

A New Light Upon Zion? The Liturgy of Reform Judaism and Reform Zionism

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The goal of this paper¹ is to facilitate discussion about the role liturgy plays in fostering commitment to Israel and Zionism among American Reform Jews. The paper analyzes the attitude of *Union Prayer Book* (1940)², *Gates of Prayer* (1974)³, *Gates of Repentance* (1978)⁴, and *Mishkan T'filah* (2006)⁵ toward Israel and Zionism. Each of these is a North American *siddur* and reflects the unique ambiance of North America--especially the United States. American Reform Judaism, however, is part of a worldwide movement and progressive Jews--especially in Great Britain, on the European continent and in Israel--have created their own *siddurim*. An examination of some of these *siddurim* will provide us with a comparative perspective.

Reform Judaism is a religious movement whose central practices are public worship and *tikun olam* (social action).⁶ Since the *siddur* and the *machzor* are summations of Reform's theology and commitments, they have great potential to influence the average Reform Jew. The repetition of the liturgy, especially in the vernacular, can have a formative effect on the identity and beliefs of those who participate in public worship.

North American Reform Judaism is a Diaspora phenomenon which is heavily influenced by its American context. Arguably, ethnicity wanes in most immigrant groups in only few generations after immigration to the United States. American society values individualism over group loyalty. Christianity, the dominant American religion,

emphasizes individual faith. These factors create little or no cultural support for the Jewish concept of peoplehood.⁷

In addition, North American Jews largely feel at home in the United States and Canada because anti-Semitism is a relatively negligible factor in their daily experience. While events like the *Shoah* and the rebirth of the State of Israel have played significant roles in the formation of Jewish identity in the past, their effect has been blunted by the Jewish integration into American culture, by the lack of anti-Semitism, and the difficulties of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the realities of modern statecraft and politics. Israel, with all its fine qualities, is not the utopian state many imagined. Both in Israel and in the Diaspora, the messiness of running a state has fostered disappointment and alienation among many Jews. Keeping the utopian and redemptive dream alive in the face of quotidian realities is a constant challenge.

Historically for American Reform Judaism, there were several factors that helped truncate our sense of peoplehood and distinctiveness: the breakdown of the system of comprehensive Jewish practice represented especially by habits of dress and diet; the translation of the service into English; and the elimination of the references to Israel, the Temple, the sacrificial cult and the Messiah. Reform Judaism's rejection of the concept of *galut* (exile) to describe our living in the Diaspora and our unwillingness to elevate *aliyah* to a *mitzvah*⁸ are both a result and a cause of our ambivalence to Israel and Zionism. Our prayer books do not express our longing to return to Israel. At the most they praise those who participate in the restoration of the Land.

Reform Zionism faces an uphill battle because it has been unable to create a compelling vision, narrative or theology to inspire active engagement or commitment. Our involvement with Israel seems to be mostly self-serving. It is limited to decrying discrimination against Reform Judaism in Israel; calling for Reform Jews to vote in the World Zionist Congress elections so we can gain significant political position in the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for the purpose of securing funding for our institutions and programs; and calling upon our membership to support the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. While these are worthy goals, they do not present an inspiring religious vision designed to encourage engagement and commitment.

The Jewish people's relationship to Israel has always been expressed through the *siddur*. Our messianic hope for the restoration of the Temple and the sacrificial cult, as well as the restoration of Jewish sovereignty and the ingathering of the exiles and ultimate redemption, play significant roles in the *siddurim* used by most Jews throughout history.

And yet, Reform Judaism has always dedicated itself to liturgical change and Reform *siddurim* have significantly modified the traditional liturgy. How does Reform liturgy depict Israel and Zionism?⁹

The Union Prayer Book

Where do we find Israel and Zionism in the *Union Prayer Book*?

O Lord our God, we turn to Thee in hope as did our fathers. May Thy mercy descend upon our people in all their habitations. Extend Thy protection and help unto our brothers who struggle in lands of darkness as victims of oppression and persecution. Fill the hearts of all men with a love of freedom and justice that tyranny may vanish and the reign of righteousness be established everywhere on earth. Uphold also the hands of our brothers who toil to rebuild Zion. In their pilgrimage among the nations, Thy people have always turned to the land where Israel was born, where our prophets taught their imperishable message of justice and brotherhood and where our psalmists sang their deathless songs of love for Thee and of Thy love for us and all humanity. Ever enshrined in the hearts of Israel was the hope that Zion might be restored, not for their own pride or vainglory, but as living witness to the truth of thy word which shall lead the nations to a reign of peace. Grant us strength that with Thy help we may bring a new light to shine upon Zion. Imbue us who live in lands of freedom with a sense of Israel's spiritual unity that we may share joyously in the work of redemption so that from Zion shall go forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem¹⁰

The *Union Prayer Book* provided an inspiring and hopeful message during the Shoah and World War II and as we entered the post-war period. Persecution and oppression remained very much part of the Jewish landscape. The words provided a clear statement of our identity and our mission. These words, repeated Shabbat after Shabbat, reinforced our religious commitments to our solidarity with our people, especially in the rebuilding of Zion. The beauty of the passage's messianic vision was not necessarily connected to statehood but certainly could be read as such in a Zionist context. As these words suggest, Reform Judaism championed the idea that the Jewish people plays a redemptive role as exemplars of justice and righteousness which will lead to the redemption of humanity. Israel was not to be a nation like all the others, but a leader in this redemption. History has shown us that the reality of the state and a

religious vision of redemption would inevitably clash. Prayers are aspirational. Reality always falls short of aspiration.

Gates of Prayer/Gates of Repentance

Gates of Prayer included prayers for rebuilding Jerusalem in the weekday *Amidah* and restoring certain traditional prayers which had been excluded from the *Union Prayerbook*.

But the most significant innovation of *Gates of Prayer* in relationship to Israel and Zionism was the inclusion of a liturgy for Yom Ha-atzmaut.¹¹ Creating and celebrating new sacred days is a bold and radical move. The decision to adopt Yom Ha-atzmaut as well as Yom Hashoah as sacred occasions demonstrates Reform Judaism's conscious intention to elevate these occasions above mere secular communal gatherings and to establish them as holy days with specific religious practices (*mitzvot*), including the recitation of liturgy.¹² This significant statement has often been observed more in the breach than in actuality.

The status of Yom Ha-atzmaut as a sacred day is still in flux. Is it a festival like Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot/Shmini Azteret, or a holiday like Chanukah and Purim? For example, the Israeli progressive prayerbook *Ha-avodah Shebalev* includes a special *Kiddush* for Yom HaAtzmaut, which as far as I have been able to tell, is unique to this *siddur*. Should Torah and Haftarah be read, and if so what should those reading be?

Should *Hallel* be recited? Should there be a special insertion in the *Amidah*?¹³ These questions represent the ongoing dilemma of both liberals and traditionalists. How we commemorate and celebrate is an important statement of our identity and commitments. Only history will determine into which category Yom Ha-atzmaut will be absorbed.

While most Reform congregations probably participate in the secular community events rather than holding religious services, nevertheless the mere fact of a special liturgy in the *siddur* commands our attention. What we pray is who we are. This is why the writing and editing and translating of *siddurim* is such an important enterprise in the Jewish community. In *Gates of Prayer*, the Yom Ha-atzmaut service substitutes Ezekiel's "Dry Bones" (Ezekiel 37) passage for the English translation of the *Geulah* after the *Sh'ma*. *G'vurot*, the second blessing of the *Amidah*, reads:

Life of the Universe, Your greatness humbles the proud; Your power brings judgment upon tyrants. By Your might the dead live, the winds blow, the dew descends. You sustain the living and give life to the dead. You are the source of our deliverance. Blessed is the Lord, who gives life to the dead.¹⁴

The insertion of the image of resurrection in both the *Geulah* and in the *G'vurot* stands in sharp contrast to earlier Reform's rejection of bodily resurrection, peoplehood and Zionism. The Jewish people now has a body. It is no longer just a spiritual entity. The messiness of bodies, with their potential for death and decay, stands starkly against the immortality of soul and the sweet spirit of reason.¹⁵ The message seems to be that the rebirth of the State of Israel has redemptive meaning. It is an example of resurrection of the dead. This is the quintessential symbol of redemption. Like on the festivals and Rosh Chodesh, *Ya-aleh v'yavo* is added to the *Amidah*. *Hallel* is recited, and the Torah is read with blessings. *Gates of the House* lists four possible readings for the Torah portion:

Deuteronomy 8:1-18; 11:8-21; 26:1-11 and 30:1-16. For Haftarah, three possibilities are listed, all in Isaiah: 60:1-22; 10:32 – 12:6 and 65:17-25. The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism reads *Parashat Ekev* (Deuteronomy 8:1-18) as the Torah portion, and Isaiah 11:1-12 as the Haftarah. The combination of Deuteronomy and Isaiah reinforce the messianic and redemptive message. This is especially true when Isaiah 11 is read.

This message is reflected in *Gates of Repentance*. In the section called “From Creation to Redemption, in the Yom Kippur afternoon service in *Gates of Repentance*, the re-birth of Israel serves as a prelude to the statement on redemption.¹⁶ These passages exemplify the death and resurrection pattern that dominated the civil religion of American Jews following the Six-Day War. From the ovens of Auschwitz, we emerged a people reborn. The first prayer in this section speaks of the renewal of American Jewish life and then is followed by one that describes the special nature of what occurred in Israel.

In one land especially we glimpsed the rays of a new dawn: the land of Zion, made ready for habitation by generations of pioneers. The great day came: Israel independent at last, the millennial dream, a dream no more! Drawn by its brightness, her children flocked to Israel from distant lands of despair, and found hope. Though bent in mourning, they ploughed the earth deep, so that grain would grow tall. As they restored the land to fruitfulness, they began themselves to be restored. Israel lives: a people at home again, rooted in its soil, its way of life, its ancient faith.¹⁷

The images seem to come from the tourist posters of an era that had already past. The passage describes the Labor Zionist ideal of an agrarian socialist paradise. We are asked to envision Ari Ben Canaan, so magnificently portrayed by Paul Newman in the movie *Exodus*, based on Leon Uris’ best-selling novel of the same name.

The image is as beautiful as it is outdated. It was an inspiring image, but would ultimately prove to be untrue as the Yom Kippur War (and eventually the 1982 Lebanon War and Intifada), as well as changes in Israel's economy, altered the idyllic picture. Its imagery is rooted in the *chalutzim* (pioneers) myth and neither conforms to contemporary reality nor provides a link to the great vision of redemption in the passage that follows it. Therefore, it fails to inculcate a sense of peoplehood and relevance for our future.

While *Gates of Repentance* regards the Shoah and the creation of the State of Israel as part of a death/resurrection motif of a redemptive narrative, this leads to another theological difficulty surrounding Yom Ha-atzmaut. Part of the difficulty in creating liturgy for Yom Ha-atzmaut is our theological uncertainty which relates equally to Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). Does the *Shoah* have theological meaning, and can it be absorbed into some normative theological framework? Certain Orthodox thinkers place the *Shoah* in the same category as the destruction of the two Temples: “*Mipnei chateinu galinu mei-artzeinu*. Because of our sins we were exiled from our Land.” The two Temples were destroyed because of our sins. All of our tragedies are related to our sins. Therefore, the *Shoah*, as tragic as it is, does not constitute a unique event to be commemorated in a unique way but should be absorbed into *Tisha B'Av*. In fact, many Orthodox groups reject *Yom Hashoah* as a separate day of mourning and incorporate it into *Tisha B'Av*. Liberal Jews reject both the classic interpretation of the *Shoah* as the results of our sins and its incorporation into *Tisha B'Av*.¹⁸ If the *Shoah* does not have theological meaning, can Yom Ha-atzmaut have theological meaning? This remains a significant and unresolved dilemma.

In concluding this discussion of *Gates of Prayer*, let us also mention that which is obvious, but often overlooked. *Gates of Prayer* emphasized the use of Hebrew by interspacing the Hebrew and the English on each page, rather than relegating the Hebrew to the right-hand page. It was also published in both Hebrew-opening and English-opening editions, in contrast to the *Union Prayer Book* which was published only in an English-opening edition. The privileging of Hebrew, the historic language of the Jewish people, therefore, is a linguistic and even visual link to Israel and Zionism.

Mishkan T'filah

Mishkan T'filah restores the prayers for rain and dew to the *G'vurot*, which explicitly links our liturgy to the agricultural cycle of *Eretz Yisrael* and, in an important and subtle way, establishes our connection to the Land of Israel.¹⁹ It restores two passages from the traditional *siddur* which were absent in the *Union Prayerbook* and *Gates of Prayer*. The passage “*or chadash al Tzion tair v'nizkeh kulanu meheirah le-oro,*” “Shine a new light on Zion that we all may swiftly merit its radiance,” is restored in *Yotzeir*, and the passage “*havi-einu l'shalom mei-arba kanfot ha-aretz vetol'chienu komemiyut l'artzeinu,*” “Gather us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our land,” is re-inserted in *Ahavah Rabah*.

Mishkan T'filah also creates an *Al Hanisim* to be inserted in *Modim* on Yom Ha-atzmaut, a la Chanukah and Purim, but unlike *Ha-avodah Shebalev*, the Israeli progressive *siddur*, and *Siddur Tov L'hodot*, the progressive *siddur* from the Netherlands, *Mishkan T'filah* does not connect *Yom Ha-atzmaut* with the *Shoah*. *Mishkan T'filah* also

includes a special section for *Yom Hazikaron* (Israel Memorial Day), raising it above other national days of mourning.²⁰

In *Mishkan T'filah*, the Yom Ha-atzmaut service is a candle lighting ritual which can stand alone or be inserted into a daily or Shabbat service. It envisions the use of a seven-branched *menorah* like the one which stands in front of the *Knesset* in Jerusalem and is similar to the *menorah* which was removed from the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. and is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome. The *menorah* is understood as a symbol of Jewish sovereignty.²¹ The service utilizes the Israeli Declaration of Independence as its primary text,²² and divides it into seven sections: 1) For the Miracle of Rebirth; 2) For the Beauty of the Land; 3) For the Ingathering of Exiles; 4) For a Society Based on Democracy, Equality and Justice for All; 5) For the Renewal of Jewish Culture, Learning and Language; 6) For Hope and Peace; and 7) For the Courage and Resilience of the People of Israel. The ritual involves the lighting of each candle preceded by the recitation of a section of the Declaration of Independence and followed by biblical text and alternative readings. The service concludes with a prayer for the State of Israel in which the meaning of the rebirth of Israel is called “*reishit tz'michat geulateinu*.” While the phrase is ambiguous, it may be legitimately translated as implying redemption. The English translation in *Mishkan T'filah*, “the dawning of hope for all who seek peace,” equivocates on the redemptive meaning of the rebirth of the State of Israel. The service ends with the singing of *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem.

Liturgical creativity is not limited to North American progressive Jewry. Our analysis of liturgy and Zionism now examines some examples of texts from Israel, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

Ha-avodah Shebalev, the Israeli progressive *siddur*, contains a *Kiddush* for Yom Ha-atzmaut, loosely based on the ceremony and *Kiddush* for the second cup of wine in a traditional Pesach Haggadah. *Kiddush* begins with Deuteronomy 8:18, followed by the blessing over the wine, and continues:

Blessed are You *Adonai* our God who redeemed us and redeemed our Ancestors and brought us from slavery to freedom, from servitude to redemption, from suffering to joy, from mourning to a festival. Therefore, *Adonai* Our God brought us appointed times and festivals which come to us for peace. Let us rejoice in the rebuilding of Your city and be happy in Your service. Blessed are You *Adonai* our God who sanctifies Israel and Yom Ha-atzmaut²³

The *Kiddush* concludes with *Shehechyanu*. The creation of a *Kiddush* seems to incorporate *Yom Ha-atzmaut* into the category of the *Shalosh Regalim*, but as will be seen below, *Ha-avodah Shebalev* also adds a new *Al Hanisim* to *Modim* following the pattern of Chanukah and Purim observances.

Ha-avodah Shebalev also provides a separate section entitled *Seder Yom Ha-atzmaut* (pp. 220-223), which begins with recitation of Psalm 126 (*Shir Hama-alot*) and is followed by a special *Avot* in which three biblical passages are inserted: Genesis 13:14-15; 26:2-5, and 28:13-14, each of which describes God's promise of *Eretz Yisrael* to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob respectively. Its purpose is to root our claim to Israel in the biblical promises. The text then offers a series of texts which include the promise to Moses and Joshua, the vision of the prophet Zechariah, the words of Simon the Hasmonean, Theodor Herzl, and David Ben Gurion, and Israel's Declaration of

Independence. The cumulative effect of these passages is to assert the continuity of the Jewish people's claim to the Land from biblical times until Israel's independence. The section concludes with Psalm 98, which is a triumphal celebration of God's redemption.

Both *Ha-avodah Shebalev* and *Siddur Tov L'hodot* insert a new *Al Hanisim* in the *Modim* blessing in the *Amidah*:

In the days of Zion's second restoration when the saving remnant from the Valley of Murder and Your people from all their dispersions arrived, strangers ruled over our holy land and the gates were locked in the faces of the persecuted ones. Then seven nations rose to annihilate Your people Israel. And You in your great mercy stood up for them in the time of their trouble to assemble and to stand up for themselves and to teach their hands to fight and the fingers to make war and You delivered the many into the hand of the few and the arrogant into the hand of Your covenant people and You made for Yourself Your Name great and holy in Your world and for Your people Israel you made a great salvation and deliverance as this day. And afterwards Your people gathered to build and be rebuilt in Your land and to fix this day of Independence for celebration and rejoicing, for thanksgiving and praising Your great Name and just as You did wonders for earlier generations so You do for later generations and You save us in these days and as in those days²⁴

While *Mishkan T'filah* also adds an *Al Hanisim* to the *Modim* blessing in the *Amidah*, it eliminates the reference to the *Shoah* and the seven nations who rose up to prevent Israel from gaining her independence. In its liturgy, the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism ascribes religious meaning to the establishment of the State of Israel. The experience of Israeli and European Jewry is different from that of North American Jewry. For European and Israeli Jews, the *Shoah* continues to loom large in their consciousness and is a significant component in their psychological and theological rationale for the establishment and the meaning of the State of Israel. Both *Forms of*

Prayer and Siddur Lev Chadash--the prayer books of the Reform and Liberal movements in Great Britain--have special sections for Yom Ha-atzmaut. *Siddur Lev Chadash* emphasizes Israel's rebirth from the ashes of the *Shoah*, offers prayers for peace, reflects on the plight of the Palestinians and expresses the hope that Israel will be an exemplar nation. *Forms of Prayer* begins with the following prayer:

Our God and God of our fathers, in Your hand is the destiny of our people and the fate of all nations. You scatter us through the world and it is You who gather us in. You lead us through slavery and from pain to freedom and joy, to be Your light and witness among the nations. Give us strength to do your will!

We turn to Zion in love, like our fathers before us. Its memories draw us to nearer to each other, its visions draws us nearer to You. Give us honour to rebuild Jerusalem in our time. Let justice be its strength and righteousness its defence, may its reward be peace.

We praise you for the wonder our eyes have seen: the hope that was born out of suffering, the springs that came to the dry sad valley, the rose that blossomed in the desert. In the troubles of our time we have heard the message of Your prophets and seen the fulfillment of Your word. Again you have redeemed us, Lord of truth. Give us the courage to complete Your work, and bring redemption to mankind. Amen.²⁵

This prayer is followed by two study passages -- one from Martin Buber on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and a second one from the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Following study, Psalm 122, a joyous prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, and *El Malei Rachamim*, for those "who gave their lives to establish the State and in a time of trouble planted new hope in the heart of the people of Israel," are recited.²⁶ It is interesting to note that both the British Reform and Liberal prayer books mention the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict over the Land. One might speculate why this theme is absent in North American liturgical expressions.

The Basis for Reform Zionism and its Liturgical Implications

The North American Reform movement is firmly rooted in the unique experience of the North American Diaspora, which identifies being Jewish with religiosity, personal autonomy and spirituality. Therefore, liturgy and ritual have the possibility of being a significant factor in creating a love of and commitment to *Eretz Yisrael* and *Medinat Yisrael*.

Reform Judaism is a religious movement. Therefore, there must be a theological basis for its Zionism. In the past, Zionism was tied to ideas of exile, persecution, and a God who acts in history to redeem the Jewish people. All of these are problematic for contemporary Reform Jews.

As stated above, American Reform Jews increasingly feel secure as Americans, and do not experience exile. They are, for the most part, already at home. Peoplehood is contrary to the American experience of individualism and contrary to the American concept of religion as a personal relationship to God.

American Jews do not perceive God to be active in history. God, where experienced at all, is the friendly personal caregiver or the ordering force in the universe, rather than the savior of the Exodus from Egypt or author of the covenant at Mt. Sinai.

For the most part Israeli Jews live lives which are not distinct from those of American Jews. While they are part of a unique culture which speaks Hebrew, they are also part of the Western civilization dominated by the United States. While they live

with the danger of terrorism and the insecurity it engenders, their lives cannot be incorporated in a substantial way into the mythic narrative of death and resurrection.

Israeli exceptionalism is no longer a foregone conclusion as it appeared to be in the pre- and immediate post-Six-Day War era. The rescue of oppressed Jewish communities is less important than it once was. There are exceptions, like Argentina, but the American Jewish community does not perceive of the world as hostile to Jews and Judaism. Normalization makes it more difficult to establish Zionism as a mode of Jewish expression--especially among American Reform Jews. This may change if the Islamist movements and an assertive Christianity gain more currency in the West, and Middle East politics become more a clash between the "Judeo-Christian" world and the Islamic world.

Religious Zionism requires some concept of a God who acts in history and that the re-birth of Israel is of theological significance. Pre-state Zionism--whether religious or ideological--was largely based on the realities of oppression and persecution. Reform Judaism in the pre-state period was about universal redemption and acceptance in America. The *Shoah* may have broken the easy optimism that characterized earlier forms of Reform Judaism, but the enlightenment values of reason and universalism have not given way to a coherent particularistic response.

For Reform Zionism, redemption is the key concept. Israel, i.e. the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael*, have an important role in redemption of humanity. Spirituality is increasingly rooted in a particularly American version of the Lurianic *Kabbalah* with its notion of *Tikun olam*--which has replaced religious action and social action as the term of choice to describe the fundamental religious activity of Reform Jews. Easily tied to the

redemptive mode of thought, this can form a mode of thinking which might ritually and liturgically become a way of connecting to land and people. There is no doubt that our fragmented and flawed world is in need of repair. Such thinking, however, requires the reintroduction of a sense of Jewish chosenness and mission. It will, of necessity, create discomfort because of the messianic trends in the Israeli settler movement and American Evangelical right.

There are at least two difficulties inherent in basing Reform Zionism on theology: First, there is little serious theological thinking taking place within contemporary Reform Judaism. This is because we live in a post-modern world where the theological and philosophical thinking of modernity has run its course and a new theological and philosophical consensus has not emerged.²⁷ Second, the members of Reform congregations who are most interested in worship and religious practice are concerned more with personal spirituality than they are with group loyalty or mission. It is questionable whether there is a theological approach which will inspire their involvement with Zionism and Israel. Our approach to that segment of our population will of necessity be experiential. We will need to take them to Israel and create spiritually inspiring moments.²⁸

Contemporary Reform's renaissance of traditional practice is more about style than substance. The increase use of Hebrew in the worship service is more about the mystique of the language than about a revival of either traditional theology or a concern for content. The concepts of *k'dushat ha-am* (holiness of the people) and *k'dushat ha-aretz* (holiness of the land) need to be developed in such a way as to project the unique mission of the Jewish people and role of the Land in that mission without implying

Jewish superiority. Only in *Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform* -- which has been largely ignored by both the average Reform Jew and our rabbinic and lay leadership -- are we prepared to think theologically about the rebirth of Israel as part of the necessary conditions for redemption.³¹

In my review of our liturgy, I find that we have hinted at, but do not fully come to grips with, the theological issues that are important if our Zionism is going to be more than vague support for Israel and defense of the rights of Progressive Judaism in Israel. Liturgy is significant because it provides a definition of our identity and our commitments. Its language is symbolic and evocative, and in both didactic and affective ways expresses our hopes and dreams. When individuals engage in communal prayer regularly, it shapes their identity and commitment. While the importance of the *siddur* cannot be overemphasized, our liturgy cannot express what we have not yet formulated. What then is Zionism today? What is religious Zionism today? What, then, is Reform Zionism today?

¹ I want to thank my colleagues Rabbi Robert Orkand and Rabbi David Nelson for their careful reading and suggestions on an earlier version of this paper. I also want to thank Rabbi Yoram Mazor for providing me with detailed information concerning the Torah and Haftarah readings for Yom Ha-atzmaut among the various religious groups in Israel. Any errors which remain are mine and mine alone.

² *Union Prayer Book Newly Revised* (New York: CCAR, 1940).

³ Rabbi Chaim Stern ed., *Shaarei T'fillah Gates of Prayer* (New York: CCAR, 1974).

⁴ Rabbi Chaim Stern ed., *Shaarei T'shuvah Gates of Repentance* (New York: CCAR, 1978).

⁵ Rabbi Elyse Frishman ed., *Mishkan T'filah* (New York: CCAR, 2006).

⁶ A major focus of Reform activism is social justice, especially equal rights. Therefore, many of ARZA's activities have focused on securing equal rights for Reform Judaism in Israel. This has often meant a negative approach to involvement with Israel. If ARZA and by extension Reform Judaism wish to engage Reform Jews in commitment to Israel and Zionism, it must provide an inspiring and compelling rationale. The theme of *tikun olam* as means of redemption for Israel and the world might play such a role.

⁷ Steven M. Cohen and Jack Wertheimer aptly describe these phenomena in their article "Whatever Happened to the Jewish People." in *Commentary* (June 2006) pp 33-37.

⁸ *Mitzvah* is an equivocal concept in Reform Judaism, but the term is generally used to describe those actions which we take most seriously. *Aliyah* is never described as more than a noble option.

⁹ This paper examines the following *siddurim*, used in America, Israel, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands: *The Union Prayer Book* (New York: CCAR, 1940), *Gates of Prayer* (New York: CCAR, 1978), *Gates of Repentance* (New York: CCAR, 1978), and *Mishkan T'filah*, (New York

CCAR,2006) *Ha-avodah Shebalev*, (Jerusalem: Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, 1982) *Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship*, (London: Reform Synagogues of Great Britain; 1997) *Siddur Lev Chadash* (London: Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues of Great Britain, 1995), and *Siddur Tov L'hodot*, the prayer book of the progressive movement in the Netherlands. (Amsterdam, 2000)

¹⁰ *Union Prayer Book* pp.68-69. A. Stanley Dreyfus, "The Gates Liturgies: Reform Judaism Reforms Its Worship," in Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman, eds., *The Changing Face of Jewish and Christian Worship in North America* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991) notes: "The 1940 prayer book substituted *reader* for *minister*, and, because increasing numbers of Reform Jews had become sympathetic to Zionism, it added a new prayer for the rebuilders of Zion and the supplication that the Land might be restored not simply as another state but, rather, 'as a living witness to the truth of Thy word which shall lead the nations to the reign of peace,' although, in deference to those who remained opposed to Jewish nationalism, the prayer was relegated to a service read only on the fifth Sabbath of the month!"

¹¹ *Gates of Prayer* pp. 590-611

¹² See the discussion in Rabbi Peter Knobel, ed., *Shaarei Moed: Gates of the Seasons* (New York: CCAR, 1983), pp. 102-03.

¹³ The best discussion of the development of Yom Ha-atzmaut is found in Meir Azari's *Chag HaAtzmaut veHitpatchuto beYisrael* (Tel Aviv: MARAM and Beit Daniel, 1994) .

¹⁴ *Gates of Prayer*, pp. 599

¹⁵ At Beth Emet the Free Synagogue in Evanston, Ill., more than thirty years ago, Rabbi David Polish z"l, who wrote the ideological platform of ARZA, introduced a reading of the "Dry Bones" passage at the end of the *Shofar* service with a special musical accompaniment of flute and french horn which culminates in the theme of "Hatikvah." In dramatic fashion it speaks of Israel's redemptive message. The use of this passage represents a significant departure from the past and a restoration at least symbolically of previously rejected ideas and expressions.

¹⁶ *Gates of Repentance* pp 442-45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 442-443.

¹⁸ The status of *Tisha B'Av* in the Reform movement as a day which commemorates the loss of sovereignty in an age of its restoration raises important theological and ideological questions.

¹⁹ The three pilgrimage festivals, *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*, are celebrated according the agricultural cycle of the Land of Israel. Therefore *Pesach* occurs in the autumn in the Southern Hemisphere, which is spring in Israel.

²⁰ There is a parallel for non-Israeli days of mourning but the singling out of Yom Hazikaron is a significant statement and indicates the tremendous distance the Reform Movement has come from the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885.

²¹ The service was composed by Rabbi Karyn Kedar, who served as a rabbi in Israel and now is a rabbi in Glenview, Ill., and Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon, who is the rabbi of the Progressive congregation in Modi'in. The service was designed to reflect the Israeli experience in a way that both Israelis and North American Jews could find significant.

²² It is in some ways quiet strange for Diaspora Jews to raise up a recently created secular text of a state in which they do not live to the status of *keva* (fixed) text in its newly created liturgy.

²³ *Ha-avodah Shebalev*, p.224.

²⁴ *Forms of Prayer* pp.46.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.259-260

²⁶ p.63

²⁷ Michael Morgan, *Interim Judaism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2001).

²⁸ This is also true for the vast majority of our congregants who are not interested in Israel and have never been.

³¹ www.ccarnet.org Documents and Positions/ Platforms? *Reform Judaism and Zionism* "The Maimit Platform "1997.