwater coral reef of Eilat
- An incredible outdoor desert experience
- Interaction with Israeli teens
- The Keneset Israel’s parliament
- Wear a toga in a Roman-style restaurant
- The Dead Sea Scrolls at the Shrine of the Book



Tour itinerary

Week One: Eastern Europe

Prague, Czech Republic

Our transatlantic trip allows us time to meet and mak friends. We begin our journey in the enchanting coun the Czech Republic with its magnificent architecture, exquisite natural beauty, friendly people and rich Jew heritage. One hundred million people visit Prague ea year and you'll see why as we stroll over the Charles Bridge into the fairy tale-like old city center. For 1000 Prague was home to a thriving Jewish culture. Visit t neu Shul, the oldest continually used synagogue in E Wander through the Jewish Quarter and see how Je lives have been filled with creativity and vitality or a millennium. The old Jewish cemetery is a remarkable and is the second oldest in Europe. Twelve Thousan

tombstones are literally jammed together at various angles, creating an almost surreal landscape.

Krakow, Poland

Travel by over-night train to the medieval city of Krakow and enjoy an afternoon stroll around its beautiful old town square. Visit the ancient Remuh Synagogue and the rededicated Reform "Tempel" synagogue. See Oskar Schindler's Factory from the movie "Schindler's List" the inspiring castle and Coronation cathedral. Together with NFTY youth from around the USA we make a moving pilgrimage to the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps where we will gather to remember and rededicate ourselves to building a Jewish future.

En route to Israel visit Warsaw and discover for yourself how courageous Jewish heroes led the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Week Two – Spiritual Jerusalem and ancient Israel

Stay at the beautiful hotel at Kibbutz Tzuba in the mountains of Jerusalem. This hotel is on Kibbutz grounds in a contained safe and secure area about 20 minutes out of the city. From here we will go on day trips exploring the history, spirituality and magic of the ancient city of Jerusalem. We will visit the Kotel the Western Wall and famous tunnels that lead directly to the heart of the Jewish people as they run beneath the Temple Mount. We will visit the Israel Museum and the Scrolls of Fire, and eat in a Roman style restaurant in the Jewish quarter of the Old City.

We take a trip into the desert of Judea as we follow the footsteps of the Hebrew Zealots running from the Romans after the destruction of the Second Temple, as they fled to the mountain fortress of Masada. We ascend to the summit of Masada at dawn, as the sunrise paints the mountains of Jordan with amazing colors. Float in the Dead Sea, cover yourself with the famous black mud and cool off in the famous Nahal Arugot waterfall near Ein Gedi. Dig into your roots on an archaeological expedition, unearth ancient pottery with your own hands. Crawl through the caves of the Maccabean Revolt by candlelight and visit the ancient cave city of Tel Marash.

Week Three – Galilee, Golan and Kinneret (the sea)

Galilee)

Explore the Galilee and Golan during your stay on the banks of the Kineret at the hotel in Kibbutz Ma'agan the southern coast of the Sea of Galilee. The kibbutz is located twenty minutes outside of the city of Tiberias. a magnificent three star beach resort on the kibbutz grounds in a safe and secure closed area with a pool beautiful beach and roomy accommodations. We will use this resort as our base for visiting the mystical Safed wander thru its alleyways filled with quaint little shops that sell the famous Safed candles and art work by local artists. We will visit the famous Naot sandals factory and tour the Golan Heights to understand its significance and importance to the state of Israel. Moving forward in the story of our people we visit the village of Kineret the settlement on the banks of the Sea of Galilee where we will examine the important beginnings of a dream of Jewish statehood in Eretz Israel, fostered by young eastern European Jews making "Aliyah" arriving in Palestine towards the beginning of the twentieth century.

Week Three – Desert wilderness experience

Hosted by the first Reform Kibbutz in Israel, Kibbutz outside of Eilat, our third week is dedicated to understanding the ancient roots of our people. We explore the desert, where we first started our journey, and how we evolved into "Am Israel". We hike and camp out in the most beautiful backdrops of black and red granite mountains, deep blue seas, and sleep under the cover of the most amazing star-studded skies. Our days are filled with desert and wildlife experiences and water activities such as snorkeling the crystal clear blue waters of the Sea; relaxing on a sandy beach, and swimming in the kibbutz pool. We will ride camels, role down sand dunes and spend a magical night, as very special guests in an authentic Bedouin tent where we sip hot tea and hear amazing stories about life in the desert.

Week Four – Modern Israel

Returning to the beautiful Kibbutz Tzuba hotel for our week in Israel, learn about the creation of the state of Israel when we visit Independence Hall in the modern city of Tel Aviv, swim in the Mediterranean, and shop on the famous

Dizengoff Street. Understand the connections and commitments the state of Israel and the Jewish Dias share with one another. Visit the Knesset the Israeli parliament and Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust mem and museum, walk through the military cemetery at Hertzl, where some of Israel's greatest leaders are b See the Latrun and Ammunition Hill memorials commemorating those who died fighting and protecti new state of Israel.

Return to spiritual Jerusalem for one final visit as you prepare to fly home having had a spectacular summe adventure of personal discovery, challenging Jewish growth, feeling proud of yourself, your people and yo land. Return home having had a once-in-a-lifetime jo of pride, discovery, friendship and fun.

Special note about Safety and Security:

In almost 50 years of sponsoring programs in Israel – Safety and Security of participants has always been primary concern. It is our hope and expectation that I will be an appropriate destination for NFTY teens this summer. NFTY will always strive to aspire to the high standards of safety and security. NFTY has a well-deserved reputation for care and caution in designing implementing summer programs. Please do not hesit contact us with any questions and concerns. **Please our safety and security page for additional inform**

Application deadline: May 1 –
(Most applicants apply from
December to April. After May 1
applications will be accepted on
a space available bases).



**REGISTE
NOW!**

Departure: Early July return early August

Program Fee: \$ 5,850

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Unit IV: Reform Responses to Contemporary Society:

Equality, Outreach, and Inreach

Note to Teacher: This unit is designed based on Reform responses to contemporary societal issues. As times change, new examples will become relevant to this unit. Feel free to adapt as needed.

Goals:

1. To portray Reform Judaism as responsive to societal change
2. To demonstrate contemporary examples of Reform adaptations towards equality
3. To convey the complexities of outreach and inreach examples currently faced by Reform Jewish leaders

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Identify and defend examples of Reform Judaism's adaptations to societal change
2. Articulate why the Reform movement treats women and LGBT as Jewish equals and how and why the Reform movement has the broadest definition of who is a Jew
3. Analyze the complex issues involved in outreach and inreach
4. Define personal perspectives on outreach and inreach

Enduring Understanding

1. **With the growth of feminism (egalitarianism) in the United States came the Reform's movement's full commitment to egalitarianism**

Suggested Activities

- Ask your students what year they think the first woman was ordained as a rabbi. Inquire why they chose that year or decade? Ideally you are looking for the answer of 1960s-1970s because of the women's movement in America. (Note: They might be surprised at how late it was compared to what they learned earlier about Reform Judaism's core beliefs)
- Read "Case One: The Equality of Women" (131-133) Borowitz. (provided) List some of the challenges involved in creating equality. Discuss possible reasons why it took so long for women to be accepted as rabbis.
- Read the two (provided) UAHC Resolutions on "Equality for Women in Reform Jewish Professional Life" (1992 & 1993). **Key Question:** What initiatives have been taken by Reform Judaism to ensure egalitarianism for Jewish professionals?
- Invite a female rabbi or cantor to speak about her experiences as a female Jewish clergy. **Key Questions:** Has she ever faced any discriminatory treatment as a rabbi because of her gender? How did/does she react? Does she (if so, when) feel that the Reform movement "truly" became egalitarian? Does she think the women's movement influenced the Reform Jewish attitude on women's rights as Jewish professionals? How? How can we help ensure women are treated equally in Judaism?

- Briefly explain the “rules” about praying at the Western Wall. (It is set-up and controlled by ultra-Orthodox Jews. It has a permanent mechitza dividing men and women. Women are not allowed to pray as a group, nor are they allowed to wear tallit and tefilin. Reform Jews have been protesting this legislation.) Then read the UAHC Resolution “In Support of Women at the Wall” (2000) (provided). **Key Question:** How does the Reform movement address the issue of egalitarianism for Jews?

Enduring Understanding

2. As American society began to accept LGBT as equals, so did Reform Judaism

Note to teacher: This may be an especially sensitive topic for students in your class especially at this age. Please keep in mind you may have some students who themselves are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) or whose relatives are.

Suggested Activities

- Read the “Status” section of the “Gay and Lesbian Rights” webpage of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (provided). **Key Question:** How has the American social and legal position on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) changed in recent years? Then read “Position of the Reform Jewish Movement” and “Gay and Lesbian Rights and Jewish Values” (same source). **Key Question:** How has/does the Reform movement respond(ed) to changing societal norms? What sources does it use to defend its position? Why do you think it uses Torah?

- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group read the example of “Boy Scouts of America” (same source) and write down the main points and the response of Reform synagogues. **Role Play:** In advance think about potential people in a synagogue who could voice an opinion on whether or not to disband its Boy Scout Troupe because of this issue. Write an individual character and opinion on pieces of paper and randomly give one to each student. Then, tell the students that they are now the personality represented on their piece of paper. Have a “civil” synagogue community meeting to discuss this issue and ultimately to make a decision whether or not to disband the Troupe. Let them debate the core issues for about 10 minutes.
- If time and interest are high in this topic, proceed to the complex issue of LGBT Jewish marriage/commitment ceremonies. Read any or all of the following (provided) “Civil Unions/Defense of Marriage” (same source), UAHC Resolutions 1993, 1997, CCAR Resolution 2000, UAHC Resolution 2000. **Key Questions:** What positions regarding same sex marriage are reflected in the resolutions? Which Reform Jewish values are they based on? Do you agree?

Enduring Understanding

3. **With its belief in true egalitarianism and the reality that more than 50% of American Jews intermarry, Reform Judaism adopted new principles about who is a Jew. American Reform Judaism uniquely took the position of either matrilineal or patrilineal descent, yet other branches of Reform Judaism did not. It is one example of the complex decisions on outreach to non Jewish spouses**

Note to teacher: This may be an especially sensitive topic for students in your class who have intermarried parents or relatives who are. Please be extra sensitive about the dynamics of your class.

Suggested Activities

- Read marked excerpts from “Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent” CCAR Responsa #38 (provided) **Key Questions:** Why/When was a child of a Jewish mom and non-Jewish dad considered Jewish? Why/When was a child of a Jewish dad and non-Jewish mom considered Jewish? What accounts for the change in history? What has changed about American society today? What is the new Reform position?
- Debate the choices of “Who Should Be Considered a Jew?” (This may or may not be appropriate depending on the dynamics and maturity of your students) Opinions should be based on Jewish texts (listed in the article) or careful thought. Possible Choices: 1) Anyone who says they are Jewish 2) Anyone who celebrates Jewish lifecycle events (Bris, Bar/Bat Mitzvah) 3) Anyone who has a Jewish education 4) A person who was born to Jewish parents, but does nothing Jewish 5) A person who has at least one Jewish parent 6) A person who has at least one Jewish parent or converts and does 1,2,3. Conclude by reviewing the complexity of this issue. Ask them what other issues the decision on “Who is a Jew” brings up.
- Optional. If students are very interested in outreach, read and discuss the issues raised in the outreach texts provided in the additional teacher resource section.

Enduring Understanding

- 4. As a response to societal change (assimilation among American Jews, bad public education...) liberal Jewish Day Schools (An example of Inreach) are on the rise in the United States**

Note to Teacher: Please stress to students: This in no way belittles or undermines the mission of synagogue religious schools. It is an example of Reform adaptation to societal change.

Suggested Activities

- Read the marked background section (provided) to “Day School Movement” UAHC Resolution 1995. **Key Questions:** What happened to Reform Day Schools between 1985 to 1995? Why do you think? What factors in today’s society would encourage a parent to send students to a Jewish Day School? How are Day Schools an example of inreach (reaching within the Jewish community)?
- If possible, phone or email a Reform Jewish Day School (list provided in teacher resources). **Key Questions:** What factors in today’s society lead parents to send their child to Jewish Day School? How is your school an example of inreach (reaching within the Jewish community)?

*Note to teacher: You may want to look online at www.peje.org and www.pardesdayschools.org to see if there are any relevant articles to add to class session on Jewish Day Schools



Memorable Moments

- Discussion with a female clergy and/or LGBT clergy about her/his experiences



guideline, not a binding rule. Individual congregations or rabbis or Jews are free to disagree. Once a large number of Reform congregations and Reform rabbis have made the decision part of their congregational life, it becomes part of mainstream Reform Judaism, like a positive attitude toward Zionism or concern with everyone's civil rights.

To see how this process works, let's look at three specific changes that were introduced into Reform Judaism. One has been generally accepted; one has been almost universally rejected; and the third is still being fought out.

Case One: The Equality of Women

The idea of equality for women seemed logical to the early Reformers, since they believed that everyone deserved equal opportunities. You remember that even in the earliest days of Reform, girls studied together with boys. They celebrated their Confirmation together. Women joined the formerly all-male synagogue choirs. Wives left the women's galleries and sat with their husbands at services.

As early as 1845, the German Reform rabbis agreed that "woman has the same obligation as man to participate from youth up in the public services and that the custom not to include woman in a (*minyán*) is only a custom and has no religious basis." A year later, the group said that there must be "complete religious equality of woman with man" and that women had "equal religious obligation." In the United States, in 1892, the CCAR—only a few years after it was started—voted Reform Jewish women eligible for "full membership with all the privileges of voting and holding office in our congregations."

Real equality came slowly, however. It was easier to announce equal rights than to put them into effect in a world ruled by men. (Consider how long it took after American women were given the right to vote before they were elected to significant offices.) Since no records mention the first female delegate to a Union Biennial, it was obviously not considered an outstanding occasion worthy of self-congratulation.

Still, until the 1950s, congregational boards of trustees were almost universally male. As a result of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s,* Reform Jewish women began to reexamine their role in Jewish life. They urged their congregations to put the theoretical beliefs about women's equality into actual practice.

At first it seemed strange to have women involved in aspects of synagogue life not connected to Sisterhood, the religious school, or the preparation and serving of food. Seeing women sit on the *bimah* or receive an *aliyah* to the Torah seemed wrong to many people. They weren't used to it



Before the Reform movement made women equal to men in religious life, women sat in a separate section when they came to synagogue.

Since 1972, the Reform movement has ordained women as rabbis. This photograph was taken at the ordination ceremony for the New York campus of HUC-JIR, held at Temple Emanuel.



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and they weren't comfortable with it. It violated their idea of what was "right" in a service. Individual congregations struggled hard with these issues. As the years have passed, most congregations seem to have decided that "not being used to something" was far less important than ethical fairness—and equality for women has increasingly won out.

It took many more years before women became rabbis. As long ago as 1922, the CCAR declared that "women cannot justly be denied the privilege of ordination." But not until 1967, when Sally Priesand applied to the college for admission, was a woman accepted into the rabbinical school for the purpose of being ordained. In 1972, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion became the first Jewish seminary to ordain a woman as rabbi. Many women have since become rabbis and cantors. Although they have won much respect, they still face special problems.

Reform Jews have taken other stands opposing discrimination against women. UAHC Biennial resolutions have supported women's rights, passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, and legislation on issues like battered wives.

The prayer book most Reform congregations use today, *Gates of Prayer*, only partially has overcome the masculine bias of traditional Judaism. Often it talks about our "ancestors," but occasionally it still says "our fathers." Although some texts say "he," others say "a person" or "one." We still have a lot to learn about how we can write prayers or refer to God in non-sexist ways. But we are moving steadily to make our ethics more effective in our lives.

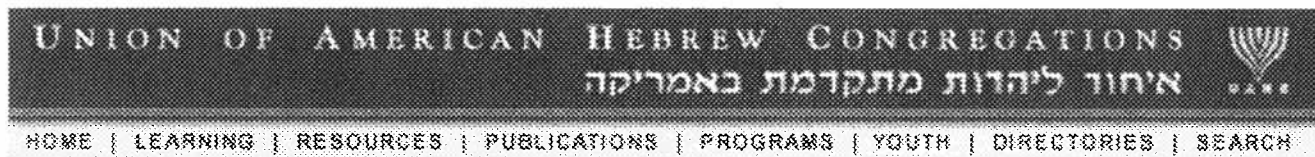
Most Reform Jews are now comfortable with the fuller role women play in Reform Jewish life. It seems impossible to many Reform Jews that equality will not someday be extended to women in every movement in Judaism.

On the whole, the case of women's rights is a good example of how the Reform movement has agreed on an important decision despite considerable problems along the way.

Case Two: The Disappearance of the Sunday Service

Sometimes, what seems to help keep Judaism alive in one generation is rejected by a later one. About a hundred years ago, American Reform Jews had a serious problem. Although Jewish law said that the Friday service welcoming Shabbat must be held at sunset, most men couldn't leave their jobs early enough to get to synagogue in time for the service. (Traditionally, women rarely if ever attended that service because they were busy at home preparing Shabbat dinner.)

In addition, Saturday morning was no longer a "logical" time for ser-



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
 May 1992
 Minneapolis, MN

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN IN REFORM JEWISH PROFESSIONAL LIFE

BACKGROUND

From its inception, the Reform Movement has been committed to equality between men and women. Our movement has consistently supported the advancement of women in the work force and women's rights in general. The insight and idealism of the movement led it to blaze a trail for equality with its ordination of women almost two decades ago. In 1983 the UAHC resolved "To examine its practices and call upon the UAHC and individual congregations to eliminate any sex discrimination and apply the principle of economic equity for all." However, the ideals of our movement have yet to be fully realized. A recent survey of salaries in the rabbinate showed that in every congregational category in which women are serving as rabbis, they are being paid significantly less than men. Other data strongly indicate that similar disparities exist for cantors, administrators, and other synagogue professionals.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Call upon all UAHC congregations to actively uphold the policy of non-discrimination based on gender in all employment practices, including hiring and promoting rabbis, cantors, educators, administrators, social workers and other professionals.
2. Urge all UAHC congregations to compensate such professionals justly regardless of gender. Those congregations now served by women are asked to examine any conscious or unconscious gender discrimination in their compensation practices. Where any injustice surfaces, however inadvertent, we call upon the congregation to consider immediately and voluntarily raising compensation, even before the finish of present contractual periods.
3. Work in cooperation with the Central Conference of American Rabbis and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion through the Joint Commission on Placement to create workshops and disseminate educational programs on the congregational, regional, and national levels on "Women in the Rabbinate", specifically focusing on issues of just and fair treatment of rabbis irrespective of gender. Similarly, work in cooperation with the other appropriate professional associations and bodies to take these actions with respect to cantors, educators, administrators, social workers and other professionals.
4. Call upon the leaders of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the other appropriate professional organizations to address the problems outlined in this resolution, to develop mechanisms to monitor the progress of our movement toward full equality, to assure effective educational and consciousness-raising efforts in all parts of the movement, and to take steps necessary to combat all forms of discrimination in the professions of Reform Judaism.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted at the 62nd General Assembly
 October, 1993
 San Francisco, CA

WOMEN IN JEWISH PROFESSIONAL LIFE

BACKGROUND

More than twenty years after Rabbi Sally Priesand became the first woman rabbi in Jewish history and a decade after the Conservative and Reconstructionist Movements followed our initiative, women rabbis still face a number of difficult challenges: a perceived reluctance by certain congregations to consider for rabbinic positions, especially for the position of senior rabbi; compensation inequities that may be based on gender; and sexual condescension and harassment, all of which undermine the very principles of Reform Judaism.

As we have stated in earlier resolutions of this body, these concerns affect all women in Jewish professional life. We reaffirm our determination to correct these egregious affronts to all who confront sexual harassment.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:

1. Calls upon member congregations to consider all qualified individuals for all positions regardless of gender;
2. calls upon member congregations to assure equality in compensation for comparably situated individuals regardless of gender; and
3. calls upon all institutions of the Reform Movement, including congregations, to initiate training on prevention of sexual discrimination, including harassment, using existing religious and corporate models as a point of departure.



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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted by the
 UAHC Board of Trustees
 June 4, 2000

IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN OF THE WALL

BACKGROUND:

The Agreement on Robinson's Arch: Soon after the Barak government was elected, the Conservative movement in Israel entered into negotiations to designate Robinson's Arch as an official alternative to the Western Wall area for Conservative prayer services. The North American Reform movement felt particularly strongly that while historically Robinson's Arch is an extension of the Western Wall, it is not THE KOTEL as commonly understood by the authorities (the government, the rabbinate and the courts) and the vast preponderance of the world's Jews. We felt that to engage in discussions with the government, the purpose of which were to produce an arrangement to pray at Robinson's Arch, would dilute our central insistence that the Kotel is the inheritance of the entire Jewish people and is not an ultra-Orthodox synagogue. We felt that no amount of rationalization or explanation would persuade world Jewry that Robinson's Arch is the Kotel.

Hence, we declined to join the Conservative movement in its discussions with the government. After all, anyone can enter the Robinson's Arch area now. No one needs special government approval. And we were not excited by the idea that the non-Orthodox movements would be "allowed" to worship way down in a deep excavation, while the main body of Jews, governed by the ultra-Orthodox authorities, would pray up in the Plaza area. There is nothing wrong with that on an informal basis, but to officially agree to this arrangement as part of a formal settlement, struck us, frankly, as offensive.

Women of the Wall: How coincidental that the Supreme Court ruled on the very next day that it too does not buy the argument that Robinson's Arch is the Kotel. "The women have the right to pray according to their custom in the open space in front of the Western Wall," wrote the Court, in rejecting the government's contention that the Robinson's Arch area could serve as an alternative for the Women of the Wall. The Court ruled in favor of the Women of the Wall and gave the government six months to devise adequate administrative and security arrangements.

It is important to remember that, despite efforts on the part of ultra-Orthodox propagandists to portray them as Reform, the Women of the Wall are a mix of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox women. In their petition they did not seek to challenge the exclusive ultra-Orthodox jurisdiction at the Wall. They said simply that in the women's section women should be entitled to pray as a group with *kippot* and *tallitot*, and be allowed to read from the Torah.

The service is not egalitarian as no men are allowed in the women's section. This decision is not complete from our perspective since the principle of equality is not upheld. Our view is that the government should be able to accommodate both Orthodox and non-Orthodox worship modes at the Wall. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, for instance, setting aside a designated period in the week for Orthodox and non-Orthodox prayer, or setting aside parts of the Wall for Orthodox and non-Orthodox worship.

The Court's decision, however, challenges the notion that the Kotel is an ultra-Orthodox synagogue, and this is the root of all of the problems at the Wall. Anything that chips away at this notion serves the best interests of the non-Orthodox movements and, indeed, the entire Jewish people.

A week after the Supreme Court's ground-breaking decision the Knesset's ultra-Orthodox forces submitted two bills to circumvent the Court's ruling. The Knesset's passage of both these bills in preliminary readings shocked and dismayed us.

One, entitled "Safeguarding the Western Wall" introduced by the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party and passed by 33 to 26, imposes a seven-year prison sentence and monetary fine for women who wear prayer shawls, read from the Torah, blow a *shofar*, or lay *tefillin* at the Western Wall.

The other, entitled "Safeguarding the Holiness of the Western Wall and the Plaza" submitted by Shas and passed by 29 to 26, declares that one must behave at the Kotel and the surrounding plaza as if in a synagogue. It prohibits various types of activities including, wearing immodest clothing, holding public gatherings without prior permission from the representatives of the Chief Rabbis, eating, drinking, smoking, photographing for a fee and slaughtering animals.

To use the parliament of Israel-- the highest sovereign body of the Jewish people-- to overturn a Supreme Court decision and render the Kotel an ultra-Orthodox synagogue where women are not allowed to pray freely violates the fundamental principles of tolerance, democracy and civil rights. It, furthermore, threatens the heart of Jewish unity and peoplehood.

Now **therefore**, be it

RESOLVED, that the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Board of Trustees warmly commends the Women of the Wall for its courageous and principled struggle to be allowed to pray at the Western Wall;

RESOLVED, any legislation which attempts to overturn the Supreme Court's "Women of the Wall" decision and render the Kotel an Orthodox synagogue threatens the fundamental unity of the Jewish people and the very essence of Israel's democratic character;

RESOLVED, that the UAHC expresses its outrage at the preliminary passage of the two aforementioned bills by the Knesset and urges in the strongest possible terms the ultimate defeat of these and similar pieces of proposed legislation;

RESOLVED, that the UAHC urge Reform congregations to express solidarity with the Women of the Wall in appropriate ways.



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Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

ISSUES

Gay and Lesbian Rights

Last Updated April 20, 2001

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Status

A new pattern is emerging as courts, spurred by cultural and political changes across the country, apply the principles of equality to sexual orientation. Just as homosexuality has moved from the fringe to the mainstream of American culture in recent years, gay rights has become a flourishing area of the law.

Proceeding in fits and starts, the changes in how the law treats gay men and lesbians has been less the result of a single court ruling or piece of legislation than collective responses to the shift in public attitudes about homosexuality. Polls show an increased acceptance of gays nationwide - movies and television programs are portraying more gay characters and advertisers have begun openly appealing to gay customers. In this political season, Democratic candidates are actively courting the gay vote, while some leading Republicans have tried to temper their party's anti-gay image.

Changes in laws affecting gay people have largely responded to the shift in public attitudes rather than driving them. For example,

despite major shifts in areas such as employment, custody, and domestic partnership, there have been fewer gains. The prevailing national sentiment, it appears, remains one of tolerance toward sexual variation, but opposition to anything that could be viewed as promoting homosexuality.

Democratic pollster Geoff Garin noted that the public strongly rejects discrimination and intolerance, but when the politics of gay rights becomes more complicated, is when the public perceives that the government is putting its seal of approval on a group. While 57% of the people surveyed said homosexuality was unacceptable, 87% of those surveyed said homosexuals should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities. Legal experts note that change has come more slowly when the subject involves family matters that invoke religious beliefs about marriage, parenting and sexuality.

Legislative Summary

Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act ([S. 625](#) / [H.R. 1343](#))
For information on this bill and the efforts of the Religious Action Center, visit the RAC's [Hate Crimes](#) Issue Page.

ENDA: The Employment Non-Discrimination Act There is no federal law preventing workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation, and, in 39 states it is currently legal to discriminate on this basis. In those 39 states, gay and lesbian employees can be fired or otherwise discriminated against solely on the basis of their sexual orientation—real or perceived—regardless of their qualifications, length of employment, dedication, or any other factors.

In the 106th Congress, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act was introduced. This Act would prohibit employers from using sexual orientation as the basis for employment decisions such as hiring, firing, promotion, or demotion. ENDA extends to gays and lesbians the federal employment discrimination protections already provided based on race, religion, gender, national origin, age, and disability. ENDA does not offer any special protections, preferential treatment, or quotas. ENDA was crafted in order to exclude from its coverage small businesses, religious organizations, or uniformed members of the armed forces. Despite having 173 co-sponsors in the House, and 36 co-sponsors in the Senate, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act ended up stalled in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution. It never reached a floor vote.

While an Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2001 has not yet been introduced in the 107th Congress, the Religious Action Center considers this legislation to be of utmost importance. We will work with the bill's cosponsors and our coalition partners to ensure that this basic civil rights protection is provided to all gay and lesbian Americans.

For years, Dr. Laura - American's number one radio show host - has been "attacking" gay and lesbian people as "deviants" and "biological errors," despite the quarter-century, scientific consensus that gay men and lesbians are as normal and healthy as heterosexuals. The Horizons Foundation, the nation's first lesbian and gay community foundation, coordinated a sign-on letter encouraging Dr. Laura to consider the impact of her words. The Horizons Foundation funds gay and lesbian organizations that assist people hurt by homophobia. Though they are not an advocacy group, upon reading transcripts of Dr. Laura's show, the Foundation felt an obligation to speak out. Many Reform rabbis from across the country signed onto this letter.

In September 2000, Dr. Laura was given a television deal by Paramount Studios. The response was quick and organized. StopDrLaura.com (www.stopdrlaura.com) immediately went into effect to mobilize in the efforts to protest. In addition to protest by GLBT groups and their supporters, there was a push to pull advertising from the show. As of early 2001, over 95 companies had pledged not to run their advertisements during the show.

While Dr. Laura is still officially on TV, most gay rights supporters tend to view the anti-Dr. Laura campaigns as a victory. Over 150 advertisers dropped Dr. Laura's TV show and over 30 advertisers dropped her radio show. In addition, the entire nation of Canada canceled the TV show completely, and TV stations across America continue to drop their broadcasts of Laura Schlessinger's show, or banish her show to undesirable time slots.

Position of the Reform Jewish Movement

The Reform Movement has been an advocate of gay and lesbian rights since 1965, when the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) passed a resolution calling for the decriminalization of homosexuality. In 1977, the UAHC and the CCAR passed their first resolutions dealing with this issue, calling for human rights for homosexuals. Since then, the UAHC, CCAR, WRJ, CSA, and NFTY have passed resolutions dealing with issues specific to Reform Judaism, such as inclusion of gays and lesbians in the rabbinate and cantorate, as well as national issues, such as support for civil marriage, elimination of discrimination within the Armed Forces and the Boy Scouts, and support for explicit workplace non-discrimination and civil rights legislation. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual outreach and inclusion has been of great importance to the Reform Movement in recent years. The UAHC Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Inclusion, headed by the late Rabbi Julie Spitzer, created a manual called *Kulanu (All of Us): A Program for Congregations Implementing Inclusion*. This text is aimed at helping congregations include gay and lesbian members and families and deal with gay and lesbian issues. The UAHC's Department of Jewish Family Concerns also deals with gay and lesbian issues.

In addition, the Reform Jewish movement is committed to working to secure civil rights for gay men and lesbians, including the right to civil marriage. Both the UAHC and the CCAR have adopted resolutions in support of gay and lesbian partnerships. In its 1993 resolution, the UAHC resolved, among other things, to call upon congregations to extend the same benefits that are afforded to heterosexual spouses of staff members to homosexual partners of staff members. The CCAR, in its 1996 resolution on gay and lesbian partnerships, resolved to "oppose governmental efforts to ban gay and lesbian marriage." The most recent major Reform movement on the issue was the March 2000 passage of the CCAR resolution on "Same Gender Officiation," followed by the Commission on Social Action's January memorandum regarding the Boy Scouts of America.

Gay and Lesbian Rights and Jewish Values

The two most often cited Biblical texts concerning homosexuality are both found in the book of Leviticus, where they are in the context of a larger section directing sexual behavior. First, it is written: "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence." (Leviticus 18:22) The second citation is from Leviticus 20:13, where we read that "If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an abhorrent thing; they shall be put to death-their blood guilt is upon them."

However, we are also guided by the very basic belief that all human beings are created *b'tselem Elohim* (in the Divine image), as it says in Genesis 1:27, "And God created humans in God's own image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them." Rabbi David Saperstein said in Congressional testimony in support of ENDA that "regardless of context, discrimination against any person arising from apathy, insensitivity, ignorance, fear, or hatred is inconsistent with this fundamental belief. We oppose discrimination against all individuals, including gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, for the stamp of the divine is present in each and every one of us."

Each of us, created in God's image, has a unique talent, with which we can contribute to the high moral purpose of *tikkun olam*, the repair of our world. Excluding anyone from our community lessens our chance of achieving this goal of a more perfect world.

Publications

- [CSA Memo concerning Boy Scouts, January 5, 2001](#)
- [RAC Legislative Agenda for the First Session of the 107th Congress](#)
- [RAC Legislative Agenda for the Second Session of the 106th Congress](#)
- [RAC Legislative Agenda for the First Session of the 106th](#)

HCPA: Permanent Partners Immigration Act (H.R. 690)

United States immigration law is largely based on a premise of family unity. Currently, if a heterosexual American falls in love with a citizen of another country, he or she can marry that individual, and sponsor him/her for United States citizenship. In fact, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a leading gay and lesbian advocacy group, approximately seventy-five (75) percent of the one million green cards or immigrant visas issued each year go to family members of U.S. citizens and permanent residents.¹ However, the permanent partners of gay and lesbian Americans are excluded from these definitions of family and spouse. Even a marriage performed in the Netherlands, a country recognizing gay and lesbian marriages, would not qualify under United States immigration law. Every year, thousands of gay and lesbian Americans in love with non-American citizens are forced to either live apart from their loved ones, or leave their homes.

While many aspects of American law-such as domestic partnerships laws, etc-have begun to address the validity of committed same-sex partnerships, American immigration law has not advanced on the issue of same-sex partner immigration benefits. There is no proof of commitment-financial, religious, or even legal in another country-that allows a gay or lesbian American citizen or permanent resident to bring his/her same-sex partner over through a legal green-card arrangement. The argument resides mainly on the fact that there is no official federal recognition of gay and lesbian partnerships. However, thirteen other countries-Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, the Netherlands (the only country which officially recognizes gay and lesbian marriages), New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, and the United Kingdom-recognize same-sex couples for the purposes of immigration.²

On February 14, 2001, Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), reintroduced the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. If passed into law, this act would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act (the main code of US immigration law) to allow for United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to sponsor their permanent partners for residence in the United States. The Act currently has 72 House co-sponsors and no companion legislation in the Senate.

Boy Scouts of America

James Dale, an assistant scout master, was removed from his Boy Scout troop nine years ago, after organizational leaders discovered that he was gay. Mr. Dale sued the Boy Scouts of America(BSA) seeking reinstatement, On August 4, 1999, the ~~an~~ New Jersey State Supreme Court handed down a decision in favor of Mr. Dale. The Court unanimously held that the Boy Scouts of America constitute a "place of public accommodation" because it has broad-based membership and forms partnerships with public entities like

police and fire departments. Therefore, the court decided that the BSA is subject to state laws and cannot deny any person "advantages, facilities, and privileges" on account of sexual orientation.

The case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The court considered the question of whether a state law requiring a Boy Scout Troop to appoint an avowed homosexual and gay rights activist as an Assistant Scout Master responsible for communicating the moral values of the Boy Scouts of America to youth members abridges the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association. The Court ruled in favor of the Boy Scouts, based on the BSA argument that homosexuality was in direct conflict with its guiding principles. Their 5-4 decision, on June 28, 2000, held that the BSA will be allowed to continue to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Following the Supreme Court decision, a number of groups across the country have expressed disagreement with the Boy Scout policy. Nationwide, the BSA has lost financial support from corporations and organizations such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Levi Strauss, and several local United Way chapters. In addition, at least nine public school districts-including District Two in Manhattan (NY) and the San Diego school system-have ended school sponsorship of Boy Scout troops/Cub Scout packs, although, as yet, they have not banned the BSA from using school property after school hours.

In late January 2001, the Boy Scouts of America boldly defended their discriminatory position by expelling seven troops in Oak Park, Illinois for refusing to comply with the BSA position. This marks the first time since the Supreme Court decision that a troop has been expelled for opposing the ban on gays. Unfortunately, it also suggests that the Boy Scouts of America does not plan to weaken or change their position on gays in Scouting.

Reform Movement Position on the Boy Scouts of America The Reform Movement and the Boy Scouts of America have long-standing ties. Many leaders in the Reform Movement have been and continue to be leaders in the Boy Scouts. Congregations across the country sponsor Boy and Cub Scout troops. And even larger numbers of congregants belong to non-UAHC affiliated Boy and Cub Scout troops.

However, the discriminatory Boy Scout policy clearly goes against Reform Jewish policy and beliefs on homosexuality. The Reform Movement, of course, has strongly-held positions in support of human rights, including the rights of lesbians and gays. We believe that all people have basic rights, regardless of their sexual orientation.

The North American Federation of Temple Youth, the North American Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Commission on Social

Action all have policy regarding the discriminatory practices of the BSA.

On January 5, 2001, after much discussion, the Commission on Social Action mailed out a new memo to congregations. This memo, which received a lot of press attention and garnered strong responses along the spectrum, recommended that congregations sponsoring/housing a troop/pack withdraw sponsorship and/or stop housing that troop/pack. In addition, parents with children in non-Reform affiliated troops/packs were encouraged to withdraw their children from these troops. It was a painful decision, but one that the leadership felt needed to be made.

However, understanding the long-standing relationship between Jews and the Boy Scouts, as well as the many positive aspects of Scouting, the memo does not require this decision to be made. Each congregation, and set of parents, has autonomy in choosing how to define their relationship with the Boy Scouts of America. To that end, the memo also offers 8 suggestions of protest actions to be taken while maintaining a relationship with the Boy Scouts of America.

The Reform Movement, of course, has strongly-held positions in support of human rights, including the rights of lesbians and gays. We believe that all people have basic rights, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Civil Unions / Defense of Marriage

In December 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court handed down a groundbreaking decision granting gay and lesbian couples the same protections and benefits given to heterosexual couples. In addition, the Court ordered the state of Vermont to craft a solution for this situation. This led to the establishment of a "civil union" for same-sex couples—a sort of cross between a marriage and a domestic partnership. The bill, "An Act Relating to Civil Unions" allows both Vermont and non-Vermont residents to acquire a license certifying their relationship with a person of the same-sex. This license extends the same benefits of heterosexual marriage to same sex couples.

While Vermont made history as the first state officially recognizing civil unions, this past Election Day saw two more states pass Defense of Marriage amendments or referenda. Following the model of the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act, both Nevada and Nebraska passed amendments defining marriage as a union between a man and a woman, bringing the total number of states that have passed such laws to 35. Beyond the obvious meanings in the states passing such laws, the repercussions include not recognizing civil unions performed in a state that does recognize them.

Central Conference of American Rabbis and Same Gender Officiation

The Reform Movement has long been a proponent of civil unions on the secular, purely legal, level. However, in March 2000, the Central Conference of American Rabbis made history by becoming the first major group of North American clergy, as an organization, to give its support to those in its ranks choosing to perform same-gender ceremonies. The resolution, "Resolution on Same Gender Officiation," supports the decision of individual rabbis to officiate, or not officiate, at same-gender ceremonies.

The resolution calls for the Reform rabbinate to develop sample ceremonies, or liturgy, for those rabbis who choose to officiate at same-gender ceremonies. While it leaves the choice of officiation to the individual rabbis, the resolution does state that a relationship between two people of the same gender can serve as the foundation of stable Jewish families, and is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual. The resolution does not suggest that these ceremonies are "marriages"; each individual rabbi is given the power to decide, within the context of faith, as opposed to civil laws, what each ceremony represents.

Gays and Adoption

The issue of gay and lesbian adoption is one that is related to the issue of gay and lesbian marriage. Nine states - California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin - and the District of Columbia have allowed openly gay or lesbian individuals or couples to adopt. However, this remains a rare occurrence. There is currently no federal mandate regarding gay and lesbian adoption, and therefore the ability of gay men and lesbians to adopt is affected on a state level by state adoption statutes.

Florida, specifically bars the adoption of children by gay and lesbian adults. Similar legislation passed in Utah, prohibiting unmarried couples, including same-sex couples, from adopting children. The bill claims it is not in a child's best interest to be adopted by persons "cohabiting in a relationship that is not a legally valid (binding) marriage." In the spring of 2000, Mississippi passed a bill banning gay and lesbian couples from adoption and forbidding the State of Mississippi from recognizing gay and lesbian adoptions that have previously been granted by other State courts - an unprecedented and dangerous provision, that threatens the entire adoption process. As in Florida, the American Civil Liberties Union and other progressive groups are fighting this legislation. Anti-sodomy statutes in 19 states and the lack of legal recognition of homosexual couples complicate adoption in those states that do not specifically prohibit gay and lesbian adoption.³

Currently, there is no activity towards legalizing or derecognizing gay and lesbian adoption on the federal level. However, the issue continues to be active on a state level, and should be monitored on a state by state basis.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted at the 62nd General Assembly
 October, 1993
 San Francisco, CA

RECOGNITION FOR LESBIAN AND GAY PARTNERSHIPS

BACKGROUND

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has been in the vanguard of support for the full recognition of equality for lesbians and gays in society. This has been clearly articulated in UAHC resolutions dating back to 1977. But far more remains to be accomplished. Today, committed lesbian and gay couples are denied the benefits routinely accorded to married heterosexual couples: they cannot share in their partner's health programs; they do not have spousal survivor rights; and, as seen in recent court rulings, individual lesbian or gay parents have been adjudged unfit to raise their own children because they are lesbian or gay and/or living with a lesbian or gay partner, even though they meet the "parenting" standards required of heterosexual couples.

It is heartening to note the steps being made toward recognition of the legitimacy of lesbian and gay relationships. Adoption of Domestic Partnership registration in cities such as San Francisco and New York and extension of spousal benefits to partners of lesbian and gay employees by companies such as Levi Strauss, Lotus, Maimonides Hospital in New York City, are models for adoption by other governmental authorities and corporations.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. call upon our Federal, Provincial, State and local governments to adopt legislation that will:
 - a. afford partners in committed lesbian and gay partnerships spousal benefits, that include participation in health care plans and survivor benefits;
 - b. ensure that lesbians and gay men are not adjudged unfit to raise children because of their sexual orientation; and
 - c. afford partners in committed lesbian and gay relationships the means of legally acknowledging such relationships; and
2. call upon our congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to join with us in seeking to extend the same benefits that are extended to the spouse of married staff members and employees to the partners of all staff members and employees living in committed lesbian and gay partnerships.



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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted by the General Assembly
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations
 October 29-November 2, 1997 Dallas

Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian Jewish Couples

Background

In 1987, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) reaffirmed its commitment to welcoming gay and lesbian Jews into its congregations and encouraging their participation in all aspects of synagogue and communal life. In 1993, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President of the UAHC, called upon the Reform movement to support the right of gay and lesbian couples to adopt children, to file joint income-tax returns, and to share in health and death benefits provided to heterosexual couples by federal, state, and local governments and by both large and small corporations. Following Rabbi Schindler's call, the UAHC, in 1993, resolved that full equality under the law for gay men and lesbians requires legal recognition of monogamous domestic gay and lesbian relationships.

In 1990, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) adopted a position paper encouraging rabbis and congregations to treat with respect and to integrate fully all Jews into the life of the community regardless of sexual orientation and acknowledging the need for continuing discussion regarding the religious status of monogamous domestic relationships between gay men or lesbians and the creation of special ceremonies. In April 1996, the CCAR adopted a resolution supporting the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the benefits of civil marriage.

In addition, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism (CCRJ) has supported the extension of spousal benefits to same-sex partners in relationships which would be deemed "common law" marriages if the partners were heterosexual. The CCRJ also supported the 1996 amendments to the Canada *Human Rights Act* to add "sexual orientation" as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

In the years since first the UAHC and subsequently the CCAR gave their support for full equality for gay men and lesbians in congregational life, gay men and lesbians have increasingly come forward to participate in the life of Reform Judaism on national, regional, and local levels. No less than heterosexual couples, gay men or lesbians living in monogamous domestic relationships have demonstrated, like their counterparts, love for one another, compassion for the sick, and grief for the dead.

The UAHC has for decades provided moral leadership to the Jewish community and to our nation, recognizing our differences and diversity, but acknowledging that we are but one family, equal before God. In this spirit, the UAHC must now move more forcefully to support the monogamous domestic relationships of gay men and lesbians.

Legal recognition of monogamous domestic gay and lesbian relationships and congregational honoring of these couples will together provide these men and women and their families with dignity and self esteem.

In 1993, the UAHC General Assembly resolution called for recognition for Lesbian and Gay relationships: A) by governmental legislation as to participation in health plans and survivor benefits, as to fitness to raise children, and as to legal acknowledgment of the relationship; and B) by congregations and institutions of the Reform movement to extend benefits to partners of staff members and employees.

A separate secular movement is proceeding to recognize these monogamous domestic relationships

judicially and statutorily and to grant to gay and lesbian couples nondiscriminatory economic, legal, and social rights equal to those under law enjoyed by monogamous heterosexual couples.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Support secular efforts to promote legislation which would provide through civil marriage equal opportunity for gay men and lesbians;
2. Encourage its constituent congregations to honor monogamous domestic relationships formed by gay men or lesbians; and
3. Support the efforts of the CCAR in its ongoing work as it studies the appropriateness of religious ceremonies for use in a celebration of commitment recognizing a monogamous domestic relationship between two Jewish gay men or two Jewish lesbians.



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Resolution Adopted by the CCAR

RESOLUTION ON SAME GENDER OFFICIATION

Resolution adopted at the 111th Convention of the
Central Conference of American Rabbis
March, 2000Background

Over the years, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has adopted a number of positions on the rights of homosexuals, on homosexuality in the rabbinate, and advocating changes in civil law pertaining to same-gender relationships.

In 1977, the CCAR adopted a resolution calling for legislation decriminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults, and calling for an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians. The resolution called on Reform Jewish organizations to develop programs to implement this stand.

In 1990, the CCAR endorsed the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate. This position paper urged that "all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation that they have chosen." The committee endorsed the view that "all Jews are religiously equal regardless of their sexual orientation." The committee expressed its agreement with changes in the admissions policies of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, which stated that the "sexual orientation of an applicant [be considered] only within the context of a candidate's overall suitability for the rabbinate," and reaffirmed that all rabbinic graduates of the HUC-JIR would be admitted into CCAR membership upon application. The report described differing views within the committee as to the nature of *kiddushin*, and deferred the matter of rabbinic officiation.

A 1996 resolution resolved that the CCAR "support the right of gay and lesbian couples to share fully and equally in the rights of civil marriage," and voiced opposition to governmental efforts to ban gay and lesbian marriages.

In addition to these resolutions, two CCAR committees have addressed the question of same-gender officiation. The CCAR Committee on Responsa addressed the question of whether homosexual relationships can qualify as *kiddushin* (which it defined as "Jewish marriage"). By a committee majority of 7 to 2, the committee concluded that "homosexual relationships, however exclusive and committed they may be, do not fit within this legal category; they cannot be called *kiddushin*. We do not understand Jewish marriage apart from the concept of *kiddushin*." The committee acknowledged its lack of consensus on this question.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality issued a report in 1998 which included its conclusion, by a committee majority of 11 with 1 abstention, that "kedushah may be present in committed same gender relationships between two Jews and that these relationships can serve as the foundation of stable Jewish families, thus adding strength to the Jewish community." The report called upon the CCAR to support all colleagues in their choices in this matter, and to develop educational programs.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS justice and human dignity are cherished Jewish values, and

WHEREAS, in March of 1999 the Women's Rabbinic Network passed a resolution urging the Central Conference of American Rabbis to bring the issue of honoring ceremonies between two Jews of the same gender to the floor of the convention plenum, and

WHEREAS, the institutions of Reform Judaism have a long history of support for civil and equal rights for gays and lesbians, and

WHEREAS, North American organizations of the Reform Movement have passed resolutions in support of civil marriage for gays and lesbians, therefore

WE DO HEREBY RESOLVE, that the relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recognize the diversity of opinions within our ranks on this issue. We support the decision of those who choose to officiate at rituals of union for same-gender couples, and we support the decision of those who do not, and

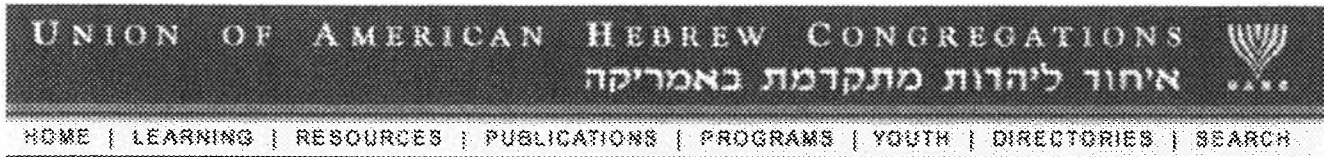
FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the CCAR to support all colleagues in their choices in this matter, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also call upon the CCAR to develop both educational and liturgical resources in this area.



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UNION OF AMERICAN
HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
איחוד ליהדות מתקדמת באמריקה

**Same Gender Officiation
A Statement by Rabbi Eric Yoffie
Greensboro, NC
March 29, 2000**

This afternoon the Central Conference of American Rabbis, meeting in Greensboro, NC, adopted a resolution by overwhelming vote stating, in part, that "the relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmatio through appropriate Jewish ritual."

It is important to note what the resolution on same gender unions does and does not say. It does not compel any to officiate at such a ritual, and indeed supports the right of a rabbi not to officiate. It does not specify what ritual appropriate for such a ceremony. It does not say that the ceremony performed should be called a "marriage."

Nonetheless, the historical and religious significance of this resolution is indisputable. For the first time in history, major rabbinical body has affirmed the Jewish validity of committed, same gender relationships.

What do the members of UAHC congregations think about this resolution? It is impossible to know for certain. *Some* have told me of their strong support, while others have indicated their opposition. Still others have said that they sympathetic to the ideas expressed but felt no resolution was necessary at this time.

Over the last quarter century, the UAHC Biennial Assembly has spoken out strongly in support of human and civil rights for gays and lesbians. We have admitted to membership a number of congregations that offer special outreach to gay and lesbian Jews, and called upon Reform synagogues to welcome gay and lesbian Jews as singles, couples and families, and not to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in matters related to employment and volunteer leadership. And the UAHC has initiated vigorous education programs to heighten awareness of discrimination and to achieve fuller acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews in our midst.

The Union, however, has always refrained from addressing the issue of rabbinic participation in same gender weddings or commitment ceremonies. As a congregational body, it is our task to provide guidance on issues of congregational policy that are normally decided by synagogue boards. But performance or non-performance of a same gender commitment ceremony is a rabbinical matter, to be determined by each rabbi according to his or her conscience and understanding of Jewish tradition. Therefore, while our synagogue members have felt free to preach their views to their own rabbis, and many have done so vigorously, the Union as an organization has appropriate remained silent on the CCAR resolution, and took no part in the many months of debate prior to the convention.

But I too am a rabbi, of course, and I was present at Greensboro. And I would like you to know that, voting as an individual, I cast my ballot in favor the resolution. I did so because of my belief that our gay and lesbian children, relatives, and friends are in great need of spiritual support; that the Torah's prohibition of homosexuality can reasonably be understood as a general condemnation of ancient cultic practice; that loving, permanent homosexual relationships, once difficult to conceive, are now recognized as an indisputable reality; and that in these relations whether or not we see them as "marriages" it is surely true that God and holiness can be present.

I know that many disagree. But whatever one thinks on the commitment ceremony question, I assume that we will respect those who believe otherwise, and remember what unites us in this debate: our responsibility to welcome *gays* and lesbians into our synagogues. Because this I know: if there is anything at all that Reform Jews do, it is to create *an* inclusive spiritual home for all those who seek the solace of our sanctuaries. And if this Movement does not e support to all who have been victims of discrimination, including gays and lesbians, then we have no right to call

excludes Reform Jews

CCAR Responsa

Contemporary American Reform Responsa

38. Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent

QUESTION: What are the origins of matrilineal descent in the Jewish tradition; what *halakhic* justification is there for the recent Central Conference of American Rabbi's resolution on matrilineal and patrilineal descent which also adds various requirements for the establishment of Jewish status?

ANSWER: We shall deal first with the question of matrilineal and patrilineal descent. Subsequently we shall turn to the required positive "acts of identification."

Matrilineal origin
It is clear that for the last two thousands years the Jewish identity of a child has been determined by matrilineal descent. In other words, the child of a Jewish mother was Jewish irrespective of the father (Deut. 7.3, 4; M. Kid. 3.12; Kid. 70a, 75b; Yeb. 16b, 23a, 44a, 45b; A. Z. 59a; J. Yeb. 5.15 (6c), 7.5 (8b); J. Kid. 3.12 (64d); Yad Issurei Biah 15.3 f, etc.). The Talmudic discussion and that of the later codes indicate the reasoning behind this rule.

The rabbinic decision that the child follow the religion of the mother solves the problem for offspring from illicit intercourse of unions which are not recognized, or in which paternity could not be established, or in which the father disappeared. This practice may have originated in the period of Ezra (Ezra 10 3; Neh. 13.23 ff) and may parallel that of Pericles of Athens who sought to limit citizenship to descendants of Athenian mothers (G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, Vol. 1, p. 20). It may also have represented temporary, emergency legislation of that period. We hear nothing about such a permanent change till early rabbinic times, then the union between a Jew and a non-Jew was considered to have no legal status (*lo tafsei qiddushin*). At one stage in the Talmudic discussions, an authority, Jacob of Kefar Neburya, considered a child of such a union Jewish, but subsequently retracted his opinion when faced with a verse from Ezra quoted by R. Haggai (*J. Kid. 64d; J. Yeb. 4a*; see Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Origin of the Matrilineal Principle in Rabbinic Law," *Judaism*, Winter, 1984, note 54). R. Judah in the name of R. Assi considered a union between a Jew and non-Jew valid in "his time" as the non-Jew might be a descendent of the lost ten tribes (*Yeb. 16b*). Many authorities considered children of all such unions as *mamzerim*. They felt that the danger lay with non-Jewish women who could not be trusted to establish the Jewish paternity of their child, though that was contested by others.

The statement which grants the status of the mother to the child saves that child from the status of *mamzerut* or other similar disabling category. There was considerable disagreement before the decision later universally accepted was reached (*Kid. 66b ff; Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer 4.19* and commentaries). The discussions demonstrate that this decision represented rabbinic reaction to specific problems.

Patrilineal origin

We should contrast the rabbinic position to the view of the earlier Biblical and post-Biblical period. Patrilineal descent was the primary way of determining the status of children in this period. The Biblical traditions and their early rabbinic commentaries take it for granted that the paternal line was

decisive in the tracing of descent, tribal identity, or priestly status. A glance at the Biblical genealogies makes this clear. In inter-tribal marriage paternal descent was likewise decisive (Nu. 1.2, *l'mishpehotam l'veit avotam*); the line of the father was recognized while the line of the mother was not (*mishpahat av keruyah mishpahah, mishpahat em enah keruyah mishpahah*, B. B. 109b; Yeb. 54b; *Yad Hil. Nahalot* 1.6, etc.).

We should also recognize that later rabbinic tradition did not shift to the matrilineal line when conditions did not demand it. Therefore, the rabbinic tradition remained patrilineal in the descent of the priesthood; it was and remains the male *kohen* who determines the status of his children. The child is a *kohen* even if the father married a Levite or an Israelite. Thus lineage was and continues to be determined by the male alone whenever the marriage is otherwise proper (*M. Kid. 3.12; Kid. 29a; Shulhan Arukh Yoreh Deah* 245.1).

If a marriage is valid but originally forbidden, (marriage with someone improperly divorced, etc.), then the tainted parent, whether mother or father, determines lineage (*Kid. 66b; Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer* 4.18). The same rule applies to children born out of wedlock if both parents are known.

mat. origin
Matrilineal descent, although generally accepted for the union of a Jew and a non-Jew, has rested on an uncertain basis. Some have deduced it from Deuteronomy 7.4, others from Ezra 9 and 10. Still others feel that the dominant influence of the mother during the formative years accounted for this principle. A few modern scholars felt that the rabbinic statement followed the Roman Paulus (*Digest* 2.4 f), who stated that the maternity was always known while paternity was doubtful; this, however, could be extended to the offspring of any parents. Shaye Cohen has also suggested that the rabbis may have abhorred this type of mixture of people as they felt negatively toward mixtures of animals and materials. A full discussion of this and other material may be found in Aptowtizer's "Spuren des Matriarchats im jüdischen Schriftum," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vols. 4 and 5 and Shaye J. D. Cohen's "The Origin of the Matrilineal Principle in Rabbinic Law," *Judaism*, Winter, 1984.

We should note that the Karaites considered the offspring of a Jewish father and a Gentile mother to be a Jew. It is, however, not clear from the sources available to me whether the conversion of the mother to Judaism may not have been implied (B. Revel, "The Karaite Halakhah," *Jewish Quarterly Review* III, pp. 375 f.) The matter continues to be debated.

These discussions show us that our tradition responded to particular needs. It changed the laws of descent to meet the problems of a specific age and if those problems persisted, then the changes remained in effect.

The previous cited material has dealt with situations entirely different from those which have arisen in the last century and a half. Unions between Jews and non-Jews during earlier times remained rare. Furthermore, the cultural and sociological relationship with the people among whom we lived did not approach the freedom and equality which most Jews in the Western World now enjoy.

We in the twentieth century have been faced with an increasing number of mixed marriages, with changes in the structure of the family, and with the development of a new relationship between men and women. This has been reflected in the carefully worded statement by the Committee on Patrilineal Descent (W. Jacob, *American Reform Responsa*, Appendix).

We may elaborate further with the following statements which reflect the previously cited historical background, the introduction to the resolution as well as other concerns. We shall turn first to the

Question of descent and then to the required "acts of identification."

1. In the Biblical period, till the time of Ezra or beyond, patrilineal descent determined the status of a child, so the children of the kings of Israel married to non-Jewish wives were unquestionably Jewish. This was equally true of other figures. Furthermore, our tradition has generally determined lineage (*yihus*) through the father, i.e., in all valid but originally forbidden marriages. This was also true for priestly, Levitical and Israelite lineage which was and continues to be traced through the paternal line (Nu. 1.2, 18; *Yad Hil. Issurei Biah* 19.15; *Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer* 8.1) . If a marriage was valid, but originally forbidden, then the tainted parent (mother or father) determines status (Kid. 66b; *Shulhan Arukh Even Haezer* 4.18). The same rule applies to children born out of wedlock if both parents are known.

Yihus was considered significant, especially in the Biblical period, and long genealogical lines were recorded; an effort was made in the time of Ezra and, subsequently, to guarantee pure lines of descent and precise records were maintained (Ezra 2:59 ff; genealogies of I, II Chronicles). An echo of that practice of recording genealogies remained in the *Mishnah* and *Talmud* despite the difficulties caused by the wars of the first and second century which led to the destruction of many records (M. Kid. 4.1; Kid. 28a, 70a ff). In the Biblical period and in specific later instances, lineage was determined by the father.

2. Mishnaic and Talmudic authorities changed the Biblical laws of descent, as shown earlier in this responsum, as well as many others when social or religious conditions warranted it. Family law was changed in many other ways as demonstrated by the laws of marriage. For example, the Talmudic authorities validated the marriage of Boaz to Ruth, the Moabites, despite the strict ruling against such marriages (Deut. 23.4); they indicated that the Biblical rule applied only to males, not to females (Yeb. 76b ff). Earlier the *Mishnah* (Yad. 4.4) claimed that the various ethnic groups had been so intermingled by the invasion of Sennacherib that none of the prohibitions against marriage with neighboring people remained valid. In this instance and others similar to them, we are dealing with clear Biblical injunctions which have been revised by the rabbinic tradition. We have followed these examples in our own twentieth century revision.

3. The Reform movement has espoused the equality of men and women, virtually since its inception (J. R. Marcus, *Israel Jacobson*, p. 146; W. G. Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism*, pp. 252 ff). As equality has been applied to every facet of Reform Jewish life, it should be applied in this instance.

4. We, and virtually all Jews, recognize a civil marriage between a Jew and a Gentile as a marriage although not *quidushin*, and have done so since the French Sanhedrin of 1807 (Tama, *Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrin* - Tr. F. Kerwan, p. 155 f; Plaut, *op. cit.*, p. 219). We are morally obliged to make provisions for the offsprings of such a union when either the father or mother seek to have their children recognized and educated as a Jew.

5. We agree with the Israeli courts and their decisions on the matter of status for purposes of *leam*, the registration of the nationality of immigrants and the right to immigrate under the Law of Return. Such rulings are secular in nature and do not bind the Israeli rabbinic courts or us, yet they have far reaching implications for all Jews. In the Brother Daniel case of 1962, this apostate was not judged to be Jewish although he had a Jewish mother (1962 - 16 - P.D. 2428). The court decided that a Jew who practiced another religion would not be considered Jewish despite his descent from a Jewish mother. "Acts of religious identification" were determinative for secular purposes of the State of Israel. The court recognized that this had no effect on the rabbinic courts; nonetheless, it marked a

radical change which deals with new conditions.

Earlier in March, 1958, the Minister of Interior, Israel Bar-Yehuda, issued a directive which stated that "any person declaring in good faith that he is a Jew, shall be registered as a Jew." No inquiry about parents was authorized. In the case of children, "if both parents declare that the child is Jewish, the declaration shall be regarded as though it were legal declaration of the child itself" (S. Z. Abramov, *Perpetual Dilemma*, p. 290; *Schlesinger v. Minister of Interior* 1963 - I - 17 P.D. 225; *Shalit v. Minister of Interior* 1968 - II - 231 P.D. 477-608). This was for the purposes of immigration and Israeli registration. It represented the farthest stance away from *halakhah* which any official body in the State of Israel has taken in this matter. It remained law until challenged and later legislation replaced it. There have been a number of other decisions which have dealt with this matter.

The current law, passed in 1970 after a government crisis over the question of "Who is a Jew," reads, "for the purpose of this law, Jew means a person born to a Jewish mother, or who has become converted to Judaism, and who is not a member of another religion" (Law of Return -Amendment, March, 1970, #4b; M. D. Goldman, *Israel Nationality Law*, p. 142; *Israel Law Journal*, Vol. 5, #2, p. 264). Orthodox efforts to change this to read "converted according to *halakhah*" have been defeated on various occasions. We should note that although the definition of a Jew was narrowed, another section of the law broadened the effect of the Law of Return and included "the child and grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew and the spouse of the child and grandchild of a Jew - with the exception of a person who was a Jew and willingly changed his religion" (*Law of Return Amendment #2*, #4a, March, 1970). This meant that a dual definition (descendants from Jewish mothers or fathers) has remained operative for immigration into the State of Israel.

The decision of an Israeli Court is a secular decision. It is, of course, not determinative for us as American Reform Jews, but we should note that their line of reasoning is somewhat similar to ours. We also see flexibility to meet new problems expressed in these decisions.

For the reasons cited in the introduction to the Resolution, those stated above and others, we have equated matrilineal and patrilineal descent in the determination of Jewish identity of a child of a mixed marriage.

Now let us turn to the section of the resolution which deals with "positive acts of identification." There are both traditional and modern considerations for requiring such acts and not relying on birth alone.

The clause which deals with the "appropriate and timely acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people..." has gone beyond the traditional requirements for consideration as a Jew. Here we have become stricter than traditional Judaism. We have done so as the normal life of Jews has changed during the last two centuries.

In earlier periods of our history, individuals whose status was doubtful were limited in number. The question became significant only during the period of the Marranos. When such individuals identified themselves and lived as part of the Jewish community, they joined a semi-autonomous corporate community largely cut off from the surrounding world. Its entire way of life was Jewish. Emancipation changed this condition. It is difficult for those of doubtful status to integrate in an effortless way as was possible in earlier periods of our history. They and virtually all Jews live in two worlds.

We are dealing with a large number of individuals in our open American society as well as in all

western lands. The Jewish status of a potentially large number of immigrants from the Soviet Union is also doubtful.

In order to overcome these problems as well as others, we now require "appropriate and timely public and formal acts..." The requirement has been worded to permit some flexibility for individual circumstances. With time and experience, custom will designate certain acts as appropriate and others not. It would be wrong, however, to set limits now at the beginning of the process.

We are aware that we have made more stringent requirements than our tradition. We believe that this will lead to a firmer commitment to Judaism on the part of these individuals and that it will enable them to become fully integrated into the Jewish community. We have taken this step for the following additional reasons:

1. We do not view birth as a determining factor in the religious identification of children of a mixed marriage.
2. We distinguish between descent and identification.
3. The mobility of American Jews has diminished the influence of the extended family upon such a child. This means that a significant informal bond with Judaism which played a role in the past does not exist for our generation.
4. Education has always been a strong factor in Jewish identity. In the recent past we could assume a minimal Jewish education for most children. In our time almost half the American Jewish community remains unaffiliated, and their children receive no Jewish education.

*
solution

For those reasons the Central Conference of American Rabbis has declared: "The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these *mitzvot* serves to commit those who participate in them, both parents and child, to Jewish life.

"Depending on circumstances, *mitzvot* leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into the covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, *Torah* study, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, and *Kabbalat Torah* (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi."

October 1983

If needed, please consult [Abbreviations used in CCAR Responsa](#).

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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Adopted by the General Assembly
November 30 - December 3, 1995 Atlanta

Day School Movement

Background In 1985 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolved to endorse Reform Jewish day schools, to encourage the establishment of day schools, and to authorize the Department of Education to provide materials, curricula, and teacher training for these schools. At the same time, the UAHC reaffirmed its continued strong support of the public school systems of North America.

There are now 19 Reform day schools in North America, two of which are celebrating their 25th anniversaries. Additional schools are in the process of formation. Many will require the nurturing that can and should be provided by the UAHC and its member congregations. In some communities, local federations provide funding assistance to Reform day schools.

The Progressive Association of Reform Day Schools (PARDeS) became an affiliate of the UAHC in 1991, which assured the day schools a prominent position in the Reform movement. PARDeS is funded through school and individual memberships and receives the educational and administrative support of the UAHC Department of Education and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR).

The Reform movement continues to strive for the highest Jewish educational goals in its supplementary religious schools. In recognition of the need to ensure Jewish continuity, however, it is crucial that we also strengthen our efforts to provide opportunities for intensive full-time Jewish educational experiences. Reform Jewish day schools have a unique role to play in contributing to the growth and vitality of the American Jewish community. We believe that full-time Jewish education will help develop a group of informed and committed Jews who will influence the Reform movement and the entire Jewish community.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Honor Beth Am Day School in Miami, Florida, and Rodeph Sholom Day School in New York, New York, for their pioneering efforts in founding Reform Jewish day schools in North America, celebrate their 25th Anniversaries, and congratulate and thank them for providing 25 years of quality full-time Reform Jewish education for thousands of children and for their significant role in the organization and development of PARDeS;
2. Applaud the HUC-JIR for expanding its curriculum and facilities for the training of educators and urge the HUC-JIR to provide more educational opportunities specific to the requirements of day school education and administration;
3. Call for rabbis, UAHC regions, congregations and their members to support Reform day schools in their local communities through advocacy, publicity, and membership in PARDeS;
4. Ask members of Reform congregations to urge all Jewish federations to apply equal and fair standards in providing funding for all Jewish day schools;
5. Congratulate the Jewish communities that have established Reform day schools and offer encouragement to those communities that are in the process of developing day schools; and

6. Urge congregations in other communities to engage in feasibility studies and to explore the creation of day schools in their areas.



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Additional Teacher Resource (Provided)

“Gay and Lesbian Inclusion.” Jewish Family Concerns. www.uahc.org/jfc/inclusion

“Gay and Lesbian Jews” UAHC Resolution. 1989

“Human Rights of Homosexuals” UAHC Resolution. 1977

“Outreach” UAHC Resolution. 1978

PARDeS Day Schools. www.pardesdayschools.org

Washofsky, Mark. Jewish Living “Outreach” (Chapter 10). UAHC Press, N.Y., 2001

Women of Reform Judaism website www.rj.org/wrj



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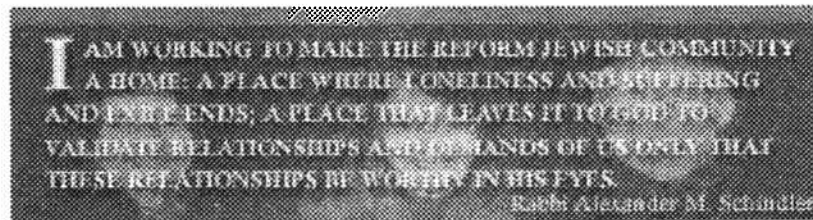
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GAY AND LESBIAN INCLUSION

The committee on Gay and Lesbian Inclusion works with congregations and communities to develop a more welcoming, inclusive culture. We have resources to help; including referrals to local organizations, liturgy appropriate for a variety of communities and *Kulanu*, our program guide for congregations implementing gay and lesbian inclusion.

- *Kulanu* is a complete primer suited for any congregation or community which is trying to become more open and welcoming, whatever stage of that process they may be in.
- **Resolution on Same Gender Officiation** adopted by the CCAR (Central Conference of North American Reform Rabbis), March 2000.
- **Statement by Rabbi Eric Yoffie**, president of the UAHC, in response to the CCAR resolution on same gender officiation, March 2000.



To learn more about how to become a welcoming community, contact us.

 [Jewish Family Concerns Home Page](#)

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Congress

Press Releases

- Letter to Congress to Support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2001 from Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, 6/18/01
- Statement of Mark Pelavin, Associate Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, on the Reintroduction of the Permanent Partner Immigration Act, 2/14/01
- Nation's Largest Jewish Organization Disappointed by Supreme Court Sanction of Boy Scout's Discrimination, 6/28/00
- Saperstein Speaks Out Against Hate Crimes At The Millennium March On Washington For Equality, 5/1/00
- Reform Jewish Movement Commends Vermont Supreme Court Decision on Same-Sex Couples, Calls on Vermont Governor and Legislature to Extend Full Civil Rights to Gays and Lesbians, 12/21/99
- Nation's Largest Jewish Organization Lauds New Jersey Court Decision Banning Discrimination by the Boy Scouts of America, 8/5/99
- Saperstein Statement on Introduction on Employment Non-Discrimination Act, 6/24/99
- Saperstein Urges Prompt Consideration of Hormel Nomination, 2/12/99
- Reform Movement Condemns Anti-Gay Rhetoric, 10/15/98
- Reform Leader Rebuts Religious Right on Gay Rights, 8/12/98
- Reform Jewish Leader Responds to the Religious Right's Anti-Gay Media Campaign, 7/15/98
- Statement of Mark J. Pelavin on the Decision of the Circuit Court of Hawaii to Recognize Same-Sex Marriages, 12/3/96
- Reform Rabbi Calls Anti-Gay Initiative Unconstitutional and Immoral, 7/11/96
- Reform Jewish Movement Lauds Supreme Court Decision

[Striking Down Colorado Anti-Gay Legislation, 5/20/96](#)

- [Reform Rabbi Calls Anti-Gay Initiative Unconstitutional and Immoral, 5/15/99](#)
-

Programs

- [Are We All Created in God's Image?: Gay/Lesbian Issues and Challenges in Our Jewish Community](#)
 - [And Justice for All](#)
 - [Homosexuals Under Nazi Tyranny: Cleveland's Interfaith Lecture Series and Visits to U.S. Holocaust Museum](#)
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For More Information

To learn more, contact RAC Legislative Assistant [Matthew Soffer](#) or visit the following websites:

- [RAC Hate Crimes Issue Page](#)
- [RAC Civil Rights Issue Page](#)
- [RAC HIV/AIDS Issue Page](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign](#)
- [National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#)
- [Lambda Legal Defense Fund](#)
- [American Civil Liberties Union](#)
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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

60th General Assembly
November 1989
New Orleans, Louisiana

GAY AND LESBIAN JEWS

In North America today, it is estimated that 100,000 Reform Jews - and 500,000 members of the larger Jewish community - are gay or lesbian.

Over the last fifteen years, the UAHC has admitted to membership four synagogues with an outreach to gay and lesbian Jews. Hundreds of men and women who once felt themselves alienated from Judaism and unwelcome in mainstream congregations have joined these synagogues, adding their strength and commitment to our religious community.

In 1977, the UAHC General Assembly called for an end to discrimination against homosexuals, and expanded upon this in 1987 by calling for full inclusion of gay and lesbian Jews in all aspects of synagogue life.

While that resolution urged that congregations not discriminate in employment, it did not address rabbinic employment, pending the report of the CCAR *ad hoc* Committee on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate. The CCAR Committee continues its work, and we eagerly await its report.

Within the larger context of UAHC congregational life, however, we have yet to shed the destructive anti-gay and anti-lesbian prejudices and stereotypes that preclude a genuine embrace of the heart.

Our union of congregations must be a place where loneliness and suffering and exile end, where gay and lesbian Jews can know that they are accepted on terms of visibility, not invisibility; that we place no limits on their communal or spiritual aspirations.

THEREFORE, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to:

1. Reaffirm its 1987 resolution and call upon all departments of the UAHC and our member congregations to fully implement its provisions.
2. Embark upon a movement-wide program of heightened awareness and education to achieve the fuller acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews in our midst.
3. Urge our member congregations to welcome gay and lesbian Jews to membership, as singles, couples and families.
4. Commend the CCAR for its sensitive and thorough efforts to raise the consciousness of the rabbinate regarding homosexuality. We urge the CCAR to pursue its own mandate with vigor and complete its tasks as soon as possible in order to respond to the communal and spiritual aspirations of gay and lesbian Jews.



RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

45th General Assembly
November 1977
San Francisco

HUMAN RIGHTS OF HOMOSEXUALS

WHEREAS the UAHC has consistently supported civil rights and civil liberties for all persons and

WHEREAS the Constitution guarantees civil rights to all individuals,

BE IT, THEREFORE, RESOLVED THAT homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection under the law. We oppose discriminating against homosexuals in areas of opportunity, including employment and housing. We call upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT we affirm our belief that private sexual acts between consenting adults are not the proper province of government and law enforcement agencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT we urge congregations to conduct appropriate educational programming for youth and adults so as to provide a greater understanding of the relation of Jewish values to the range of human sexuality.



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RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UAHC

Board of Trustees
December 1978
Houston, Texas

OUTREACH

Rapid demographic change is doing much to affect the future of American Jewry. Among the significant and critical demographic trends are the growth of mixed marriage, the decline of the Jewish birthrate relative to the general population, and an increase in the numbers of non-Jews converting to Judaism. These trends require our profound, serious, and continuing attention. They call for creative leadership so that we reach out to shape our future and do not become passive products of forces beyond our own control.

Accordingly, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at its Board meeting in Houston on December 2, 1978, resolves to:

1. Intensify our formal and informal Jewish education programs within the Reform synagogue and the Reform Jewish movement to stimulate positive and knowledgeable Jewish identification;
2. Develop a sensitive program of welcoming converts to and involving them in Judaism, recognizing that those who choose Judaism in good faith are as authentic in their Jewish identity as those who are born Jewish;
3. Develop an effective outreach program whereby the Reform synagogue can seek out mixed married couples in order to respond to the particular emotional and social stresses in their situations and to make the congregation, the rabbi, and Judaism itself available to them and their families.
4. Plan a special program to bring the message of Judaism to any and all who wish to examine or embrace it. Judaism is not an exclusive club of born Jews: It is a universal faith with an ancient tradition that has deep resonance for people alive today; and
5. Implement these principles by calling upon the chairman of the Board to appoint a special task force of members of the Board, rabbis, and lay people to examine these recommendations for implementation in all the program departments of the UAHC and to report back to meeting of the Board in the spring 1979 with an interim report.



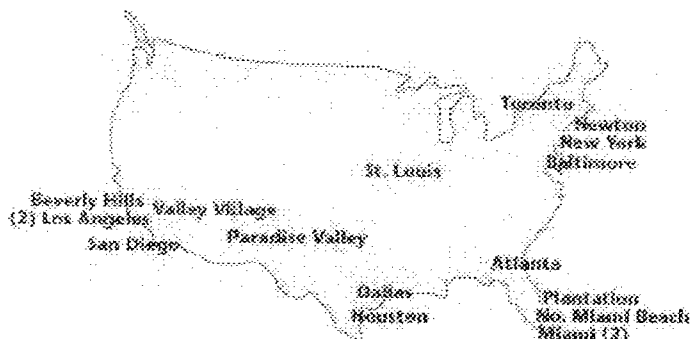
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Pardes Jewish Day School

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 Bonnie S. Morris, RJE,
 Head of School
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 (t) 480-991-4545
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bonnie@pardesschool.org

The Rashi School

www.rashi.org
 Shlomit Lipton, Interim Head of School
 15 Walnut Park
 Newton, MA 02458
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 (f) 617-969-9949
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Reform Jewish Academy of St. Louis

www.reformjewishacademy.com
 Marsha Grazman, RJE,

The Shlenker School Congregation Beth Israel

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 Ricki Komiss, Head of School
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Faith Stein, Ph.D.,

With much sadness, we report that on Wednesday, September 26, Faith Stein passed away in her hometown of Allentown, PA. Faith was a passionate advocate for all the causes she believed in and that included her devotion to the Reform Jewish day school movement, as exemp by the wonderful work she did for PARDeS. We will all miss her terribly, and we will cherish the many precious hours that she spent with us. was truly a beautiful person. Her memory will be treasured by each of us who called her "friend," and her work will live on in the important contributions she made to our mission. Faith is survived by her father, Leonard Stein of Whitehall, PA, and her brothers and their families.

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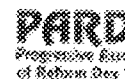
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About PARDeS

PARDeS has a growing roster of members including professional and lay educators, parents and many other committed Reform Jews. Our goals:

- Development of the full potential of the person—intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual and creative—blending the best of our Jewish and American heritage
- A personal view of the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people
- Ethical and moral values inherited from biblical and rabbinic sources
- A commitment to practice and observe the ceremonies and ethical mitzvot of Reform Judaism
- An appreciation of the historic kinship between the Jewish people and the land of Israel
- Love and respect for the Hebrew language, a knowledge of prayer and our sacred writings, as well as the ability to speak and read the living language of modern Israel
- An understanding of the Reform Jewish perspective
- Excellence in both General and Judaic Studies
- Leadership qualities to serve both the Jewish community and the secular world
- A sense of responsibility for one's actions in academic performance and daily behavior



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domestic needs, in our commitment to maintain strong foreign aid for Israel; the rights of gays and lesbians with the importance of the traditional Jewish family; our commitment to close Black-Jewish relations with our opposition to quotas; our efforts to find peaceful ways for nations to resolve differences with our need to contain Saddam Hussein's Iraq and to intervene in Bosnia and other places where genocidal activity takes place; our joy at the fall of the Communist empire with our concern about the resulting ethnic hatreds, nationalist fervor, and anti-Semitism; our support for the Middle East peace process with our pain at the price Israel must pay because of the increased terrorism that accompanies it; our commitment to the unity of the Jewish people and to *Klal Yisrael* with our determination to stand up for our rights as Reform and Conservative Jews in Israel? How should we balance our Jewish universal ethics and the ethics of our particular self-interest when they collide? . . .

What is the Jewish dimension in each of these issues? What is the Jewish stake? And what do Jewish values teach us about these issues? If Jewish tradition speaks to these conflicts, it does not always do so clearly. No "You shall" and "You shall not" were proclaimed at Sinai, no specific answers to our thorny political issues. There are no easy answers as we enter the twenty-first century.

But the complexity of these issues does not exempt us Jews from facing up to our moral challenges. We may have to walk a moral tightrope, yes, but we cannot escape our Jewish mission. With greater modesty and less certainty than in the past, with more tentativeness and greater tolerance for dissenting views, we still bear our historic Jewish burden: to face this world and its pain head-on; to engage in endless study and moral debate; to cherish human life and to pursue justice; to enhance the life of the mind and to struggle to be God's partner in repairing this broken and incomplete world. It was never easy, even in the old days; it is more difficult today and will be even harder tomorrow. But, if the agenda is more nuanced today, our duty to do the right thing, to engage in *tikkun olam*, the "repair of our broken world," is as compelling as ever.

Source: Albert Vorspan and David Superstein, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice* (New York: UAHC Press, 1998), 3-5.

OUTREACH

★ Since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (fifth century B.C.E.), endogamy (in-marriage) rather than exogamy (out-marriage) was and has remained the desirable option for all branches of Judaism, though the second half of the twentieth century has seen an explosive increase in mixed marriages. By the 1990s, in a number of large cities, as well as in some small communities, the rate of mixed marriage between Jews and gentiles had risen to over 50 percent. Because of its more conservative traditions, Canada has been somewhat less affected, but there too the tendency away from traditional endogamy was increasingly in evidence.

Jews in all streams of life have been affected by these changes. While Orthodoxy and Conservatism rejected rabbinical officiation at mixed marriages outright, the Reform rabbinat became deeply divided over the issue. At the same time, Reform was the first movement to wrest positive opportunities from this situation. By reaching out to the gentile partners in the marital union, it increased conversions to Judaism, and it also confronted the need for integrating intermarried families and their children into the congregational fabric. Outreach thus became an important element of Reform's program.

Mixed Marriage

1. The 1973 Resolution on Rabbinical Officiation

Already in 1909, the CCAR had discussed the growing issue of mixed marriage and had resolved "that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion

and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate." The resolution was reaffirmed in 1947, though an attempt to keep Reform rabbis from officiating at such weddings was turned down. That issue was again debated at the 1973 convention, at which time it was estimated that 40 percent of the rabbis in the CCAR were officiating at mixed marriages because they felt that doing so was an act of important outreach to the intermarrying family. After extensive discussion, the convention adopted a new resolution.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, recalling its stand adopted in 1909 "that mixed marriage is contrary to the Jewish tradition and should be discouraged," now declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis recognizes that historically its members have held and continue to hold divergent interpretations of Jewish tradition.

In order to keep open every channel to Judaism and *K'lal Yisrael* for those who have already entered into mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members:

1. to assist fully in educating children of such mixed marriage as Jews;
2. to provide the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, and
3. to encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish community and the synagogue.

Source: "Resolution of the Committee on Mixed Marriage," *CCAR Yearbook* 83 (1973): 97.

2. Rabbinical Opposition to Officiation (1983)

Subsequently, a group of 100 Reform rabbis who refused to officiate at mixed marriages signed a statement initiated by Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin (who later became president of the CCAR). It was privately published and distributed in pamphlet form. The following are the opening paragraphs.

As rabbis we look at each marriage ceremony as a reaffirmation of the Covenant between God and the Jewish People and as an opportunity to share in the

happiness of members of our congregations. During the wedding we invoke God "who sanctifies our people Israel through the covenant of marriage," and the bride and groom consecrate themselves to each other "according to the heritage of Moses and Israel." These words are the essential and traditional heart of the Jewish marriage ceremony, and we recite them with joy.

Every rabbi whose name is appended to this pamphlet has been asked to officiate at mixed marriage ceremonies. It would be easy to say yes, to be accommodating and not add to the pain that is so often felt by couples and their families in such instances. Why, then, must we say no?

When officiating at a marriage ceremony, the rabbi acts as representative of the Jewish people and the Jewish heritage. What the rabbi does or does not do has an effect on the totality of Jewry and on our people's potential for survival in the midst of an overwhelmingly non-Jewish society.

If one of the partners in a marriage is not a member of the Jewish people and is not heir to "the heritage of Moses and Israel," what reasonable purpose is served by using those time-hallowed words? Again, if one of the partners is not Jewish, how can that marriage ceremony "sanctify our people Israel?" Of course, one might suggest that the rabbi omit these traditional statements from a mixed marriage ceremony. But, then, what is the function of the rabbi? The rabbi represents Judaism and the Jewish community.

Our understanding of the essence of Jewish marriage makes it impossible for us to officiate at mixed marriages. Such marriages are, of course, legally valid, and we are willing to meet with and to counsel couples of mixed religious background both before and after marriage. They and their children are welcome to our synagogues—to our worship services, our classes and our programs. But the fact remains that a marriage ceremony involving a person who is not a member of the Jewish people is not a Jewish ceremony.

If we cannot officiate at the marriage ceremonies of Jews and non-Jews, it is not because we reject such couples. They are dear to us, and we shall always seek to meet with them and to extend the hand of friendship.

Source: *Reform Rabbis and Mixed Marriage* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1983), 1-2.

3. Rabbinical Support of Officiation (1985)

Following the adoption of the resolution on rabbinical officiation, a group of Reform rabbis and laity who were more favorably disposed to a rabbinical role at mixed

weddings for the Reform Association for a Progressive Reform Judaism. One of its leaders, Professor Eugene Mihaly (1918-) of HUC-JIR, wrote a series of responses on the subject of Jewish marriage, from which the following is an excerpt.

Civil marriage, to many of our young people, is not quite being married. For many of our sons and daughters raised in our synagogues and religious schools, a judge or justice of the peace are not even viable, acceptable options. They seek—and often go to endless trouble to arrange—a religious ceremony. They want; they need; they yearn for a Jewish blessing; and if that is denied them by Judaism, they will turn to more sympathetic clergy of other faiths. Will that strengthen the Jewish people and Jewish faith?

One reasonable alternative would be to involve the congregants in addressing this problem. Could not each congregation appoint a committee of competent, dedicated lay persons whose duty it will be to determine whether a marriage meets what the congregation considers to be the legitimate standards set by the congregation, and if the rabbi's conscience will not permit him to officiate, then one of the dedicated members of the committee, after a course of study and licensing by the congregation to satisfy the legal requirements, would solemnize the marriage? The officiant, even according to the most literal interpretation of tradition, need not be an ordained rabbi. Any competent lay person is qualified. Well, let us relieve the rabbi of the burdensome and often painful responsibility and let the congregation and those lay people who are willing to devote themselves to study and serious preparation assume this privilege. The Religious Society of Friends follows a similar procedure. Perhaps we might profit from their experience.

Cantors, whether they were formally invested by an academic institution or not, have been licensed for many decades to officiate at weddings. In Orthodox communities not only *chazzanim*, but other less committed and less qualified functionaries of the synagogue have for generations solemnized marriages. There is a long-standing tradition in Reform Judaism that lay persons in smaller, isolated communities are licensed by the congregation to officiate at weddings and other life-cycle occasions. Can we not with our rich resources devise a syllabus for interested, devoted and competent congregants who, after successful completion of the course, would be authorized by the appropriate authorities to act, with the consent of the

congregation, as officiants at marriages and bestow the blessings of Judaism upon the couple?

Whatever alternative we as Reform Jews adopt, however, we cannot, we must not and, with the help of a benign Providence, we will not deny the blessings of Judaism to our children. If we are to speak with the young men and women whom we consecrated and confirmed, we must be prepared to say, as our ancestors heard the good Lord Himself say to His beloved people: "Your pain is My pain (*Ymmo 'Anochi betzarah*). "Your joy is our joy; we are with you in your soul struggle, in your travail—open, accepting, loving, understanding. We face this together."

Source: Eugene Mihaly, *Response on Jewish Marriage* (Cincinnati: [s.n.], 1985), 81-83.

4. Reaching Out to the Non-Jewish Partner (1978)

In 1978, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler (1925-), president of the UAHC, made international news when he urged his board of trustees to adopt a national policy of truly welcoming non-Jewish marriage partners into Reform congregations. He also took up a suggestion made by Rabbi Bernard J. Banberger and others (see below) to undertake an aggressive proselytizing campaign that would win many new adherents for Judaism. The latter proposal bore little fruit, but the former resulted in making Outreach a central and persistent pursuit of the Reform movement.

Not all non-Jewish partners of an intermarriage convert to Judaism as we so well know. The majority, in fact, do not. Statistics are hard to come by, but what we have, suggests these facts: A preponderance of intermarriage involves Jewish husbands and non-Jewish wives and upward to 40% of these women formally accept our faith. In that smaller grouping involving non-Jewish husbands and Jewish wives, the rate of conversion is not much more than 3%. However something extremely interesting has come to light. Social scientists have uncovered a "Jewish drift," the phenomenon of a "turning" to our faith. Their research has established that "nearly 50% of non-Jewish husbands" though not formally embracing Judaism, "by their own description, none theless regard themselves as Jews." (Massarik)

This brings me to my second proposal: I believe that our Reform congregations must do everything possible to draw into Jewish life the

non-Jewish spouse of a mixed marriage. The phenomenon of the "Jewish drift" teaches us that we ought to be undertaking more intensive Jewish programs which will build on these already existing ties of identification. If non-Jewish partners can be brought *more actively* into Jewish communal life, perhaps they themselves will initiate the process of conversion or at the very least we will assure that the children issuing from these marriages will, in fact, be reared as Jews.

We can begin by removing those "not wanted" signs from our hearts. I am in substantial agreement with Dr. Fein here: we reject intermarriage—not the intermarried. If Jews-by-choice often feel alienated by our attitudes we can imagine how, unwittingly or not, we make the non-Jewish spouses of our children feel.

We can also remove those impediments to a fuller participation which still obtain in too many of our congregations. Even the most stringent approach to halachah offers more than ample leeway to allow the non-Jewish partner to join in most of our ceremonial and life-cycle events. Thus the halachah permits a non-Jew to be in the temple, to sing in the choir, to recite the blessing over the Sabbath and festival candles, and even to handle the Torah. There is no law which forbids a non-Jew to be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

As for the children born of such a marriage, if the mother is Jewish the child is regarded as fully Jewish. But if she is not, then even Orthodoxy, providing consent of the non-Jewish mother is obtained, permits the circumcision of the boy, his enrollment in religious school and his entitlement to be called to the Torah on the occasion of his bar mitzvah and to be considered a full Jew everlastingly thereafter.

All this is possible under Orthodoxy. How much the more so under Reform! Reform Judaism has never been chained by the halachah, we insist on its creative unfoldment. If we put our best minds to it, we will find many other ways which can bolster our efforts in this realm.

As a case in point, why should a movement which from its very birth-hour insisted on the full equality of men and women in the religious life unquestioningly accept the principle that Jewish lineage is valid through the maternal line alone? Some years ago, I heard a learned paper by Dr. [Ben Zion] Wacholder of our College-Institute, a man most knowledgeable in rabbinic sources and heedful of their integrity who argued that there is substantial support in our tradition for the validity of Jewish lineage through the

paternal line. I discussed his paper with one of Israel's most rabbinic authorities, who found much weight in Dr. Wacholder's argument.

By way of illustration: a leading member of the United States Senate is not a Jew, although he was born a Jew. His father was Jewish. His mother converted from one of the Christian denominations. He was circumcised, reared as a Jew and attended religious school. When the time of his bar mitzvah approached, the rabbi refused to recognize the validity of his mother's conversion and did not allow the boy to recite the blessings over the Torah. Embarrassed, enraged, the entire family converted to Christianity. This is why a leading United States senator is not a Jew today.

Now I am not about to propose a resolution of this maternal/paternal line issue. I lack sufficient knowledge. I merely insist that there is a possibility of the harmonization of tradition with modern need. And that the Task Force for whose creation I call should include representatives of our Rabbinic Conference's Responsa Committee or enlist its effort in toto as we pursue our delicate tasks.

It may well be that in our collective wisdom and mindful of the needs of a larger Jewish unity we will ultimately determine that certain privileges simply cannot be extended to non-Jews. If we do, then I am certain that the thoughtful non-Jew, who is favorably disposed to Judaism, will recognize that only through conversion can these privileges be won.

It is the inertia which I want to overcome. It is the indifference which I mean to master.

Let no one here misunderstand me to say that I am accepting of intermarriage. I deplore it, I discourage it, I will struggle against it. Rhea and I have five children and we are as ardent as all other Jewish parents in our desire to stem the tide. But if our efforts do not suffice, why then we do not intend to banish our children, we will not say shivah over them. Quite the contrary, we will draw them even closer to our hearts and we will do everything we humanly can to make certain that our grandchildren will be Jews, that they will be a part of our community and share the destiny of this People Israel.

Source: Alexander M. Schindler, "Outreach: The Case for a Missionary Judaism," (address to UAHC Board of Trustees, Houston, TX, December 1978). Another version of this address can be found in *Outreach and the Changing Reform Jewish Community: Creating an Agenda for Our Future* (New York: UAHC, 1989), 86-88.

The UAHC Resolution on Outreach (1978)

In response to Rabbi Schindler's proposal, the trustees adopted the following resolution.

Rapid demographic change is doing much to affect the future of American Jewry. Among the significant and critical demographic trends are: the growth of mixed-marriage, the decline of the Jewish birth-rate relative to the general population, an increase in the numbers of non-Jews converting to Judaism. These trends require our profound, serious and continuing attention. They call for creative leadership so that we reach out to shape our future and do not become passive products of forces beyond our own control.

Accordingly, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at its Board meeting in Houston on December 2, 1978, resolves:

1. To intensify our formal and informal Jewish educational programs within the Reform synagogue and the Reform Jewish movement to stimulate positive and knowledgeable Jewish identification.
2. To develop a sensitive program of welcoming and involving converts to Judaism, recognizing that those who choose Judaism in good faith are as authentic in their Jewish identity as those who are born Jewish.
3. To develop an effective outreach program by which the Reform synagogue can seek out mixed married couples in order to respond to the particular emotional and social stresses in their situations and to make the congregation, the rabbi, and Judaism itself available to them and their families.
4. To plan a special program to bring the message of Judaism to any and all who wish to examine or embrace it. Judaism is not an exclusive club of born Jews; it is a universal faith with an ancient tradition which has deep resonance for people alive today.
5. To implement these principles, we call upon the Chairman of the Board to appoint a special task force, of members of the Board, to examine these recommendations for implementation in all program departments of the UAHIC and to report back to the Spring 1979 meeting of the Board.

Source: Resolution from the UAHC Board Meeting in Houston on December 2, 1978. Another version of this resolution can be found in *Outreach and the Changing Reform Jewish Community: Creating an Agenda for Our Future* (New York: UAHC, 1989), p. 91.

6. Outreach Twenty Years Later

Two decades after Rabbi Schindler had challenged the movement with his demand for an Outreach program and after a special department for this purpose had been established at the UAHC, his successor, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie (1947-), assessed its impact and needs.

Now that Outreach has been with us for two decades, we are understandably inclined to spend more time discussing its practical dimensions than its theoretical foundations. But it is important for us to review from time to time those theological principles upon which our Outreach efforts are based.

We begin with the premise that Judaism is a rejection of tribalism. Yet there is a biological dimension to Judaism, but it is only one dimension among many; and yes, Judaism speaks the language of fate, but it speaks as well the language of choice. A tribalistic view of Judaism would be one that exalts the prestige of blood and that roots Judaism solely in race; such a view is utterly contrary to our tradition's most basic teachings.

But it would certainly be wrong to conclude that Outreach rests on some vague, love-the-stranger universalism. Judaism is not a universalistic religion. The opening chapters of Genesis specifically reject universal solutions to the human situation. The Tower of Babel, the eternal symbol of a world of "one people with one language," is portrayed as an act of hubris, destined to remain unfinished, no matter how much violence may be committed in its name.

Instead, the starting point for Jewish Outreach and all Jewish theology is our unique destiny as a religious people, tied to God in a covenant that we trace back to Abraham and Sarah. For 3,500 years, we have been taught to follow Abraham's example and to "keep the way of the Eternal, doing what is right and just." Developing the nuances of meaning and obligation that flow from this covenant is the ongoing task of the Jews: It guides us in a world that is redeemable but not yet redeemed. We have paid a heavy price for our religious destiny, but we have also been eternally blessed by our conviction that this is the reason for our survival. We know that God has established this covenant with us and has sustained us so that we may offer a taste of goodness and compassion to a despairing humanity.

In short, Outreach begins not with an act of inclusion *per se* but rather with an act of self-definition. We begin with an affirmation of our particular-

ness, of our unique destiny. This may seem anomalous, but of course it is not. The first step of Outreach—and the single most important step—is to have a clear sense of who we are and of the boundary that exists between us as Reform Jews and the society around us.

If we have learned anything at all after twenty years, it is this: You do not draw people in by erasing boundaries and eliminating distinctions. If there are no clearly-defined distinctions between our Jewish values and the values of the world around us, then what reason would serious people—Jews or non-Jews—have to cast their fate with ours?

If we have learned anything at all after twenty years, it is this: Intermarried couples are not attracted to us by minimalism or watered-down Judaism. They are attracted by compelling ethical teachings, by ritual experiences rich in meaning, by the mystery of Shabbat, and by the possibility of religious commandment.

If we have learned anything at all after twenty years, it is this: The Jews most successful at the work of Outreach are those who know who they are, who communicate the power and beauty of their heritage, and who model proud and assertive religious behavior. Jews who are confused about who they are and what their movement stands for are utterly incapable of opening for others the door to our Jewish world.

Source: Eric H. Yoffie, "UAHC President's Remarks," in *Twentieth Anniversary Symposium for the William and Lotie Daniel Department of Outreach* (New York: UAHC, 1999), 3.

7. The Status of Children (1988)

In 1983, the CCAR took a radical step in defining the Jewishness of offspring born into a mixed-marriage family. According to the preamble of the highly controversial "patrilineal" resolution, the new definition applied only to America, and in fact, Reform Jewish communities outside that realm have generally stood by the traditional halachic definition. Yet even among Conservative Jews, recognition of patrilineal Jews as Jewish has found widespread support among the laity. The following is a historical account and analysis of Reform opinion on the subject taken from the current Rabbi's Manual (1988).

The previous *Rabbi's Manual* (1961) contained the following statement which reflected the prevailing practice of Reform rabbis (p. 112):

Jewish law recognizes a person as Jewish if his mother is Jewish, even though the father was not a Jew. One born of such mixed parentage may be admitted to membership in the synagogue and enter into a marital relationship with a Jew, provided he has not been reared in or formally admitted into some other faith. The child of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother, according to traditional law, is a gentile; such a person would have to be formally converted in order to marry a Jew or become a synagogue member.

Reform Judaism, however, accepts such a child as Jewish without a formal conversion, if he attends a Jewish school and follows a course of studies leading to Confirmation. Such procedure is regarded as sufficient evidence that the parents and the child himself intend that he shall live as a Jew.

At the Pittsburgh convention of the CCAR (1980) a special committee was established to review this position. Its report was submitted to the convention held in Los Angeles in 1983 and was accepted in amended form.

It reviewed the halachah pertaining to patrilineal and matrilineal descent, recalling that in all respects save one it is the father who determines the status of the child, as for instance in establishing whether a person is a Kohen. Only in cases of mixed marriage is the mother's identity decisive: the halachah considers the child of a Jewish mother as Jewish, and that of a gentile mother as gentile. A major reason for this exception was the fact that a child of a mixed union (which in Jewish law had no status as a legal marriage) would be brought up in the community of its mother, a community totally separated from that of a father. Besides, mixed unions were relatively rare.

Today's situation has changed dramatically. Mixed marriages abound in the Diaspora and the children of such unions often live in multiple-faith communities. Therefore the exclusive emphasis on the Jewishness of the mother as the determining factor in the Jewishness of the child seems no longer justified.

The CCAR, in reviewing its position, was mindful of the complexity and emotional overtones of any new statement on *ishut*. Nonetheless, it deemed it necessary to frame the prevailing practices of the movement (as described in the 1961 *Rabbi's Manual*) in the form of a resolution that began by stating:

The purpose of this document is to establish the Jewish status of the children of mixed marriages in the Reform Jewish community of North America.

The operative paragraph (as amended) then went on to state:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis declares that the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish descent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these mitzvot serves to commit those who participate in them, both parent and child, to Jewish life.

Depending on circumstances, mitzvot leading toward a positive and exclusive Jewish identity will include entry into the Covenant, acquisition of a Hebrew name, Torah study, bar/bat mitzvah and Kabbalat Torah (Confirmation). For those beyond childhood claiming Jewish identity, other public acts or declarations may be added or substituted after consultation with their rabbi.

Two aspects of the statement should be especially noted.

First, *the resolution is advisory* rather than halachic in the traditional sense. It does not establish a new definition of Jewish identity, for its preamble states expressly that it means to be operative only for the Reform community in North America, not for all Jews everywhere.

Second, *the resolution establishes a presumption*. It does not say that any child of a mixed marriage is to be considered *ipso facto* as Jewish. It does say that such a child may be presumed to be Jewish if certain conditions will subsequently obtain, that is, if certain acts will take place and/or certain declarations will be made. Depending on circumstances, these may range from entry into the Covenant to Jewish education, or from personal identification with the Jewish people to the abjuration of another faith.

Therefore, the CCAR resolution diverges from the traditional halachah in two ways: (a) In the halachah the child of a Jewish mother is *ipso facto Jewish*; in the CCAR position he/she is not, and is to be treated like the child of a Jewish father. (b) In the halachah, the child of a Jewish father and gentile mother is a gentile, to be treated like other gentiles in relation to Judaism and the Jewish people. The CCAR resolution of 1983, on the other hand, considers such a child as *potentially Jewish*: it has, in fact, a *claim to Jewish status*.

In both cases it is up to the child or his/her parents to validate this claim through subsequent and meaningful acts of identification.

The statement does not affect the position of the CCAR that mixed marriages are to be discouraged.

Source: *Maaglet Tzedek—Rabbi's Manual*, ed. David Polish, with historical and halachic notes by W. Gunther Plaut (New York: CCAR Press, 1988), 225–27.

Conversion to Judaism

1. Seeking Proselytes (1944)

Through most of Jewish history no initiatives were undertaken to win adherents to Judaism, and often those who came to us of their own free will were considered with suspicion. During and after World War II there was a flurry of interest in waging an aggressive missionary campaign, but—like later efforts to this end—the Reform community could not be roused to support this effort vigorously. Rabbi Bernard J. Bamberger (1904–1980) of New York City, a historian, biblical scholar, and president of the CCAR, was an advocate of conversionary efforts.

Anyone who has a deep and abiding faith must want to share it. Otherwise, his faith is either insincere or trivial. If you believe strongly and honestly in vegetarianism, the single tax, the principles of the Republican party, or the doctrines of Karl Marx, you are bound to try to convince others that your views are right. How can you withhold from them the truth as you see it? Above all, this applies to religion. Whenever it rises above the level of tribal cult and becomes a message of significance to man as man, religion takes on a missionary spirit. A faith we do not try to spread is not a conviction—it is just a habit. Every true believer is an apostle.

Many Jews are surprised to learn that this is the case with their religion. We sometimes hear it said—even by some who should know better—that Judaism does not seek converts. Whatever truth this statement contains is the result of historical accident. Judaism was once an aggressively missionary religion. In the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christianity, we carried on vigorous propaganda throughout the Mediterranean world, and with amazing success. We gave up seeking converts only because Christian and Moslem authority, armed with police power, forced us to stop. We gave up the effort slowly and reluctantly. As late as the eighth century, the royal family of the Chazars (in what is now southeastern Russia) and

many of subjects adopted Judaism. Since then, only scattered individuals have entered the Jewish fold; and the Jewish communities, fearful of persecution, were often hesitant about accepting them. Forced to abandon missionary effort, the Jews gradually lost the urge for it.

When the ghetto walls fell and Jews entered more fully into the life of the world around them, you might have expected a change. Now that they were again in free contact with their fellow men, they could have tried to propagate their faith. Especially, you might think, Reform Judaism, with its stress on the universal message of the religion, should have directed this message to all men!

But things did not happen that way. In Germany, where the Reform movement started, the Jews felt much too insecure to take a step that might irritate the Christian authorities. In America, Jewish life was so chaotic that all our efforts were absorbed in putting our own house in order (though Isaac M. Wise had a missionary zeal that went far beyond the house of Israel—but this is a separate story). We had to make the synagogue effective first for those who were born Jews before we could bring its message to a larger audience.

To many Jews, however, the whole idea of proselytizing was repellent. In many countries of Europe, conversion to the dominant faith was the condition of worldly advancement. The numerous Jews who were baptized, or who had their children baptized, seemed to us hypocritical cowards. We assumed that all who change their religious affiliations are insincere turncoats. Again, we resented the establishment in this country of special missions to convert the Jews, sometimes staffed by "professional" converts of dubious character. And so we did not want to missionize others.

Yet, strange to say, Reform Judaism laid the greatest stress on the *Mission of Israel*. Our preachers constantly proclaimed that the Jewish people had been called by God to proclaim His unity and to spread his law of righteousness and peace. This idea is plainly stated in the Bible; the spokesmen of Reform reemphasized it with great eloquence. Rarely, however, did they suggest how the mission was to be carried out in practice. It remains a somewhat vague, though sublime concept. We are still faced by the problem: If we believe we have a mission, what are we going to do about it?

Source: Bernard J. Bamberger, "A Missionary Religion," *Liberal Judaism*, September 1944, 44-45.

2. A Moral Obligation to Propagate Judaism (1985)

David Belin (1928-1999), a distinguished Iowa lawyer, became the major advocate of making active proselytism a part of Reform Outreach. Here he argues that the subject deserves the attention of every serious Reform Jew.

"Why should I choose to be Jewish?" It is a question that is being asked with increased frequency throughout the United States and Canada in a variety of circumstances.

When a Jew and a non-Jew fall in love and decide to marry, the Jew may ask his or her intended spouse to choose Judaism. Why? What is there about the Jewish religion that would lead the non-Jew to want to change religious identity?

The parents of a Jew contemplating marriage to a non-Jew usually want the prospective son-in-law or daughter-in-law to consider converting to Judaism. Why should the non-Jew choose Judaism?

If the non-Jew does not convert to Judaism, in what religion will their children be raised? Why should the couple raise their children to be Jewish? If a child is not raised in the religion of either parent on the rationale of freedom of choice upon reaching adulthood, the young adult may ask: "Why should I choose the religion of my Jewish parent?"

These questions directly relate to what has come to be known as Jewish Outreach—one of the most challenging developments in modern Jewish history.

Related to this new development is the increasingly large number of Americans today searching for religious identity. Generally speaking, they have not considered the possibility of choosing Judaism because of the erroneous perception by most non-Jews that Judaism is a closed society or that Judaism does not seek to bring others into the Jewish religion. In fact, Jewish Outreach has historic roots going back to biblical times. But even if those roots did not exist, Jews have a moral obligation to let those searching for religious identity know that they have every opportunity, if they so desire, to choose Judaism.

I believe there is a unique opportunity for thoughtful Jews to enhance the quality of their lives by exploring answers to the questions: "Why should I choose to be Jewish?" and "What is Jewish Outreach and what does Jewish Outreach mean for me?" A similar opportunity exists for non-Jews who may

be involved in an interfaith relationship with a Jew or who may have no religious preference but are searching for a personally and philosophically satisfying religious affiliation.

Source: David Belin, *Why Choose Judaism: New Dimensions of Jewish Outreach* (New York: UAHC, 1985), 1-2.

3. Conversion (giyyur) in Classical Reform Judaism (1892)

In 1892, the CCAAR decided that religious instruction and a convert's verbal commitment would be sufficient for giyyur (conversion). Circumcision and immersion in the mikveh (ritual bath) were no longer deemed essential—a decision that was in line with the generally low importance the Reformers of that day assigned to ritual.

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, assembled this day in this city of New York, considers it lawful and proper for any officiating Rabbi, assisted by no less than two associates, and in the name and with the consent of his congregation, to accept into the sacred covenant of Israel and declare fully affiliated to the congregation לְכָל דָּבָר שֶׁבְּקוּדֻשָּׁה any honorable and intelligent person, who desires such affiliation, without any initiatory rite, ceremony or observance whatever; provided, such person be sufficiently acquainted with the faith, doctrine and religious usages of Israel; that nothing derogatory to such person's moral and mental character is suspected; that it is his or her free will and choice to embrace the cause of Judaism, and that he or she declare verbally and in a document signed and sealed before such officiating Rabbi and his associates his or her intention and firm resolve:

1. To worship the One, Sole and Eternal God, and none besides Him.
2. To be conscientiously governed in his or her doings and omissions in life by God's laws ordained for the child and image of the Maker and Father of all, the sanctified son or daughter of the divine covenant.
3. To adhere in life and death, actively and faithfully, to the sacred cause and mission of Israel, as marked out in Holy Writ.

Source: "Resolution Relating to 'Initiatory Rites of Proselytes,'" *CCAR Yearbook* 3 (1893): 36.

4. Conversion in Contemporary Reform Judaism (1988)

Though the above resolution has never been changed, increasing numbers of Reform rabbis today suggest or even insist upon the traditional requirements.

We recognize today that there are social, psychological, and religious values associated with the traditional initiatory rites, and therefore recommend that the rabbi acquaint prospective converts with the halachic background and rationale for *b'rit milah*, *hatafat dam b'rit*, and *t'vilah* and offer them the opportunity to observe these rites. In Israel, Canada, and various communities elsewhere, giyyur is performed by our colleagues in accordance with traditional halachic practice.

A rabbinical *beit din* is desirable for giyyur. Where it is not available, the rabbi should choose two informed synagogue members as witnesses.

After the conclusion of the ceremony a copy of the giyyur certificate should be given to the convert; other copies are for the rabbi and the congregation. It has been suggested that the American Jewish Archives also receive a copy.

It is understood that while the rituals of giyyur are important, the preparatory period preceding the ceremony is even more significant and is given a high priority by Reform Judaism. The length of preparation is determined by the rabbi, taking into consideration the time needed by the candidate to obtain the necessary understanding and appreciation of Judaism so that he or she may make an informed decision. The period of study should be reinforced by assisting the prospective convert's active participation in the various celebrations, observances, and worship services of our people. Regular attendance at the synagogue, as well as evidence of concern for Jewish values and causes in the home and community, should be required. This is intended to enable rabbis and their associates to satisfy themselves not only that the candidate has a sufficient knowledge of Judaism but, of even greater importance, that the candidate is a person of sincere and responsible character who is genuinely desirous of making a whole-hearted commitment to the Jewish people, its faith, and its community.

Giving a Hebrew Name

The candidate is invested with a Hebrew name at the time of the ceremony. This name will serve him or her for all those occasions when a Jew is identified by a traditional Jewish name.

The Mishnah says: "The father of all converts was Abraham, therefore when a convert is named, he/she is named X, son/daughter of our father Abraham" (*Tanchuma*, Lech Lecha 32). Reform Judaism would expand this statement and end it by saying "... our father Abraham and our mother Sarah."

Benedictions

At the circumcision (or at *hatafat dam*) the benedictions are said by the circumciser or rabbi; after immersion, they are said by the convert because he/she has already entered our gates and is now enabled to recite the *b'rachot*.

Immersion

Tradition requires that the candidate enter the *mikveh* without jewelry or cosmetics of any kind.

Immersion should take place three times, to the accompaniment of the *b'rachot* indicated in the text.

Where *l'vilah* is desired but a *mikveh* is not available, the ceremony might take place in the ocean, or in a lake or river. The Conservative movement has sanctioned the use of a swimming pool when other alternatives fail. This option might be exercised especially when the local *mikveh* is not made available to Reform converts.

Conversion of a Child

When a non-Jewish woman who is pregnant is converted, upon birth her child is automatically Jewish, as the child of a Jewish mother. If, however, the child is born before *gyyyur*, other rules apply.

Gyyur must be purposeful and voluntary, but this condition is absent in the case of small children who are converted with their parents. In such a case a child's *gyyyur* takes place conditionally, and when the child reaches maturity he/she may annul the conversion. The age of maturity is, according to tradition, 12 years for girls and 13 for boys, and the option must be exercised at once. We, however, do not deem children of such ages as capable of making decisions for life and would therefore extend the period of option until a later time and would not hold young persons to membership in the Jewish people against their will. Once full adulthood is reached (which may be said to coincide with the voting age) and *gyyyur* has not been repudiated,

the principle obtains that a Jew remains a Jew even if he, she, or it reverts to the former faith.

Source: *Maaglai Tzedek—Rabbi's Manual*, ed. David Polish, with historical and halachic notes by W. Gunther Plaut (New York: CCAR Press, 1988), 232–34.

The Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue (1994)

The increase in mixed marriages has had an important impact on Reform congregations. For, although the incidence of such unions is spread across all segments of the community, Reform has been the most open and welcoming of the religious streams in Judaism. Converted gentiles have made their contributions to Reform Jewish life and beyond; they have served as congregational presidents and on the boards of the movement's national bodies. However, the question of how to integrate unconverted gentile members of temple families into the religious life of the congregation has remained a controversial issue. The CCAR Response Committee received the following question posed by the Reform Practices Committee: "What are the traditional and Reform positions on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services?" The following are brief excerpts from the lengthy responsum.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century profound changes have taken place in the demography of North American Judaism. The rate of mixed marriage has increased dramatically, with one marriage partner remaining outside the Jewish faith community. When such couples, often with their children, wish to find a synagogue where they can worship and enroll their offspring for a Jewish education, they will most likely turn to Reform congregations, which are sure to welcome and accommodate them.

Since in most congregations the family is the unit of membership, the status of the non-Jewish partners remains frequently undefined, especially when congregational constitutions do not specifically state that members must be of the Jewish religion. But even where the constitution is unequivocal in this respect (as it probably is in the majority of temples), the fact is that emotionally, physically, and financially such families have a stake in the synagogue. They support it; they attend its services; and their children are enrolled in the religious school, where they prepare for bar/bat mitzvah and confirmation. Especially on the latter occasions, questions of parental par-

participation in the celebratory ritual arise and may become the seed bed of conflict. Rabbis are put under pressure to make the widest possible accommodation to the non-Jewish partners, in order to give them a role in the service.

This scenario is paralleled by other developments. The Responsa Committee has lately been asked questions about various kinds of non-Jewish appearances at services which suggest a worrisome tendency toward increasing syncretism. Our decisions have held that there must be boundaries in order to assure the identity and continued health of our congregations as well as our movement. If we are everything to everyone, we are in the end nothing at all. On this, there is general agreement. . . .

Participation in the Torah reading is one of the most potent symbols of inclusion in the Jewish community. It was precisely for that reason that Jewish women had to fight twenty years ago not only for the right to be called to the Torah and to read from it, but even to carry or even touch the scroll. The same emotional response is behind the new "tradition" of passing the Torah from family member to family member to the bar or bat mitzvah. Access to the Torah symbolizes full inclusion in the Jewish community. That is precisely why bar/bat mitzvah is celebrated in the way it is.

For this reason a non-Jew should not be called to the Torah for an *aliyah*. The reading of the Torah requires the presence of a community, because it is one of the central acts by which the community affirms its reason for existence, i.e., the covenant whose words are contained within the scroll. To be called to the Torah is to take one's position in the chain of privilege and responsibility by which the Jewish community has perpetuated itself. A non-Jew, no matter how supportive, does not share that privilege or that responsibility as long as s/he remains formally outside the Jewish community.

In many congregations the pressure to grant non-Jews *aliyot* comes in connection with the celebration of a bar/bat mitzvah. The reasons for this may be found in the ways our movement has both deliberately and unintentionally given the public Torah reading an altogether different context and meaning than the one just outlined. Relieving this pressure, therefore, is for this Committee not merely a matter of issuing clear guidelines; it is also a matter of reeducating our people to the real significance of what they are doing. . . .

A brief word should also be said on congregational membership. Where

the constitution of the synagogue is not specific on the subject, Gentiles have obtained membership as partners in a family unit. Some congregations therefore conclude that all who have the legal status of members must be entitled to all religious privileges as well. We would disagree. Religious membership is not the same as synagogue membership. The latter is the outflow of an institutional arrangement, the former a spiritual and historic category. Therefore, even where non-Jewish spouses of Jews are considered full temple members, their religious privileges and obligations derive from sources other than congregational by-laws and partake of the limitations set out above.

We are aware that there are differing views of the nature of Jewish worship and much that pertains to it. However, in the view of this Committee, there is a clear and present danger that our movement is dissolving at the edges and is surrendering its singularity to a beckoning culture which champions the syncretistic. Jewish identity is being eroded and is in need of clear guide lines which will define it unmistakably. To provide such markers is the task of the Responsa Committee.

Source: "Gentile Participation in Synagogue Ritual," in *Teshuvot for the Nineties: Reform Judaism's Answers for Today's Dilemmas*, ed. W. Gunther Plaut and Mark Washofsky (New York: CCAR Press, 1997), 55ff.



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM

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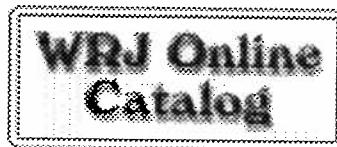
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Resolutions and Statements

Board Statement

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- Stem Cells, Gene Therapy and Cloning
- Human Rights Issues

43rd Assembly Resolutions

- Complete Health: Mental And Physical
- Seeking Peace
- Economic Justice
- Elections In The United States

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- Children as Soldiers
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- Continuing Tragedies of the Shoah
- End-of-Life Care
- Gay and Lesbian Rights
- International Year of Older Persons
- Jewish Unity and Solidarity
- Reform Judaism and Zionism
- The Commercial Exploitation of Children

1997

- ~~NEW~~ Collection of Resolutions and Statements on Women's Reproductive Health & Rights, 1935 - 1996

For information about resolutions and policy statements prior to 1997, please see the book In Pursuit of Justice: Resolutions and Policy Statements or contact Carolyn Kunin

Conclusion Unit: Reform Judaism and Me

Goals:

1. To review the overall curriculum
2. To help the students personally explore and struggle with the enduring understandings and examples studied
3. To enable students to develop a positive identification as Reform Jews
4. To provide an opportunity to dialogue with Jews of other denominations

Objectives: Students will be able to...

1. Summarize the enduring understandings learned in this course
2. Express his/her definition of being a Reform Jew
3. Explain and defend what being a Reform Jew is about

Guiding Questions (This can take the form of a test or an informal review)

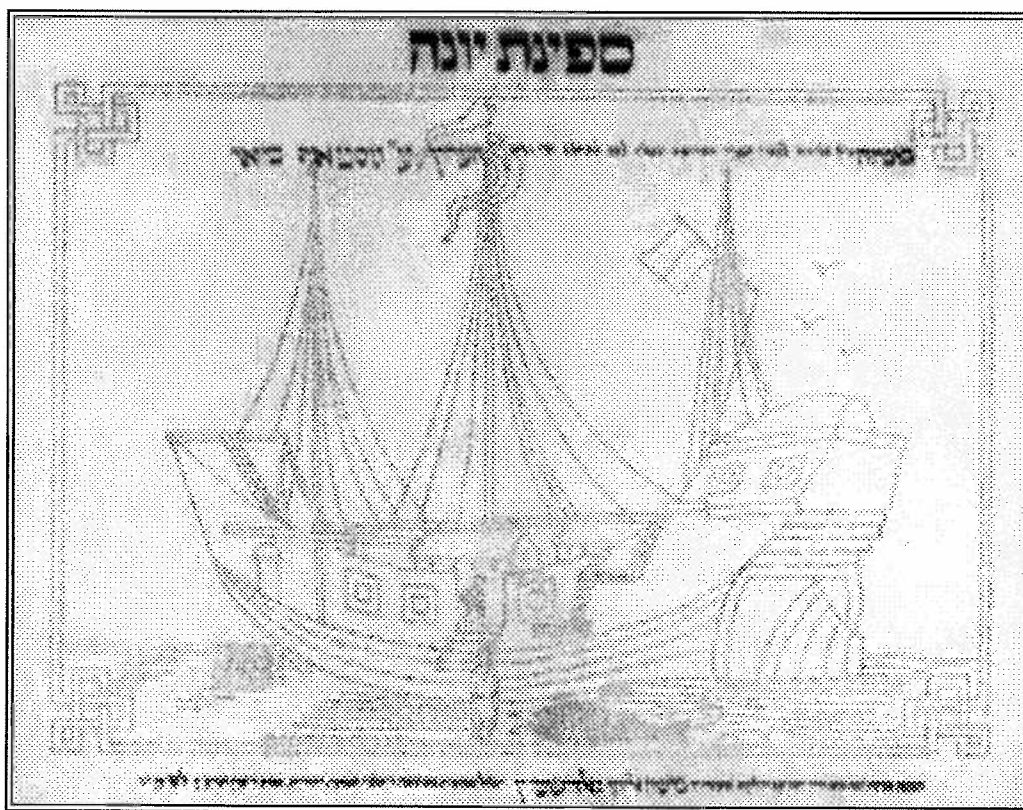
1. List 3 ways that Reform Judaism is an intentional liberal expression of Judaism and Jewish peoplehood.
2. Describe 2 ways Reform Judaism embraced the ideas of modernity (combined Jewish tradition and modern ideas)
3. How does the Reform synagogue reflect a commitment to being fully Jewish and American? In other words, What are some ways Reform synagogues/services reflect American culture/influence?
4. Describe 3 recent ways that Reform Judaism adopted itself to modern societal change?

Suggested Activities/Memorable Moments

- Formally or informally assess student's ability to answer the guiding questions above
- **Class Micrography Project.** Micrography is the Jewish Art Form of drawing a picture using Jewish words. Sample Provided. As a class design the outline of a shape reflecting Reform Judaism. Then, as a class, decide what phrases or prayers you want to write on it to display what you have learned about Reform Judaism this year. Each student should pick some phrases reflecting what s/he (and the class) most enjoyed learning about Reform Judaism (amount depends of the number of students and size of shape). Then write the phrases on the outline of the shape (in Hebrew or English). Display in the synagogue (create an explanation to hang next to it).

- **Video testimony** of Reform Judaism today and personal beliefs. Reform Judaism is always changing. In 25 years, another class at this Temple may be studying Reform Judaism. We want to provide them with testimony about Reform Judaism today so they can have a first-hand look at Reform Judaism in 2003 and compare it with their Judaism. Each student should testify as to her/his beliefs and practices as a Reform Jew and share what they enjoyed and/or struggled with in this course. Please invite parents, clergy, and other students to view the video at a ceremony or communal event.
- **Visit** with peers (if possible) or clergy from other denominations. Discuss Jewish issues from Reform and other Jewish perspectives. While differences will arise, also focus on what you all have in common...KLAL YISRAEL.

Mendelowitz was a member of the Habad hassidic community in Hebron, in the nineteenth century. He spent most of his life traveling as far west as England and as far east as India, as an emissary of his community to gather funds for the support of its members and its institutions. These were long, often dangerous journeys in small ships on stormy seas to lands infested by brigands. Once, after three and a half years away from home, his community and his own family urged him to continue on, for the sums he had sent them were not sufficient. At home, he published a number of books, the most valuable of which is *Zichron Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem, 1876), descriptive of the Holy Land at that time. In it are detailed reports of synagogues, academies of learning, charitable institutions and various social organizations, as well as legends. In the second part Mendelowitz writes about the cities he visited during his travels, among them Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Basra, Bombay, Calcutta, Cairo, Alexandria, Izmir, Adrianople, Constantinople, Kremenchug (Russia), London, Paris, Amsterdam, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Berlin, and Halberstadt. He mentions the names of those who helped him in his charitable mission and those who extended him hospitality.



Micrography is the forming of pictures of persons or objects with the words in tiny letters of verses appropriate to the subject. Thus the story of Jonah, the reluctant prophet, the boat, the fish, the ocean are all formed from the words of the biblical book bearing his name. it was fashioned by Moses Elijah Goldstein in 1897 and presented to Herr Gustave May, ("The Ship of Jonah," Micrography, 1897, Hebraic Section, Library of Congress Photo).

His chief benefactors were members of the Sassoon family in the Near East and in Europe, who provided the funds for building two Habad synagogues in

Hebron. In appreciation Mendelowitz presented to Solomon Sassoon an illustrated menorah tablet similar to the one in the Library of Congress. We know of no other of his artistic works which have survived.

This peripatetic emissary, author, and artistic scribe used his talents to promote his mission, distributing his published works and rewarding philanthropists with the fruits of his scribal artistry. The Library's shivviti menorah tablet is just such a gift presented to a Solomon, whose last name is lost.



The Book of Deuteronomy written in tiny letters forms this portrait of Moses. The artist's own translation in English of the Hebrew and French descriptive statement reads:

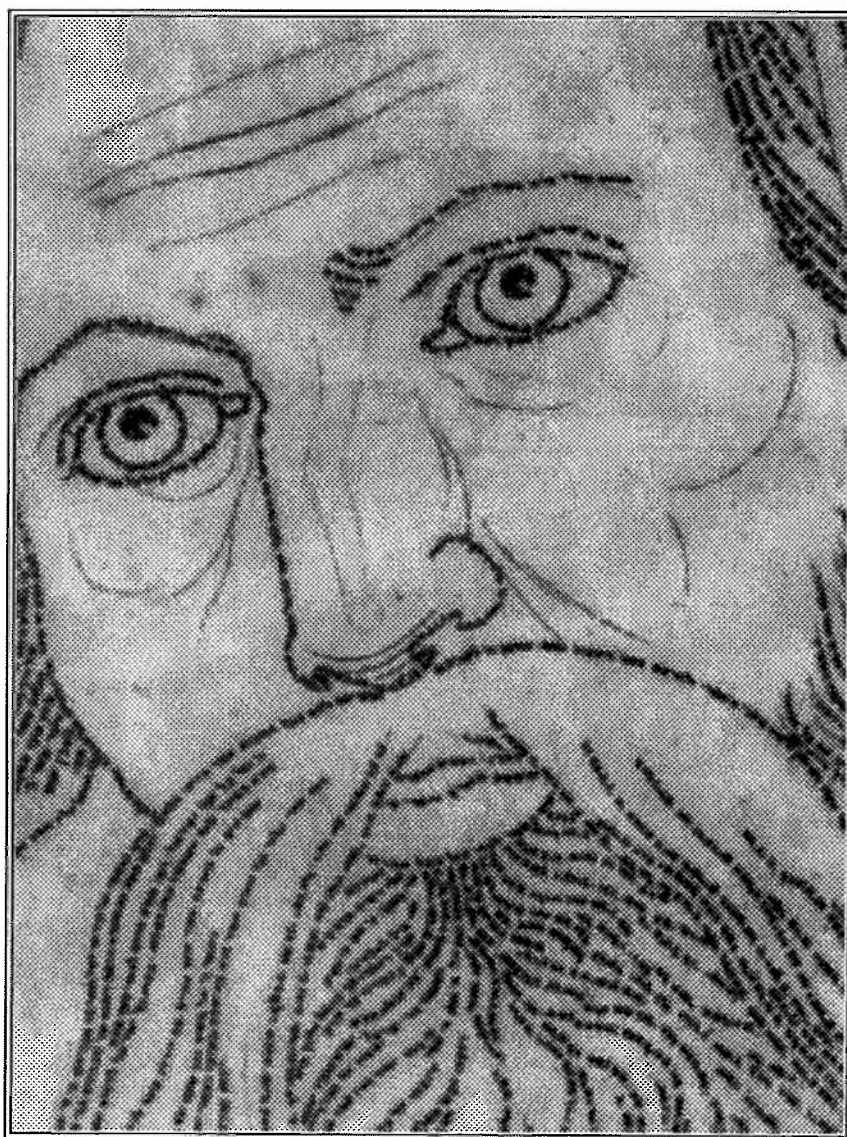
PORTRAIT OF MOISE

Laws giver of the Israelites and
the greatest of the Prophetes ...
(Containing the fifth Book) Written

in small letters by Hilel Braverman,

("Portrait of Moise," Micrography, late nineteenth century, Hebraic Section, Library of Congress Photo).

Lovely micrographic drawings of "The Ship of Jonah" by Moses Elijah Goldstein, and Hillel Braverman's "Portrait of Moise" represent the Library's holdings in this art form. Micrography draws a design, portrait, or scene associated with the subject by using words composed of tiny letters, whose forms are barely legible to the naked eye. Widely used in medieval Hebrew manuscripts, micrography experienced a revival at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It has been esteemed by Jews, because it makes it possible to draw a picture of a sacred event without "casting away" the sacred words which describe it in a classical religious text; thus, micrography permits the welding together of the visage of a saint or sage with the very words he uttered or which were written in praise of him.



"The Ship of Jonah," completed in 1881, was presented to "the exalted and notable philanthropist, Herr Gustave May," in 1897 by the artist, who had already published micrographic portraits of Simeon bar Yohai, Esther, and Judith. The ship depicted is a galleon, Jonah has just been cast from it, and a fish no larger than he swims toward him, mouth open to swallow him. The reader, magnifying glass in hand, can follow the story of the prophet who was reluctant to heed God's injunction to preach repentance to the feared and hated city of Nineveh; and having been taught by God that He is the father of all, Jonah accedes and thereby becomes Nineveh's savior. This message of God's loving concern for all humankind has been incorporated into the Day of Atonement liturgy when the entire book of Jonah is read at the afternoon service.

Source: Abraham J. Karp, *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress*, (DC: Library of Congress, 1991).

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Annotated Bibliography

- Borowitz, Eugene B. and Naomi Patz. Exploring Reform Judaism. Behrman House: West Orange, NJ, 1985.

This textbook on Reform Judaism, although outdated, is designed for intermediate grades. The book is divided into 5 parts: “What Makes Reform Jews Special? Who Tells Reform Jews What to Do and Believe? What do Reform Jews Believe? What is a Reform Jew Supposed to do? In Closing.” This curriculum guide utilizes excerpts from the book. It is not necessary for students to own a copy for this curriculum guide.

- Bruner, Jerome. A Study of Thinking. Science Editions: New York, 1957.

His modality of concept attainment is adapted by Dr. Isa Aron and then by me for an activity in the introduction unit.

- Mack, Stan. The Story of the Jews. Jewish Lights: Woodstock, VT, 2001.

This cartoon book depicts the 4,000 year history of the Jews in a fun, creative, and concise way. It can be useful for virtually any age (where students can read) and is a nice change from a typical textbook. This curriculum guide utilizes excerpts from the chapters on Enlightenment and 1945-Present.

- Maslin, Rabbi Simeon J. What We Believe... What We Do A Pocket Guide for Reform Jews. UAHC Press: New York, 1993.

This concise pamphlet describes the Reform approach to “Sacred Times, The Journey of Life, and Daily Life.” It is very useful in explaining holiday, life cycle, and other issues to new learners. This curriculum guide uses the section on

social justice.

- Meyer, Michael A. and W. Gunther Plaut. The Reform Judaism Reader. UAHC Press: New York, 2001.

This book is an anthology of essential North American Reform Documents. Parts of it are utilized throughout this curriculum guide. The original language of some of the documents can be tricky for this age. The teacher can easily skim through the documents and highlight the essential sentences (This is provided in this curriculum guide). It is a must have for the teacher.

- Segal, Abraham. One People, A Study in Comparative Judaism. UAHC Press: New York, 1982.

This book modeled around the value of Klal Yisrael points to the real similarities and differences between Jewish denominations. It is very useful in breaking down stereotypes. It is provided as a teacher resource.

- Washofsky, Mark. Jewish Living. UAHC Press, New York, 2001.

This book is an excellent resource for learning the basics of Reform Judaism.

This curriculum guide uses many excerpts from this book. This is a must have for the teacher.

- Websites: This curriculum guide uses many resources found on the internet.

Everything needed is provided in this curriculum guide in hard copy, however the teacher and students should be encouraged to explore Reform Judaism on the web.

The main sources of information can be found through the numerous links available at www.rj.org