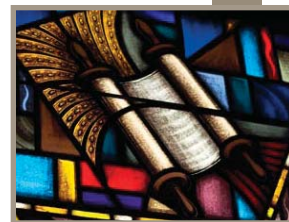


The Reform Advocate

Volume III, Number 2: Summer 2011

THE SOCIETY FOR
CLASSICAL
REFORM
JUDAISM

Renewing the Heritage
of American Liberal Judaism
for the 21st Century



SCRJ Rabbis Nadia Siritsky, Jacques Cukierkorn and Howard Berman address the Opening Session of the HUC Institute on May 16, 2011

FIRST ANNUAL SOCIETY INSTITUTE AT HEBREW UNION COLLEGE A ROUSING SUCCESS!

As part of the new partnership between the Society for Classical Reform Judaism and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Reform Movement's rabbinic seminary and institution of higher learning, a number of major new initiatives have been launched over the past few months.

In November 2010, following a year of planning discussions between the Society and the HUC administration and faculty, this new program was launched with the support of the Edward and Wilhelmina Ackerman Foundation of Dallas, Texas. An initial \$500,000 grant was awarded to the Cincinnati campus to provide for a broad program of student scholarships and programs to enable the students to encounter and experience the Classical Reform tradition as a resource for their own personal spiritual development and their emerging visions of their rabbinates. In addition to financial aid grants to every student, a Prize Essay program was inaugurated this Spring, which attracted six participants who submitted significant works of research and reflection integrating the history and principles of the Reform heritage with their own academic interests and class work. A selection of these papers follows in this issue of *The Reform Advocate*.

On May 16-18, the first annual SCRJ Institute was held at the College – an intensive series of lectures, discussion forums, and worship experiences for the HUC-JIR community. Beginning with the National Board Meeting of the Society on the Cincinnati campus on May 15, the inaugural SCRJ Institute was an exciting and indeed historic highlight of the new partnership between the Society and the College. The presence of a significant representation from the SCRJ Board was an important element in the program. This gathering at the symbolic center of our Movement, complete with a pilgrimage to the historic Plum Street Temple, was an inspiring setting for our deliberations. Even more significantly, the personal interactions of our leadership with the rabbinic students and HUC faculty were a critical element in the building of collegial and mentoring relationships that we believe are at the core of our vision.



SCRJ Board Members at the historic Plum Street Temple, Cincinnati

The Institute surpassed our fondest hopes and dreams in making an impact on the College beyond the important groundwork we had laid with the scholarships that each student received from the Ackerman grant. We are deeply gratified by the energetic involvement of the administration and faculty in planning all the details of this broad and ambitious three-day event. Their official welcome and hospitality was genuinely warm and gracious. However the major criteria of success was the participation of the students themselves in our various discussion forums, our worship service and the highlight of the Institute - the presentations by the six students who participated in our Prize Essay program. Over the two days, 15 students, a significant representation of the student body currently in residence at the Cincinnati campus, attended the Institute, for which elective credit was offered. Eleven faculty members also took part in the various events. All expressed deep appreciation and interest in our message. For many of the students, it was their very first exposure to the Classical Reform tradition in any meaningful way - for some it was clearly a revelation of a particular perspective of Jewish faith, identity and practice that they personally resonated to and eagerly identified with. The six student presentations of their essays, reflecting both serious academic research and personal spiritual reflection, were clearly the culmination of the event. The range of themes and subjects, and the conscientious integration of the Society's principles in each project, was a powerful demonstration by these students to their peers that the Classical Reform position is a vital and valid voice in contemporary Reform Judaism, and a genuine option for their own rabbinic growth.

A moment of particular significance was our service in the College Chapel - the first ever in that setting using the Union Prayer Book-Sinai Edition, and probably the first genuinely Classical Reform service in that space in many years. Cantor Yvon F. Shore, the Director of Liturgical Arts, led a varied repertoire of historic music, accompanied by piano. So many of the students expressed their happy surprise at how beautiful and personally inspirational they found this

service. A full shelf of the Union Prayer Books now graces the entry to the Chapel, and our contemporary Classical Reform liturgy will now become one of the regular options for student-led services. In addition, in response to a particular need of the Chapel, the Society will be presenting the College with a new state-of-the-art organ so that our students will be able to experience the full richness of both the historic Reform musical repertoire as well as the new choral and organ compositions we are supporting.

On the day after the Institute, Rabbi Berman met with a broad representation of the faculty and was received with the same warmth and enthusiasm that had pervaded the entire program. Many of the professors have already been Society supporters. Others were connecting for the first time. Every one of them was deeply impressed by the Institute's academic quality and its impact on the students. Many of them are already incorporating references of Reform history and principles, as well as the specific Classical Reform perspectives, in their teaching of their various subjects, particularly so this past year, as part of our agreement. From the beginning of our planning, the

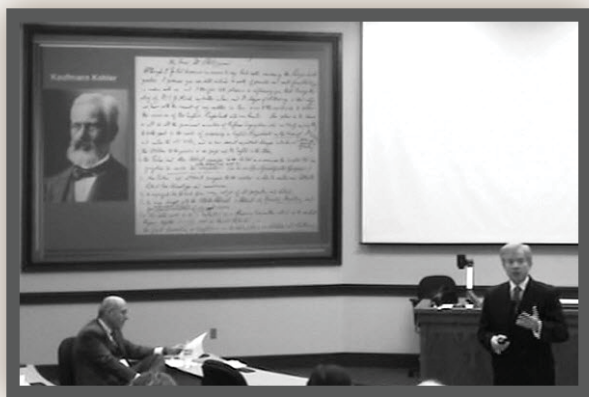
Society has strongly expressed its respect for the academic freedom and prerogatives of the faculty on all academic matters, and consequently, this collegial cooperation is particularly gratifying.

We will begin planning the dates for the next Institute in the Spring of 2012, as well as separate visits and programs for this coming fall. **And, in another major development, we have initiated discussions with the Jerusalem campus of HUC to initiate programs there in the Spring of 2012. This would enable the Society to begin sharing its message with the First Year Rabbinic Class, which is in residence in Israel at the outset of their studies, as well as enable us to work with Israeli students in helping them to understand their place in the broader context of the history of Reform Judaism, and to develop a distinctive, indigenous understanding of Classical Reform principles and practice.**



The Scheuer Chapel at the Cincinnati campus

We want to express our sincere appreciation to the President of the College, Dr. David Ellenson, for his support, and to Dean Kenneth Ehrlich, Rabbinic Department Director Kenneth Kanter, and Professors Richard Sarason and Gary Zola for their great efforts in visioning and planning this great effort... and for the enthusiasm and interest of the students who ultimately made this inaugural program such a resounding success!



Dr. Gary Zola of the American Jewish Archives lectures on Reform history at the Institute

Society Presents New Organ to HUC Chapel in Cincinnati

We are also happy to announce that on behalf of the Society, the Edward and Wilhelmina Ackerman Foundation has made a gift of \$30,000 to the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College for the purchase of a new organ for the Scheuer Chapel. The continued use of the organ in Reform worship, both to preserve the historic repertoire of the Classical Reform tradition, as well as to inspire contemporary creativity in the composition of new liturgical music of a high artistic order, are major priorities of the SCRJ. We believe that our rabbinic students should be familiar and conversant with both of these dimensions of the organ's role as a valuable resource for synagogue life... beginning with their worship experiences at the College.

An essential part of this latest gift to HUC will be a mutual understanding that the instrument would

be used on a regular basis during Daily Services in the Chapel, and that a thorough orientation to all students on the historic role and the continuing potential of the organ in Reform Judaism will be incorporated into the current teaching of liturgical arts. We anticipate that a Dedicatory Service to introduce this new resource to the College community will be planned for some time in the fall, in conjunction with one of Rabbi Berman's scheduled visits to the Cincinnati campus.

We have received the following message from HUC President Dr. David Ellenson:

"Let me express my deepest thanks to the Society for Classical Reform Judaism for the very generous gift to the Cincinnati campus of a new organ for the Scheuer Chapel. I am delighted by this kind and thoughtful gift, and know that the new organ will play a crucial role in helping present and future generations of rabbinical students enhance their worship experience – both for themselves and for the congregants they will one day inspire and lead. I am greatly appreciative of this valuable resource that will enrich and deepen both their prayer and their education. For this gift, and the ongoing relationship that exists between the Society and the College, I am most grateful..."

From Cantor Yvon F. Shore, the Director of Liturgical Arts and Music:

"Words cannot express the tremendous feeling this generous gift has evoked. I am so touched and honored by the Society's actions. A quality instrument would be utilized every Shabbat we have services, on programming during the academic year, weekday worship, electives, outreach concerts, and Mifgash [HUC's annual national workshop for temple musicians]. Honestly, the list is exhaustive!"

This is such a generous gift. The opportunity to have an actual functioning organ opens the path to educate our students towards a vibrant, living and breathing heritage.

Thank you for taking action towards such a worthy end..."

We are very excited to add this gift to our ongoing support and the broadening of our partnership. It is a profoundly symbolic statement of the full integration of Classical Reform values in the life of the College, and in the studies of a new generation of rabbis.

Meet the Leadership of The Society

In this issue of the Advocate, we continue our introductions of the staff and lay leadership of the SCRJ.

Rabbi Howard A. Berman

Executive Director

Rabbi Howard A. Berman is the Executive Director of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism. He is also the Founding Rabbi of Boston Jewish Spirit, a contemporary Classical Reform congregation in the heart of Boston, now celebrating its seventh anniversary. He also continues to serve as Rabbi Emeritus of Chicago Sinai Congregation, which he led as Senior Rabbi from 1982-2002.

He was born in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, where he received his early religious and general education. After attaining his undergraduate degree in European History from the University of London, England, he studied for the Rabbinat at the Leo Baeck College in London, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where he was ordained in 1974. He has also pursued graduate studies in American Religious History at the University of Chicago Divinity School and the Chicago Theological Seminary, and studied Architectural History at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. In 1999 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.



As a student, Rabbi Berman served Reform Congregations in London and Brussels, as well as in Baltimore; Petoskey, Michigan; and Rapid City, South Dakota. He also served as a Youth Group Advisor for the World Union of Progressive Judaism in Amsterdam, and as Assistant Dean of Admissions for the Hebrew Union College. After his ordination, Rabbi Berman was appointed Assistant Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, New York City, where he served for five years. From 1979-1981, he was Associate Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel, West Hartford, Connecticut. Rabbi Berman has been active in various religious and civic organizations both locally and nationally. In 1986, he was appointed by the late Mayor Harold

Washington to the Chicago Peace Conversion Commission, charged with drafting and enforcing the city's Nuclear Free Zone Ordinance. From 1989-1996, he served on the faculty of the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, and has also served on the Social Action Committee of the Chicago Board of Rabbis and the AIDS Pastoral Committee of the Council of Religious Leaders in Chicago. From 1992-1996, Rabbi Berman represented the Chicago Jewish community on the Metropolitan Task Force of the Council for the World Parliament of Religions, and served on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Chicago from 1994-1996. In addition, he was an annual contributor to the World Book Encyclopedia Year Book as editor of its articles on Judaism from 1985-1995.

As part of the partnership between Boston Jewish Spirit and the city's historic Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Rabbi Berman serves as "Rabbi in Residence" of the parish, preaching monthly at Sunday Morning Worship. He is also the Coordinator of Boston's annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service.

Rabbi Berman's avocational interests include the study of American history, architectural history and the collecting of contemporary art and rare books. He lectures widely on New England history, particularly the Hebrew influences on the Mayflower Pilgrims, and also serves as production consultant to museums, theatre companies and orchestras in Boston on Jewish themes and issues in art, drama and music.

Rabbi Devon Lerner

Joins SCRJ Staff

The Society for Classical Reform Judaism is pleased to announce the appointment of Rabbi Devon Lerner as



its new Program Coordinator, assisting Executive Director Rabbi Howard Berman, effective June 15.

Rabbi Lerner, a native of Kansas City, is a graduate of the University of Texas and Boston University, and was

ordained at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, in 1979. She has served congregations in Atlanta (The Temple), Richmond VA, and Lexington, MA, prior to focusing her rabbinate on pastoral counseling, with a special focus on psychotherapy; elder services advocacy, and extensive support for interfaith families. She has also been involved in broader community service, particularly in building interfaith religious coalitions addressing major social concerns.

Rabbi Lerner is the author of *Celebrating Interfaith Marriages*, a guidebook for couples to explore their shared spiritual journey, and a valued resource for clergy. This widely used work is considered the standard on this subject, and is now published by Henry Holt/Macmillan.

She is an active member of Boston Jewish Spirit, and is deeply committed to its Classical Reform worship and mission. Rabbi Lerner states “I am very excited about the growth of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism and about opportunity to advance its mission. Every principle of the SCRJ speaks to me. Each affirms and names what I feel and believe it means to be Jewish. In addition to my rabbinic and community service experience, I can also contribute technical and social networking skills to introduce, educate and welcome many more Jewish and unaffiliated seekers to this old and yet new form of Judaism. I know that Classical Reform Judaism will resonate with many disillusioned Jews and spiritual seekers in our country.”

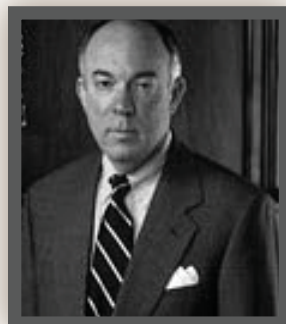
We also take this opportunity to express the deep gratitude of the SCRJ to Rabbi Nadia Siritsky, as she transitions from her Staff position to her renewed status as a Board Member. We wish her all joy and fulfillment in her important new rabbinic position at Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation, and look forward to her continued active participation in our work.

The Society's Board of Directors

The second in an ongoing series of profiles of the leadership of the SCRJ

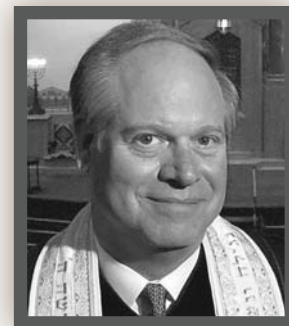
B.H. Levy, Jr., President

B.H. Levy, Jr., a descendant of the first Jews who settled in Savannah in the Colony of Georgia to found Congregation KK Mickve Israel in 1733. He is the founding President of the SCRJ Board of Directors. From 1988 until 1990 B.H. served as President of Mickve Israel. He and his wife Margie, also a Past President of Mickve Israel, have two children: Benjamin, who is physician at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and Elizabeth, who is a health education specialist with Given Imaging in Atlanta. Since 1979 B.H. has been a partner with the Savannah law firm of Bouhan, Williams & Levy in Savannah.



Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn, D.MIN. D.D

Rabbi Cohn, Senior Rabbi of New Orleans' historic Congregation Temple Sinai, received his Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of Cincinnati in 1970, his Master of Hebrew letters degree and rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1974. He received his Doctor of Ministry degree from the St. Paul School of Theology in 1984.

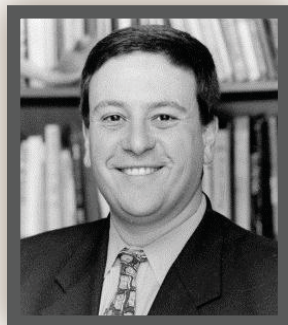


He is President of the Southwest Association of Reform Rabbis. Rabbi Cohn was appointed by the Mayor of New Orleans to Chair the New Orleans Holocaust Memorial Project. Dr. Cohn served as founding Chairman of the City Human Relations Committee and is an active leader in the Jewish and larger communities of the New Orleans metropolitan region. The Rabbi served as ethics consultant for MSNBC and appeared on “The Ethical Edge.” Under Rabbi Cohn's leadership Temple Sinai has become the Jewish address for interfaith married families, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender and Bi-Sexual Jews, Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous.

Rabbi Cohn was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He is married to the former Andrea Levy and they have two daughters, Jennifer and Debra and a grandson, Maxwell Cohn Kesselheim.

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, Vice President

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He earned a BA in Psychology from Universidade de Sao Marcos, a M.H.L. from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio as well as rabbinical ordination from that same institution in 1994. His rabbinic thesis was “*Retornando - Coming Back: a Historical Perspective and Description of the Marrano Communities of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil.*” Rabbi Cukierkorn was one of the founders of *Kulanu*, an organization that reaches out to lost and dispersed Jewish communities; in that capacity he has led missions to Uganda and Brazil. Rabbi Cukierkorn is the Vice-President for the Society for Classical Reform Judaism, he is also a member of the Computer Technology and the Rabbinic committee as well as a member of the World Jewry Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.



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Rabbi Cukierkorn is the author of *HaMadrij*, a basic guide to Judaism in Spanish and an English version *Accessible Judaism: A Concise Guide*. Rabbi Cukierkorn together with Bill Tammeus has recently written a book entitled *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust*. The book tells remarkable and uplifting stories of Jews in Poland who survived the Holocaust with help from non-Jews. In most cases, these stories are based on interviews – in the United States and in Poland – both with survivors and with members of the families who helped them survive.

Currently Rabbi Cukierkorn serves as spiritual leader of the newly founded Temple Israel in Kansas City, Missouri, and has also served as President of the Greater Kansas City Board of Rabbis. Rabbi Cukierkorn is married to Denisse, a school psychologist, and they have two daughters: Raquel and Dahlia, they reside in Overland Park, Kansas.

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Philip D. Hoffman

Philip D. Hoffman of Chicago has been a Classical Reform Jew for 55 years and is married to Eileen Hoffman whose family have been Classical Reform Jews in the United States for four generations. Hoffman has been an active member of Temple Emanuel, Dallas, Temple Jeremiah, Northfield, IL, and Chicago Sinai Congregation.



His Classical Reform Rabbis were Levi Olan, Allan Tarshish and Howard Berman. Hoffman served on the Board of Chicago Sinai for 12 years and was Secretary of the congregation for six of those years. He is presently on the 150th Anniversary and Prayer Book and Music Committees. He served as chairman of the committee that revised the Union Prayer Book, Sinai Edition, published in 2000.

2011 Society Prize Essays by Students of Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion

The following papers are the first installment of our publication of the winning entries for the inaugural Prize Essays of the SCRJ partnership with our Movement's rabbinic seminary, Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion, in Cincinnati. Additional essays will appear in the next issue of the Advocate.

Reflections on Parashat Vayishlach (Genesis 35)

Maura H. Linzer (Class of 2012)

“We affirm a broad, inclusive pluralism, which reflects the full diversity within today's changing Jewish community and welcome all those who share our ideals.”¹

Writing my fourth year sermon for Hebrew Union College on the weekly Torah reading *Parashat Vayishlach*, the story of the conflict between Jacob and Esau in Genesis, Chapter 35, I decided to focus on

the pressing need of the Jewish community to work together to build a pluralistic community, based upon mutual respect and understanding. My sermon looked at the strained brotherly relations between the biblical twins.

Having entered into a non-aggression pact with Laban, Jacob sets out to return home. Along the way, Jacob's conscience begins to trouble him. He reflects back on his relationship with his brother, Esau. He recalls Esau's animosity toward him after he stole Esau's birthright and his father's blessing. As a precaution, Jacob decides to send messengers ahead of him, to alert his brother Esau of his impending return. Jacob instructs the messengers to tell Esau that until now he had been with Laban and that he was finally coming home. The messengers do as they are told and, reporting back to Jacob, they ominously inform him that Esau was coming to meet him in the company of 400 hundred men. According to a *midrash*, Esau still had hate in his heart. The text informs us that Jacob was greatly frightened and anxious. He anticipates the worst. Two siblings – twins – who possess an identical ancestry, and it appears as though they have become bitter enemies who may never again be able to find common ground.

For me, the strained relations between the brothers (Jacob and Esau) were symbolic of the tenuous relationships that exist today between various Jewish movements and within the Reform movement. Often, discussions surrounding Jewish Pluralism and *K'lal Yisrael* deal only with interdenominational tension, but such animosity within our own movement, unfortunately, are commonplace as well. Adopted in February 2008, the principles of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism acknowledge the need for a response to these divisions within the Jewish community through the creation of “a broad, inclusive pluralism, which reflects the full diversity within today's changing Jewish community and welcome all those who share our ideals.”² This openness to pluralism has its antecedents in the early leadership of the Reform movement.

Maximilian Heller, one of the pillars of early Classical Reform, not only ideologically believed in the tenets of Jewish pluralism but he lived his life accord-

ingly. “As a member of the second ordination class of the Hebrew Union College (1884), and as one of the early presidents of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Heller was a respected and influential [leader] in the early days of the Reform movement in America.”³ Historian Gary Zola notes that “Heller never disdained those who were attached to a more traditional observance of Judaism. He would celebrate the second day of Jewish holy days (which were not observed in the Reform movement) by attending services in an Orthodox synagogue. He was seen by colleagues as a man who warmly regarded tradition and traditional Jews.”⁴ Actualizing his ideology of outreach and inclusion, Heller became an ardent defender of the Russian Jewry. By 1897, Heller was implementing the view of his mentor, Reform pioneer Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal, who believed that “Russian Jews . . . [were not] a threat to the assimilated, but a spark to rekindle much of the religious flame beginning to sputter . . .”⁵ In this way, Heller has modeled for contemporary Reform how to internalize pluralistic values and how to live them on a daily basis. How do we as modern Reform Jews internalize and implement our love of pluralism, as suggested by the principles of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism, and extend our hand of fellowship toward our Jewish brothers and sisters? Classical Reform values provide rabbinic and lay leadership with a *modus operandi*.

The first essential component is about creating a meaningful mode of communication. One of the centerpieces of Classical Reform Judaism is the creation of a worship experience that is accessible for congregants in English. The ideological plank upon which this precept rests is the notion that shared understanding facilitates meaning and builds relationships. The same is true of our pluralistic relationships. We need to build dialogue upon a foundation of mutual understanding, only gained by a comprehension of one another's differing beliefs and practices without judgment. This mutual dialogue of acceptance is essential for building bridges with our Jewish brothers and sisters.

The next tenet of Classical Reform Judaism deals with personal autonomy and the ethical obligations that require us to serve our community. Although Classical Reform Judaism speaks about our universal obligation to better the area in which we live, this is not to the exclusion of improving our local Jewish

community. We might use such a moral imperative as an opportunity to collaborate with other Jews locally to volunteer with another synagogue outside of the Reform movement on an issue that is central to all Jews, such as the local Jewish home for the aged. Additionally, Classical Reform Judaism takes great pride in its American heritage and the pluralism that this environment offers and the freedom that America ensures. American pride is a shared experience for American Jews. Pride in our shared heritage as American Jews can serve as a rallying point for all Jews, regardless of religious predilection. For instance, Jews across denominational lines can collaborate to lobby for causes central to the entire community, such as support of the State of Israel and advocacy for issues such as Darfur. In addition, just as shared American values and experience can provide common ground for interdenominational dialogue among the various Jewish denominations, so too can the Reform movement's shared heritage in Classical Reform Judaism lay the foundation for fellowship and mutual respect between Reform Jews.

Finally, Classical Reform Judaism encourages active outreach for interfaith families. We, as Reform Jews, realize the importance of creating a warm and welcoming environment for those interfaith families that choose to raise their children as Jews. We do this by reaching out to interfaith families, engaging the entire family in Jewish life, and creating a space where mixed families are welcomed. Such outreach involves a conscious, continual effort to be compassionate, deliberate, and open. The same skill set is necessary to create a place where Jews of differing religious traditions and practices would also feel welcome. We need to consciously reach out to our coreligionists, be compassionate about areas where our own beliefs depart from theirs, and open to the possibility that others experience their Judaism in a way that is different from ours. We as a Reform community can take what we have learned about interfaith outreach and try to re-appropriate its lessons to build enduring bridges of understanding within the Jewish community.

By broadening the core values of Classical Reform Judaism, we can learn how to effectively live pluralistic values in our own communities. In this way, we will help to affirm the broad, inclusive pluralism, which is reflected in today's dynamic Jewish community. Building real bridges of understanding will not

be easy. Yet each one of us will come to a point in the road when we have to decide whether we want to go out and meet our brothers and sisters or whether we want to turn and go in the opposite direction. Our *parasha*, *Vayishlach*, reminds us that despite their many differences and their past conflicts, the Bible's famous twins Jacob and Esau go forward to meet. Neither one knew how the other would receive him. Yet the text tells us that Esau and Jacob embraced, Esau kissed Jacob and together they wept. Rashi says that this kiss was a tender kiss from the heart. Other commentators claim that Jacob wept because Esau bit him. In truth, both outcomes are real possibilities when we take risks in life. Like Esau and Jacob's embrace, our path toward a spirit of true Jewish pluralism and religious respect will bring us moments of embrace and hurtful encounters. Yet we must go forward toward our fellow Jews. Jacob and Esau could have avoided one another. In many ways, avoidance would have been the easier path, but they came forward with the courage to face their past and future differences because ultimately, when all was said and done, they were brothers.

Let us have the courage to follow their example. Let us find ways to meet and embrace those who do not share our religious outlook. Let us draw strength and courage in the knowledge that only by coming together can we hope to fulfill the Covenant we all cherish. Let us be *B'nai Ya'akov*, true inheritors of Jacob's namesake, who muster the courage we need to travel on our sacred path as self-respecting yet mutually accepting members of one Jewish family.

¹ The Principles of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism, <http://www.renewreform.org/principles.php>

² Ibid.

³ Gary P. Zola, "Reform Judaism's Pioneer Zionist: Maximilian Heller," *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1983-June 1984): 376.

⁴ Ibid, 376-377.

⁵ Bobbie Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1997), 85.

Universalism vs. Particularism: An Historic Debate Still With Us

Ari Lorge (Class of 2013)

In 1949 Professor Lowell McCoy became the first non-Jewish member of the faculty of Hebrew Union College. McCoy was both a non-Jew as well as an ordained minister. McCoy taught speech at Hebrew Union College from 1949 until his retirement in 2000. He remains the only non-Jewish professor to have served as a full time instructor at the College.

During the first semester of this year, I engaged in a research project focusing on the life and career of Professor McCoy. While gathering research I conducted a personal interview of Professor McCoy. During that interview I asked if he felt any resistance from students or faculty because he was not Jewish. He replied that he was welcomed with open arms and always felt embraced by his colleagues and pupils. That being said, when asked regarding the shift of the “movement toward a more traditional position, McCoy stated that he felt this hurt the Reform movement. In his mind not only was the movement sacrificing the values of rationality and reason, but even more worrisome, it was isolating itself from its commitment to universalism.¹

McCoy believes the shift away from universalism and towards particularism was, and continues to be, a problematic shift. According to McCoy, the Reform movement’s original commitment to universalism in its mission, philosophy, and ideology allowed the movement to build bridges between all people and religions. McCoy stated that all religions should serve to connect human beings to one another and work toward the betterment of humanity.² Universal messages and outlooks serve this goal, while particularistic viewpoints keep people distant and apart from one another. Additionally, McCoy feels that a universal ideology allows for Reform Jews to accept the value inherent in other faith traditions. This helps ally its members with other faiths that seek to together create a better more moral world.³ This is a viewpoint shared by The Society for Classical Reform Judaism. One can see it reflected in the Society’s Principles adopted in 2008:

“We believe that Judaism is a religious faith with a universal message for all people... Our most fervent hopes and prayers are for a strong, creative and spiritually renewed American Jewish community and for freedom and security for Jews everywhere as we fulfill our historic mission of working together with all of God’s people to build a world of justice, love and peace.”⁴

This spirit of universalism can also be seen in the original Pittsburgh Platform of 1885,

“We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the Infinite, and in every mode, source or book of revelation, held sacred by any religious system, the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man... 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.”⁵

Here too one can see the devotion of the shapers of the original Platform to a Universal message that not only sees an inherent value in other faith traditions, but also a belief that they can spread truth. Truth is not something particular to Judaism. Other faiths can help bring about a better world.

Professor McCoy felt a shift in the Reform movement over the course of his time at Hebrew Union College. He perceived a move away from the universal towards a focus on the particularistic within Judaism. This shift is reflected in the differences between the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform and the 1999 Pittsburgh Platform of the CCAR. The first place this shift can be noted is in the statement, “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.”⁶ Here one can see a departure from the 1885 Platform that stated, “in every mode, source or book of revelation, held sacred by any religious system, the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man.”⁷ In stark contrast to the 1885 Platform, the 1999 Platform speaks of the truth in our revealed Torah, but is silent about any truth inherent in the traditions of other religions.

Later in the 1999 Platform one reads, “*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.*”⁸ While this statement continues the tradition of seeking to work with other religious traditions to repair the world, it does not affirm that there are truths in other religious traditions and their missions. Unlike the 1885 Platform which stated, “*Christianity and Islam, being daughter religions of Judaism, we appreciate their providential mission to aid in the spreading of monotheistic and moral truth...*”⁹ The 1999 Platform makes no such admission of moral truth or legitimate position. Similar to the sections of the Platform regarding the scripture of other faiths, the 1999 Platform is silent. Within that silence one notices the shift away from universalism.

Looking at how the two Platforms define Judaism also speaks to the shift away from universalism. The 1885 Platform states, “*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.*”¹⁰ Here one understands that Judaism is the highest of many God-ideas. There are others, which have legitimate relationships with God and which teach moral truths as well. The 1999 Platform, on the other hand, states, “*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.*”¹¹ Here, no other religions have a place or true understanding of the God-idea. Judaism is not in the minds of the writers of the Platform the best of many legitimate options, but rather the only option that has any true relation to God or conception of God’s role in the world. McCoy perceived this shift by observing changes in the practice of students and faculty as well as observing the discourse of the Reform movement. This shift worried him since he, a Christian with a liberal universalist outlook, felt that the shift created divisions between those of similar religious outlooks who could work together to create a better world.¹²

While researching the career of Professor McCoy I searched for instances when other non-Jewish faculty may have taught at the college. I stumbled upon a document that in many ways was a microcosm of the tension within our movement between universalist and particularist ideals. In 1983, Hebrew Union College was looking for a new head of the Graduate School. One of the individuals who was being

considered for the job was Dr. James A Sanders. Dr. Sanders had earned his doctorate at Hebrew Union College. During his time as a student he earned top marks and was often listed first among his peers. However, Dr. Sanders was not Jewish. Fearing that a non-Jew would be hired, several members of the faculty gathered together and wrote a memo to HUC President Alfred Gottschalk. The title of the memo was, “*Why the Dean of the Graduate School Must Be Jewish.*” In the memo these faculty list twelve arguments for why a non-Jew could not serve as the head of the Graduate School. Some of the arguments included in the memo were that the College already had one non-Jewish member of the faculty and administration, Professor Lowell McCoy, and that a second non-Jewish faculty member would signify, what was in their mind, a troubling trend. Additionally, they claimed that the greater Reform community around the country would object to more than one non-Jewish faculty member of the College. Moreover, they also argued that it would be inappropriate for a Christian to teach a fundamental course, like Bible in the case of Dr. Sanders, to rabbinical students.¹³

One professor, Dr. Matitياهو Tsevat, wrote a memo in response. He stated at the outset that he spent five years living as a young adult in Nazi Germany, and that he never thought that he would one day find himself part of a Jewish enterprise which advocated the notion of becoming *Christenrein* (free of Christians). Professor Tsevat went on to say that the Graduate School of HUC-JIR is an institution charged with promoting objective and basic scientific study: “*To exclude persons from research, teaching, or administration irrespective of their scientific or academic qualifications or standards and only because they are members of this or that group is as inimical to science as is to exclude areas, materials, aims or methods of research irrespective of their scientific suitability and standards.*” In short, Tsevat argued that dismissing the candidacy of an individual based on their religion runs contrary to the basic principles of the Graduate School, Hebrew Union College, and moreover to Tsevat’s conception of Judaism.¹⁴

These two memos clearly reflect the tension and continued debate which rages within our movement. Are we committed to universalism or particularism? One position was that non-Jewish scholars should be welcomed onto the faculty of a Jewish seminary and graduate school because of their erudition and the value of learning from those of other faiths backgrounds. The second position was that Hebrew Union College should exclusively employ Jewish scholars because rabbinical students must be trained by Jewish scholars and a Jewish institution is only Jewish if it is comprised of Jews. Are we saying as a matter of policy that qualified non-Jewish scholars should not be seriously considered for academic positions?

It is clear that based upon the principles outlined in the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform there was a great acceptance of other faiths and a large commitment to universalist beliefs. Today, living in the age of the 1999 Pittsburgh Platform, the movement is shifting toward tradition and particularism. Since Professor McCoy's retirement there have been no other appointments of non-Jews to the faculty of the Hebrew Union College. It is important for us as a movement to consider what this shift away from universalism means for the future of our relations with other faith traditions. There is nothing dangerous about celebrating who we are as Jews. However, when we do so by delegitimizing other faith traditions, we distance ourselves from them, setting up needless barriers. In a world where the most audible religious voices are fundamentalist, it would be wise to reach out to other liberal movements and voices, to build upon our commonalities, and work together to create a world in which we would all wish to live. When discussing the benefit of having instructors of diverse faith backgrounds in an educational institution Professor McCoy stated,

"It seems to me there should be a continuing growth in relationships [between religions] through the years and it pains me when that growth is diminished or does not occur. Because, at least for me, the heart of religion is in finding that which is best for humanity and assisting ... It is a goal. I do not know that we'll ever reach it, but it is a goal."¹⁵

This was the message of Professor Lowell McCoy and it is in the spirit of the values upon which our movement was founded. May we find that our work brings us closer to achieving the vision of our founders and the goal Professor McCoy.

¹McCoy, Lowell G. Oral History Interview November 16, 2010. DVD. From The American Jewish Archives. CD-796.

²McCoy, Lowell G. Religious Worldview of Professor Lowell McCoy: Luncheon Forum With Students February 26, 1992. From the American Jewish Archives. C-4588.

³McCoy, Lowell G. Religious Worldview of Professor Lowell McCoy: Luncheon Forum With Students February 26, 1992. From the American Jewish Archives. C-4588

⁴"The Principles of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism," The Society for Classical Reform Judaism, accessed March 23, 2011, <http://renewreform.org/principles.php>.

⁵"The Pittsburgh Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=39&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656.

⁶"A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism: Adopted in Pittsburgh – 1999," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=44&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656.

⁷"The Pittsburgh Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011.

⁸"A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism: Adopted in Pittsburgh – 1999," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011.

⁹"The Pittsburgh Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011.

¹⁰"The Pittsburgh Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011.

¹¹"A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism: Adopted in Pittsburgh – 1999," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed March 24, 2011.

¹²McCoy, Lowell G. Oral History Interview November 16, 2010. DVD. From The American Jewish Archives. CD-796.

¹³Correspondence File, Memorandum to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion faculty members concerning Dr. Robert L. Katz's Informal Memo to President Gottschalk, Cincinnati, Ohio. From the American Jewish Archives. F 7, 1984.

¹⁴Correspondence File, Memorandum to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion faculty members concerning Dr. Robert L. Katz's Informal Memo to President Gottschalk, Cincinnati, Ohio. From the American Jewish Archives. F 7, 1984.

¹⁵McCoy, Lowell G. Oral History Interview November 16, 2010. DVD. From The American Jewish Archives. CD-796.

The Union Prayer Book: A Treasury of Reform Tradition *Joshua C. Leighton (Class of 2011)*

The Society for Classical Reform Judaism is, at its heart, an organization that seeks to preserve and perpetuate the traditions established during the early period of Reform in America. The goal is not to see that era as a time frozen in history, but rather as a timeless and vibrant expression of Jewish religious commitment. In addition to upholding the values of the universal "Mission of Israel," pluralism, and mod-

ern rational thought, the Society also cherishes the worship style that was, and still is, distinctly characteristic of Classical Reform Judaism.

A “substantial revision” of the more traditional forms of prayer, Classical Reform espoused a style that is participatory, welcoming, and meaningful to all. In order to achieve these goals, the worship services feature English translations and thematic readings based on the Hebrew liturgy, beautiful renditions of the Hebrew text in song or spoken word, and a profound, thought provoking sermon. The service, its readings, songs, and preaching was held to the highest standards in order to be aesthetically pleasing and solemn. These various qualities of the Classical Reform worship service are encapsulated in the prayer book that has become synonymous with Classical Reform, the *Union Prayer Book*. An historic liturgy of the Reform Movement, the *Union Prayer Book* provides a window into the artistic and thematic vision of the early reformers, while still being relevant in the context of modern life.

Within the landscape of Reform/Liberal/Progressive Judaism today, there are a myriad of *siddurim* available for use in prayer and in study. In our present day, the majority of the authorized prayer books of the different unions and organizations reflect our modern sensibilities of gender neutrality, egalitarianism, pro-Zionism, post-Holocaust theology, etc. The liturgies, the translations, and even the physical size of the books themselves all reflect decades of development. In a world of *Mishkan Tefilah*, *HaAvodah Shebalev*, and their contemporary counterparts, the prayer books of the past are increasingly viewed as distant, forgotten, and irrelevant. Each organizational prayer book, however, relies on a combination of factors that lead to its development. These factors include, but are not limited to: drawing from previous organizational prayer books, drawing from like-minded prayer books (contemporary and historical), and a certain degree of innovation. Therefore, no prayer book ever truly becomes irrelevant (especially those developed by committee), because each serves as a snapshot of the times in which they were created. A “union” prayer book becomes a treasury of traditions and interpretations for the generation it serves, and for future generations.

The *Union Prayer Book* (UPB), the first, successful, Reform liturgy compiled by and for a broad spectrum

of congregations, is such a treasury. In 1890 Isaac Mayer Wise, then president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), recognized that the variety of individually produced prayer books reflected the “degree of reform, the constructive and the radical,” that spanned the congregations of the UAHC, also leading to “disunion and dissension.”¹ Wise believed that the time had come for the CCAR to become the authority on Reform worship in the United States and, as such, decided that they should produce a uniform liturgy for the movement.² The process for creating this book, he proposed, would not be that of adapting liturgies from abroad, but rather should be done “gradually and originally” by the Conference.³ Further, the overarching theological view of the movement would hold true in the book; “that Judaism is a universal religion and contains nothing contrary to it.”⁴

The eventual result of Wise’s charge was the foundation and publication of the *Union Prayer Book*. While Wise had suggested that only American liturgies be included as part of the canon of the UPB, the prayer book does indeed have various similarities to European reform prayer books. The similarities of course do not end there, but rather extend to include a wide range of elements adopted from more local publications. The result is a prayer book that reflects the history of Reform liturgies to that point, while also adding its own innovations.

Proceeding will be survey of a variety of ways in which the UPB serves as a treasury of the great Reform traditions. The survey will focus primarily on the liturgy for the most common occasions of worship, Shabbat and weekdays (Sunday). The study will yield a greater appreciation for how the UPB was developed, how it serves as a treasury of Reform traditions, and also how it is, indeed, still relevant to Reform Jewish life.

One of the earliest prayer books of Jewish Reform is the one that was published for the Hamburg Temple in 1819. This prayer book instituted many liturgical changes and formats that were carried on by a multitude of its successors. The format of the book was to have a split page the primary service text, Hebrew or German, would be on the top section of the page, with the German translation and/or transliteration of

the Hebrew texts on the lower section of the page. This same formatting was carried over into American prayer books such as *Olat Tamid*, as well as portions of Isaac Moses' prototype for the UPB. Scattered between sections of the prayer book were also directions for when to stand or sit, as well as when to sing a hymn (GEZANG) in the vernacular. This style of "stage directions" was also included in the UPB.

Liturgically, the *Hamburg Temple Prayer Book* contained many innovations that would be influential to future prayer books. Three innovations, in particular, influenced most future reform prayer books, including UPB. The first is the wording of the *R'tzei* ("Look with favor O Lord...") benediction in the *Amidah*. The version that Hamburg created was carried through to many other publications, including *The Order of Prayer*, edited by Dr. L. Merzbacher for Temple Emanu-El in New York City, and, eventually, as the standard in the UPB.⁵ This version has continued as a standard in the *Gates of Prayer* series, and is also to be found as an alternate *R'tzei* in *Mishkan Tefilah*. Furthering the liturgical innovation, Hamburg also added the song *S'u shearim* ("Lift up your heads O ye gates...") as an introductory piece of the Torah service. Unlike many of Hamburg's liturgical changes, this one was neither rooted in Ashkenazic nor Sephardic customs. *S'u shearim* continued to be used in various European and American liturgies, and, again, eventually became standardized in the publication of UPB.

The most widespread innovation of Hamburg, however, came in the formulation of the Mourner's Kaddish. Drawing from the *hashkava* prayer, the Sephardic equivalent to *El Malei Rachamim*, ("O God, full of compassion...") Hamburg inserted a paragraph explicitly referring to death into a prayer that otherwise praised God's power. The insertion of the Aramaic *al yisrael v'al tzadikaya* ("The departed whom we now remember...") paragraph was employed by virtually all Reform prayer books from the publication of Hamburg onward. The UPB included that format of the Mourner's Kaddish, which has subsequently been removed in the modern liturgies, restoring the Mourner's Kaddish to its original formulation. The UPB serves best as a treasury of the legacy of Hamburg in its usage of the altered Mourner's Kaddish.

From England, the 1840's *Seder haTefilot: Forms of Prayer* used by the West London Synagogue also contributed in a way to the reform legacy that the UPB encapsulates. This book made dramatic the elimination of angelology in the prayers, a practice roughly common in later American Reform prayer books. Of specific note is the reduction in size of the *Kedusha*, creating the format conducive to highlighting the *Kedusha* responses as exhibited in the UPB.

Merzbacher published the first edition of his prayer book in 1855, with the second edition, revised by Samuel Adler, being published in 1860. A third edition followed shortly afterwards. One of Merzbacher's innovations, separate from the Shabbat or weekday liturgies, was the creation of a freestanding *Yizkor* memorial service. This practice was reflected in the UPB, and continues to this day in Reform congregations. Regarding the Torah service, Merzbacher removed the introductory *va'y'hi binsoa ha'aron vayo-mer moshe: kuma adonai...*, also a practice reflected in later prayer books including the UPB and its successors. When Adler made his revisions in the second edition, he used the formulation of *m'chayei hakol* ("Thou sustaineth the living...") in the *chatima* (coda) of the *G'vurot* ("Eternal is Thy power...") prayer. While this was not the preferred format of the UPB, this change is reflected in *Gates of Prayer* and *Mishkan Tefilah*. The third edition, however, reflects the changing of *go'el* (Redeemer) to *geulah* (redemption) in the *Avot* ("God of our fathers...") blessing, another change that was standardized by UPB.

One of the most influential liturgical creations of Merzbacher was his treatment of *Aleinu*. Merzbacher was one of, if not the first, to alter the formulation of *Aleinu* to present a more universalistic message. Removing the comments about singling out Israel, Merzbacher "cut and pasted" from the second paragraph to speak of God's creation of the world. This Hebrew formulation became a standard hallmark of Reform liturgy and laid the groundwork for what would become one of the most influential innovations of the UPB itself. Also characteristic and influential of Merzbacher's *Aleinu* is the labeling and identification of it as the "Adoration."

David Einhorn's *Olat Tamid* (1856), is often viewed as one of the publications most influential in the creation of the UPB. The distribution and balance of Hebrew and English in *Olat Tamid* was followed by

the UPB,⁶ although the UPB boasted slightly more Hebrew. Einhorn's formulation of the *chatima* for *G'vurot* was especially influential as it was adopted almost verbatim in the UPB. Einhorn wrote "*Baruch atah Adonai hanoteah b'tocheinu chayei olam.*" The UPB took the 'ha' off of *noteah*, yielding its *chatima*, "*Baruch atah Adonai, noteah b'tocheinu chayei olam.*" ("Praised be Thou O Lord, who hast implanted within us eternal life.") Of further Hebrew influence is Einhorn's condensed *yotzer*, which found its way, verbatim, into the UPB. Einhorn was also careful in the crafting of his liturgy so as to highlight the universal nature and Mission of Israel as being a light unto the nations. Although not taken as direct quotes, the UPB expressed the same ideas in very similar language in its English readings, as well as its Hebrew editing.

While waiting for the CCAR to publish its *Union Prayer Book*, David Philipson produced a small volume, *Services for the Sabbath and Holidays*, for K.K. Bene Israel (Rockdale Temple) in Cincinnati. His noteworthy influence on the UPB comes in his formulation of the final paragraph of the *Oleinu* (*Aleinu*):

"May the time not be far distant, O God, when thy name shall be worshipped o'er all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently hope and pray that the day will come upon which all men will invoke Thy name, corruption and evil make way for the purity of goodness, superstition no longer enslave the minds of men nor idolatry blind their eyes to the truth, all inhabitants of this globe perceive that before Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue do homage. O may all Thy children, created in Thy image, recognize that they are brethren, having one Father; then will the prejudices that still separate man from man and the religious differences that divide in hatred what should be joined in love be no more known, and all men, one in spirit, one in humanity, be united before thee.

They will altogether acknowledge Thee; Thou wilt be their all-loving Ruler, for Thine is the dominion now and forever. As Thy prophet hath said: God will be King over all the earth. God will be King forever and evermore; the day will come when God alone will be recognized and His name alone." (pp 12-13)

"May the time not be distant..." became the standard formulation and implementation of the transla-

tion of this paragraph in the UPB, and has lived as an *Aleinu* option in the later CCAR prayer books. In the first formal UPB part I, in 1895, "May the time..." appeared as follows:

"May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come upon which all men will invoke Thy name, corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness; when superstition shall no longer enslave the minds, nor idolatry blind the eyes; when all inhabitants of the earth shall perceive that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine, image, recognize that they are brethren, so that they, one in spirit, and one in fellowship, may be forever united before thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth, and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Eternal shall rule forever and aye."

In the UPB Part I Revised edition of 1924 it reads:

"May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come when all men will invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness; when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye; when all inhabitants of the earth shall perceive that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine, image, recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be for ever united before thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth, and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Eternal shall rule forever and ever."

And in the Newly Revised, 1940 edition:

"May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. Fer-

vently we pray that the day may come when all men will invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye, when all who dwell on earth shall know that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine, image, recognize that they are brethren, so that, one in spirit and one in fellowship, they may be for ever united before thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth, and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Lord will reign forever and ever.”

The later CCAR prayer books also keep this formulation and present the following readings:

“May the time not be distant, O God, when Your name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. Fervently we pray that the day may come when all shall turn to You in love, when corruption and evil shall give way to integrity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eye, when all who dwell on earth shall know that You alone are God. O may all, created in Your image, become one in spirit and one in friendship, for ever united in Your service. Then shall Your kingdom be established on earth, and the word of your Prophet fulfilled: “The Lord will reign for ever and ever.”

And:

“Let the time not be distant, O God,
When all shall turn to you in love,
When corruption and evil shall give way to integrity
and goodness,
When superstition shall no longer enslave the mind,
Nor idolatry blind the eye.
O may all created in Your image,
Become one in spirit and one in friendship,
Forever united in Your service.
Then shall Your realm be established on earth,

*And the word of Your prophet fulfilled:
Adonai will reign for ever and ever.”*

In 1892, Isaac Moses presented the CCAR with the prayer book he was working on as a prototype for the UPB. The book was published and distributed, but was not used as the final first edition of the UPB. As mentioned earlier, Moses employed the use of the Hamburg formatting for the service texts and translations thereof. He was the first to create what would become a standard, though adapted, English rendering of *Emet v’emunah*. Moses’ UPB employed the *M’chayei hakol*, *chatima* for the G’vurot. This version of the UPB was also the first to use the terminology “infinite love” for the translation of *Ahava Raba*, reminiscent of the standard translation the later UPBs would come to use.

The *Union Prayer Book* itself also contains influential innovations. As one example, the newly revised, 1940 edition, introduces the reading, “Grant us peace thy most precious gift...” for *Shalom Rav* and *Sim Shalom* that has become popular in the movement. More significant is the innovation apparent in the 1895 UPB, that of the Adoration. The Hebrew editing of *Aleinu* in Merzbacher, and carried through other prayer books, had varying English translations. The 1895 UPB was the first, however, to render it as “Let us adore...,” the, now classic, adoration. This rendering was then carried through to all of the other CCAR prayer books, in the following formulations. The original, 1895 UPB rendering reads:

“Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world: He is our God, and there is none else.

We bow our head and bend our knee and magnify the King of kings, the Holy One, the Ever-blest.”

Both the 1924 and 1940 revisions read:

“Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world: He is our God; there is none else.

We bow our head and bend our knee and magnify the King of kings, the Holy One, praised be He.”

Gates of Prayer renders it as:

“Let us adore
the ever-living God,
and render praise
unto Him
Who spread out the heavens
and established the earth,
Whose glory
is revealed in the heavens above,
and whose greatness
is manifest throughout the world.
He is our God; there is none else.

We therefore bow in awe and thanksgiving before the One who is sovereign over all, the Holy One, blessed be He.”

The gender-neutral (“Gray”) edition of *Gates of Prayer* reads:

“Let us adore the ever-living God! We render praise unto You, who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above, and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. You are our God; there is none else. We therefore bow in awe and thanksgiving before the One who is Sovereign over all, the Holy and Blessed One.”

Finally, *Mishkan Tefilah* reads:

“Let us adore the ever-living God,
and render praise unto You
who spreads out the heavens and established
the earth,
whose glory is revealed in the heavens above,
and whose greatness is manifest throughout the
world,
You are our God, there is none else.

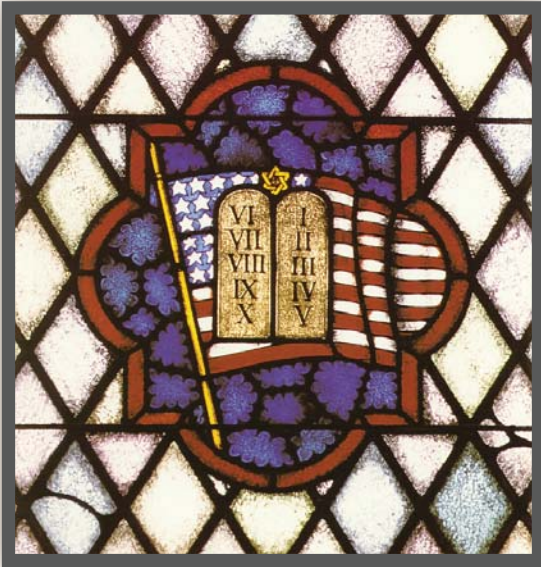
*Therefore we bow in awe and thanksgiving before the One who is Sovereign over all, the Holy and Blessed One.”*¹¹

As we traced the Adoration through the CCAR prayer books, we close our sampling of the innova-

tions and inclusions of Reform classics in the UPB. This study has certainly yielded an illustration of the impact that the UPB has had on liturgies since its publications, as well as the ways in which the UPB serves as a treasure trove of Reform traditions. The value that the Society for Classical Reform Judaism places on the *Union Prayer Book* as a paradigm for Classical Reform worship, therefore, cannot be ignored.

As we have seen, the UPB is a work characterized by its revisions of both the traditional service as well as previous iterations of Reform liturgy. The *Union Prayer Book* is a liturgy that features readings aimed toward the goal of universalism; promoting the “mission of Israel” as a people aimed at performing good deeds for the benefit of all of humankind. The continually refined artistic style of the liturgy, the accessible and relatable translations and readings, and the timeless message all contribute to the continued relevance of the *Union Prayer Book*.

As one who grew up solely with *Gates of Prayer*, and who now uses *Mishkan Tefilah* as the primary liturgy, I personally had never encountered the *Union Prayer Book*. Though I do not characterize myself as a Classical Reform Jew, I have, nevertheless, been able to incorporate the *Union Prayer Book* into my corpus of liturgical sources. As I was first introduced to the UPB during my first year of Rabbinical school, the work was as alien to me as the Israeli culture I found myself immersed in during that year. To my surprise and delight, my initial cursory readings of the UPB allowed me to realize that I was familiar with many of the English readings as they were echoed in those incorporated into *Gates of Prayer*. This year, in particular, has allowed me to become ever more familiar with the UPB. My current student pulpit in Pine Bluff, Arkansas uses the *Union Prayer Book* for services, along with the musical accompaniment of a soloist and an organ. In this setting, I am able to get a taste of the Classical Reform worship experience. More importantly, I have had the opportunity to explore the UPB in greater detail and have come to develop an even greater appreciation for the *Union Prayer Book*.



The Chaplains Memorial Window
in the HUC Chapel

As a treasury of Reform traditions, the *Union Prayer Book* serves as a model for the goal of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism. That is to say, whereas the SCRJ is aimed at preserving and perpetuating the traditions of Classical Reform, the UPB, in a sense, was aimed at continuing the literary and thematic traditions from even earlier stages in the development of the Reform movement. Retaining the readings and echoes of previous generations, the UPB allows us to interact with the past while engaging with the text through modern eyes. In this respect, the UPB, and Classical Reform Judaism for that matter, are not relics of a bygone era, but rather continually vital and viable entities that have the potential to speak to Jews in our generation and beyond.

In our day, the UPB does indeed still hold value as a resource for the study of Reform Judaism, as well as a resource for prayer. Although the language may seem outdated, the themes and readings still have relevance to our lives and to the modern state of the movement. The old saying, “you will never know where you are going, until you know where you have been,” rings true about both the UPB and the Classical Reform tradition, as much as it does about life.

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¹Silberman, Lou H., “The Union Prayer Book: A Study in Liturgical Development.” in *Retrospect and Prospect: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1889-1964*. Bertram Wallace Korn, ed. New York: CCAR, 1965. pp.46-80. (p. 46)

²ibid 47

³ibid

⁴ibid

⁵Petuchowski, Jakob J. *Prayerbook Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*. New York: WUPJ, 1968. pp. 233, 379n

⁶ibid 308

⁷*Gates of Prayer* (Blue), p. 617

⁸*Mishkan Tefilah*, p. 589

⁹p. 617. The parenthesis indicate that the line is found as a translation below Hebrew, separate from the main body of the text.

¹⁰p. 149. Note: the Hebrew text here does not follow the Merzbacher edit. Therefore, “Let us adore...” does not serve as translation, per say, of the Hebrew.

¹¹p. 587



Rabbinic Student Ari Lorge
presents his Prize Essay at the Institute



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