CONFIRMATION CLASS ROSTER - SEPTEMBER 17, 1990

Home Work

M07574 Joel Boehm (M) R 10
Birth: 04/20/75 B/M: 04/16/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Mrs. Claudia Boehm
1709 South 109 Street 402-397-9173
Omaha, NE 68144

M15073 Dana Cohn (F) N R 10
Birth: 12/04/74 B/M: 11/07/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Cohn (Susan)
1122 South 112 Plaza 402-697-1111 402-391-0400
Omaha, NE 68144

M18373 Benjamin Ensel (M) N 10
Birth: 06/28/75 B/M: 05/28/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Dr. & Mrs. Toby Ensel (Lary)
2818 South 101 Street 402-391-6610 402-559-5151
Omaha, NE 68124

M18973 Daniel Jason Epstein (M) N R 10
Birth: 06/22/74 B/M: 10/10/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Richard Epstein (Pamela)
12321 Douglas 402-333-4617 402-444-7040
Omaha, NE 68154

M[illegible]3 Dana Beth Erman (F) N R 10
Birth: 01/06/75 B/M: 03/26/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Erman (Ruth)
1210 South 113 Plaza 402-333-0569 402-334-1970
Omaha, NE 68144

M22273 Clara I. Fishel (F) N R 10
Birth: 02/05/75 B/M: 06/08/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Norman Fishel (Marilyn)
9426 Shamrock Road 402-392-0226 402-397-6223
Omaha, NE 68114

M46273 Sarah Joy Kohll (F) R 10
Birth: 02/07/75 B/M: 09/12/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Kohll (Sandra)
1617 South 107 Street 402-391-3603 402-342-6347
Omaha, NE 68124

M50473 Traci Lyn Kutler (F) R 10
Birth: 01/07/75 B/M: 11/28/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Kutler (Sandra)
1014 South 93 Court 402-397-9638 402-339-2100
Omaha, NE 68114

M79573 Mitchell Sherman (M) R 10
Birth: 12/06/74 B/M: 12/26/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Marc R. Sherman (Claudia)
12756 Nicholas Street 402-496-3523 402-333-7700
Omaha, NE 68154

M89323 Lindsey Paige Weinberg (F) Y R 10
Birth: 10/01/75 B/M: 05/07/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Taxman (Sherry)
1810 South 108 Street 402-397-5816 402-397-0612
Omaha, NE 68144

M93973 Lindsey Paige Weinberg (F) R 10
Birth: 10/01/75 B/M: 05/07/88 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Maynard Weinberg (Barbara)
12023 Douglas Street 402-333-9077 402-397-0999
Omaha, NE 68154

M97273 Charles Adam Yale (M) R 10
Birth: 08/14/74 B/M: 09/05/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Donald A. Yale (Janis)
1108 South 113 Plaza 402-333-3366 402-391-0400
Omaha, NE 68144

M97723 Brent Michael Zacharia (M) R 10
Birth: 08/22/74 B/M: 10/17/87 Conf: / /
Parent: Mr. & Mrs. Richard Zacharia (Terry)
419 South 126 Street 402-333-0739 402-397-8570
Omaha, NE 68154

13 Names printed.

Marty Finkel
12006 Farnam
Omaha, NE 68154
333-5888

Jason Sacks
1802 No. 56th St.
Omaha, Ne
68104

A-8-A 00:01:12

TEMPLE ISRAEL
7023 CASS STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68132

September 26, 1990

Marty Finkel
12006 Farnam Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68154

Dear Marty:

Enclosed, please find the Confirmation letter and card that was sent to the Confirmation students. Also, I am sending you the material that goes in your notebook, the material was from the first class. Please bring this with you to class, Monday, October 1 at 6:00 p.m., dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

I will have a notebook for you and more information about the classes.

Looking forward to seeing you, Monday, October 1.

Shalom,

Aryeh Azriel
Rabbi

AA:lsb
Enclos.

Temple Israel

7023 Cass Street Omaha, Nebraska 68132 Phone (402) 556-6536

August 27, 1990

Dear Parents of Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Graders:

We hope you had an enjoyable summer. We have been hard at work planning classes and activities for our teenagers. We will share these plans with parents:

Monday, September 10
7:00-8:30 p.m.
Parents Orientation
Milder Center

The agenda for the evening will include meeting faculty, contents of curriculum, details about class trips, logistics of special dinners, Tikun Olam (Social Action) projects, and opportunities for questions, answers, and parent feedback.

Students will have their first classes on September 17, following a 6 p.m. dinner. These are vital years for the spiritual development of our youth. We have designed an educational format that requires your encouragement and support.

We look forward to seeing you on September 10.

Shalom,

Ann Kibel Schwartz
Director of Education
AKS/jm

Aryeh Azriel
Rabbi

TORAH · TRUTH · PEACE

Aryeh Azriel, Rabbi - Sidney H. Brooks, Rabbi Emeritus
Karen L. Webber, Cantor - Ann Kibel Schwartz, Director of Education - Dorothy R. Spizman, Temple Administrator

8-30-90

Temple Israel
Omaha, Nebraska

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

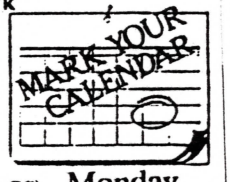
The first Confirmation class will be held:

Monday, September 17

6:00 p.m.
(beginning with dinner)

Please mark your calendar now for the Confirmation class trip to New York

October 25 - October 28



I look forward to seeing you on Monday, September 17!

Aryeh Azriel
Rabbi

CONVERSATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN
by Rabbi Avraham Radzik

MAN: Well, here I am again, God - September has rolled around, I've paid my dues, and this Yom Kippur, I promise I'll do my best not to smoke in the bathroom.

GOD: Thanks a lot. You're really terrific, just a swell fellow. Tell me, why is it that I don't recognize you?

MAN: Well, I don't come that often, God. You know how it is, the kids, golf, Xavier with her garden parties - whose got time to come to shul?

GOD: I'm here all the time.

MAN: Yes, I know, but that's because you have to be.

GOD: Really? I was thinking of going away for the High Holidays this year.

MAN: You're kidding!

GOD: No - that's what man doesn't understand. I'm not kidding.

MAN: Well - that's crazy. You can't leave us!

GOD: And why not?

MAN: Because we need you. And, besides, I've got all kinds of things I want you to give me. Me and Xavier and the kids in the coming year.

GOD: Being that you hardly come to my house all year, and being that I barely recognize you, I'm sure you won't have the chutspa to ask me for anything more than - let's say a cup of coffee, or a ride downtown. Right?

MAN: (laughing nervously) Oh no! Not exactly. I want other things.

GOD: What did you say your name was?

MAN: Sebastian Rogers.

GOD: Nice Jewish name. So, tell me, Sebastian, what is it you want from me?

MAN: I want success, good health, nachas, lots of money (more than last year) and long life.

GOD: That's all?

MAN: Well, now that you mention it, there are . . .

GOD: Tell me, Sebastian, why should I give you all these things?

MAN: (a little angry) Why? Whaddya mean why? Because I'm Jewish, that's why! You're supposed to help us, right? Well, I'm only asking for what's coming to me.

GOD: Mmmm. I see. You really feel strongly about this. I'll tell you what, Napol - I mean, Sebastian. I'm a very good listener. Why don't I just sit back on my throne here and I'll let you present your case. If you can convince me that you are deserving I will be glad to give you all of your requests. If not - well, we will see.

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN
by Rabbi Avraham Radzik

(continued)

MAN: I don't believe this. I've been coming to shul every single y for three days each year. I take off from work, I'm here all I don't ask for any thanks, I lose business, it's my season.

GOD: Well, how about if I give you all of your requests and more fo three days a year? Wouldn't that be fair?

MAN: No! I do more than that!

GOD: Yes, I'm listening.

MAN: Well, I eat gefilte fish, I use Jewish words from the bible lik 'Yente' and 'schlemiel.' I gave $500 to Israel last year. The just kept on calling me and calling me. I could have . . .

GOD: Forgive me for interrupting, but I happen to have your file her in front of me. It will save us both time if I just read it. see here you attended two Bar Mitzvahs, sent 19 New Years cards and are a loyal member of a Jewish bowling team.

MAN: (grinning proudly) That's right!

GOD: How about a succah?

MAN: Oh, I don't do things like . . .

GOD: How about Shavuot, Tisha B'av, t'fillin, keeping kosher, havdala

MAN: Well, you see, God, my grandfather used to keep these things . .

GOD: Good! We'll give your grandfather long life and happiness. Sebastian, has it ever occurred to you that I expect much more fro you and that you can get much more from me?

MAN: Actually, no, I haven't.

GOD: I chose you, Sebastian, to be one of my chosen people. I chose you for more than gefilte fish. Do you realize that?

MAN: I-I-I guess so. But-but-

GOD: Yes?

MAN: I guess I've sort of known it all along. I guess my credit ratin is pretty poor, huh?

GOD: Need I answer?

MAN: Well, I have to think about it. I'm not making any promises n-

GOD: Now, tell me, where did you get a name like Sebastian Rogers?

- -

BELIEF IN GOD

Your friend knows that you are taking a class on Judaism. She approaches you with the questions below. How would you answer her?

A. Why should I believe in God?

B. How can there be an all powerful God when such terrible things happen in the world?

C. If God is all powerful, then God should be able to know everything–including, the future. Does that mean that everything I do is pre-determined by God?

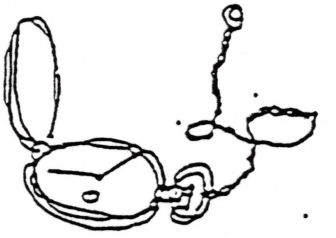
D. Jews often speak of God as "He." Does that mean that Jews believe God is male?

SECOND THOUGHT: Mini-Theologies

HERE ARE SOME QUICK LOOKS AT SOME COMMON WAYS PEOPLE BELIEVE IN GOD.

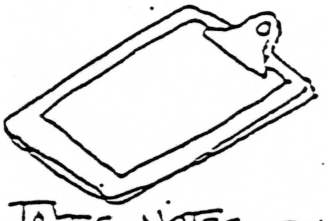


THE PUPPET-MASTER
GOD PULLS STRINGS. HE CONTROLS THE WORLD, AND SETS MAN'S FUTURE, WORKS MIRACLES.



THE WATCHMAKER
A WATCHMAKER MAKES A WATCH. HE PUTS IT TOGETHER, WINDS IT UP AND THEN LEAVES IT RUNNING. GOD WORKS THE SAME WAY. HE CREATED THE WORLD, AND THEN LEAVES IT RUNNING.

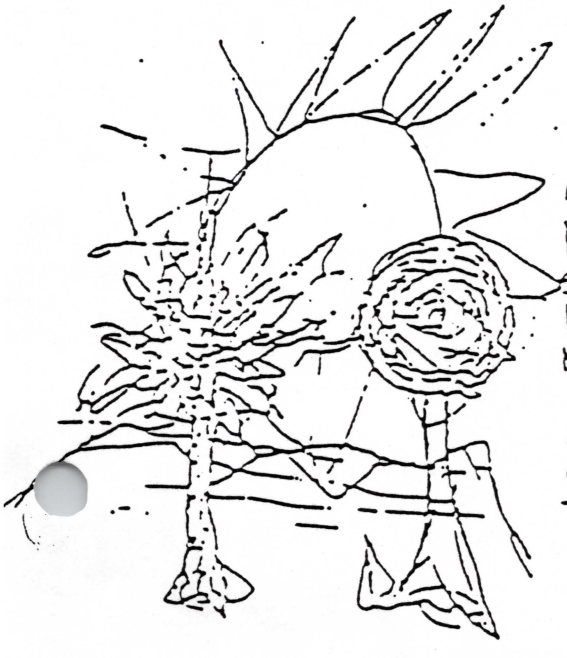
HE'S MAKING A LIST, CHECKING IT TWICE.



GOD TAKES NOTES ON WHAT WE DO. LATER WE'LL GET REWARDED OR PUNISHED FOR WHAT WE'VE DONE



JIMMINY CRICKET/THE STILL SMALL VOICE
GOD IS THE SMALL VOICE THAT WHISPERS IN OUR EAR, THE FEEL THAT WE ARE DOING WRONG OR RIGHT. GOD IS OUR CONSCIENCE, OR GOD WORKS THROUGH OUR CONSCIENCE.



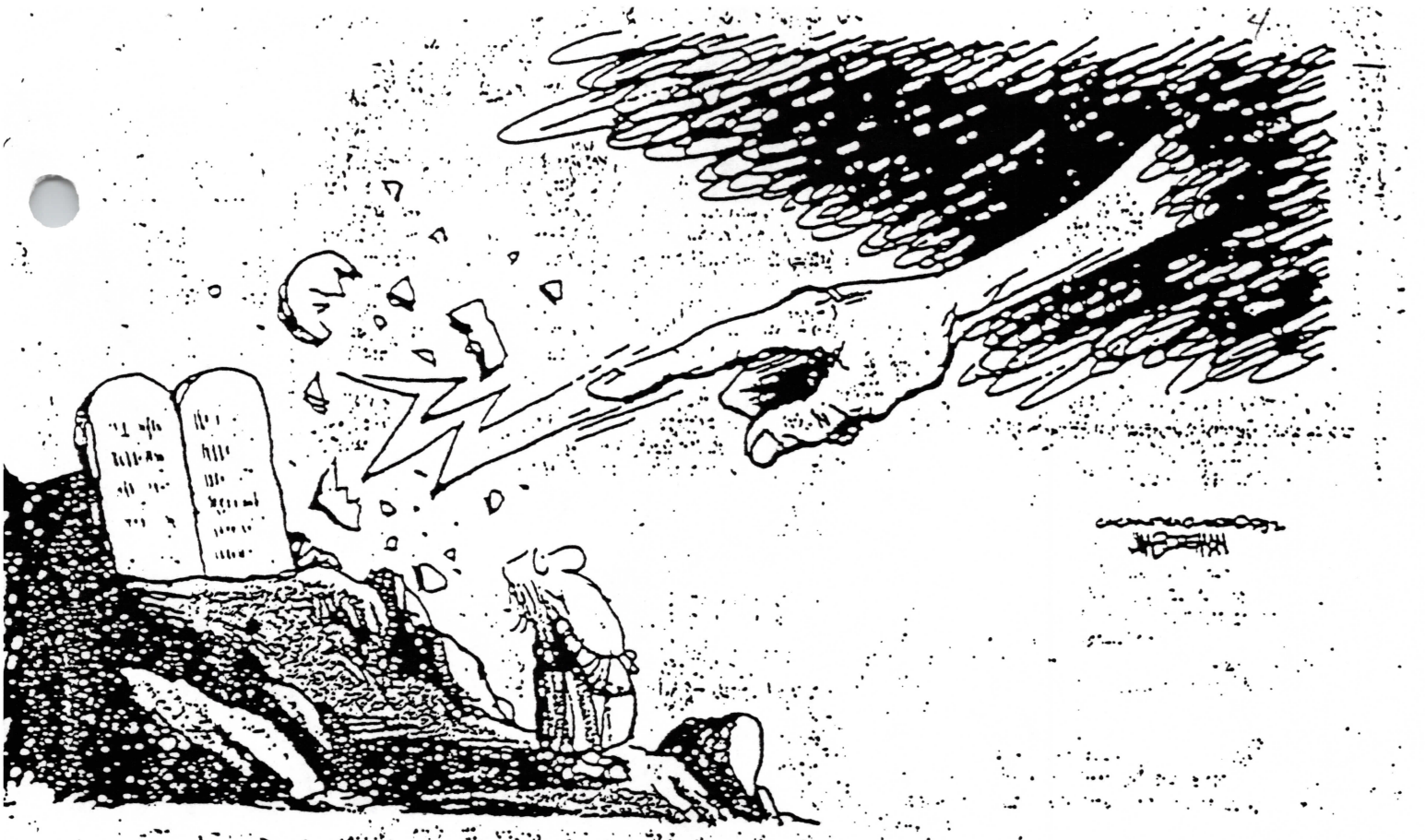
MOTHER NATURE, SCIENTIFIC LAWS. NATURAL RULES, AND OTHER TRUTHS.

GOD IS ALL THE LAWS OF NATURE, SCIENTIFIC TRUTHS, ALL THE TRUTHS ABOUT MAN, LIFE, THE WORLD, THE UNIVERSE, ETC.

GOD IS ORDER.
GOD GIVES ORDER.

SHARE ANY OF YOUR OWN.

God is process. -



"OK! OK! I'LL KEEP IT DOWN TO TEN ..... FOR READER'S DIGEST'S SAKE!"



"God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, and God bless all the other fanatical lunatics who are subverting my religious freedom with their archaic jargon."

God, a bill collector



Mike Royko

In this credit-crazed society, most of us have had the experience of letting a bill become overdue.

You don't have to be a deadbeat to do it. You might be absentminded, a sloppy bookkeeper or temporarily short of funds. Or you might be disputing the amount owed.

Whatever the reason, a letter quickly arrives. Today's credit computers have little patience.

There are all sorts of forms the letters take.

Some are low-key, very understanding, in tone.

"Dear Mr. Jones: You may have mislaid the bill we sent you on April 1, or it might have been misdirected. In either case, we just wish to remind you that your account is 30 days overdue and. . . ."

OTHERS ARE more direct, but not menacing:

"Dear Customer: We have not received payment for this billing period. The amount due is. . . ."

Some are blunt:

"Dear Customer: Your account is 30 days delinquent. DO NOT ENDANGER YOUR CREDIT RATING. . . !"

Some don't beat around the bush:

"Customer: Pay your bill or it will be turned over to a collection agency."

The most unusual dunning letter I've ever seen was recently sent to a suburban man by a Chicago physician.

The man, James Goggins, 56, of Harwood Heights, had disputed the amount owed to Dr. Joshua D. Salvador, for treatment given to Goggins' wife.

GOGGINS SAYS that after several rather heated exchanges, both written and oral, he flatly refused to pay the bill.

That's when he received a letter that said:

"Dear Mr. Goggins:

"I am really surprised at your attitude.

"Most of our patients are grateful to our services, and they pay their accounts without the kind of fuss you are making about it.

"In order for your wife to be blessed with good health you must meet your obligations and pay your debts.

"If you don't, I am afraid God will take this blessing from you and inflict such an ill health on you that all the money of the world cannot compensate you for it.

"WHY BRING the wrath of God on you? Isn't it better to pay and get his blessing?

" . . . Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

" Sincerely yours,

"Joshua D. Salvador, M.D."

Goggins, a retired accountant, said:

"I read that letter four times. I couldn't believe it, his talking about God that way. I was stunned."

Goggins brought the letter to my attention because he had noted that I try to keep track of the many ways God is portrayed in our society.

As I've pointed out in previous columns, God is sometimes given the role of a sports fan ("I guess the Man Upstairs wanted me to get that home run") or a a TV-church fund-raiser ("God told me to ask you to send in only $10 and you will be cured of . . .).

RECENTLY, the Rev. Bob Jones Jr. called upon God to destroy Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, which puts God in the role of a hit man.

Until I saw Dr. Salvador's letter, I had never seen God portrayed as a bill collector.

After reading the letter, Goggins said, he fired off a letter to the doctor.

"I don't remember exactly what I said, but it was something to the effect that my wife and I don't fear God because we're on good terms with him. And I told him that if he thought he had a valid claim, he should take it to court."

Then he got angry again and wrote a lengthy letter to the president of the American Medical Association. A few of the better lines:

"I was aware that you birds had a very strong trade union. I even suspected that you were more powerful than the plumbers.

"However, I had no idea of the extent of your clout until Salvador informed me that it is universal and even reaches God.

"At first this news was mind shattering. Now that comprehension has penetrated my brain, the idea is fascinating. Imagine, God the Almighty roaming the Earth repossessing the good health of people who, for one reason or another, have not been able to pay your outrageous fees.

"WHY HAVE YOU maintained such a low profile about this? Surely having God on your payroll is newsworthy. Has your modesty compelled you to remain silent? Or have all of you been too busy counting your money to issue press releases.

" . . . If you will be so kind as to answer a few questions. . . .

"Does God take the form of a mortal when he goes about his job? Does he look like George Burns?

"Does he have a contract with the AMA?

"Does each member make his own deal with God?

"The religious leaders of the world spend a lot of time beseeching God to alleviate human pain and suffering. Are they disallusioned that he now works for you going around inflicting ill health on people who have fallen into disfavor with you?

"Does God give a patient one last chance to pay up?

" . . . I will be looking forward to your answers."

So far, Goggins has not heard from the AMA.

WE CALLED Dr. Salvador's office to see if he wanted to chat about his letter. He didn't want to come to the phone, but a lady who said she was his sister and secretary said:

"Yes, Dr. Salvador sent the letter. It was a nice letter. It explained his position. The doctor tried to cope with him psychologically by trying to reason with him through God. This guy [Goggins] is out of it."

Oh, I don't know about that. If Goggins was really "out of it," then he would have sent a letter to Dr. Salvador saying something like:

"Dear Doc. Got your bill. You sent it to the wrong place. Send all future bills to God. He's my accountant."

Proverbs 3:12--- "For whom the Lord loves, He chastises, even as a father does to the son he loves."

---

from Harold Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to Good People, New York: Schocken Books, 1981.

1. "We will turn to God, not to be judged or forgiven, not to be rewarded or punished, but to be strengthened and comforted."

2. "Randomness is another name for Chaos."

3. (Old Iranian Proverb)"If you see a blind man, kick him; Why should you be kinder than God?"

4. "I have to believe in God so that I have someone to blame, someone to curse and shout at, When I think of what I have gone through."

5. Two bumper stickers: "My God is not dead; sorry about yours."
"My God is not cruel; sorry about yours."

***Make up your own bumper sticker about God. Be creative, but try to also be serious and really express your thoughts/feelings/.....

From Brenner, The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors---

"It never occurred to me to question God's doings or lack of doings while I was an inmate of Auschwitz, although of course I understand others did.... I was no less or more religious because of what the Nazi's did to us; and I believe my faith in God was not undermined in the least. It never occured to me to associate the calamity we were experiencing with God, to blame Him, or to believe in Him less or cease believing in Him at all because He didn't come to our aid. God doesn't owe us that, or anything. We owe our lives to Him. If someone believes God is responsible for the death of six million because He didn't somehow do something to save them, he's got his thinking reversed. We owe God our lives for the few or many years we live, and we have the duty to worship Him and do as He commands us. That's what we're here on earth for, to be in God's service, to do God's bidding."

****What does this make you think?

****What type of a response is this?

*Could you make a similar response to suffering? Why, or Why not?

Some Selected Quotations:

From Joseph Heller's Catch-22----

"Good God, How much reverence can you have for a Supreme Being who finds it necessary to include such phenomena as phlegm and tooth decay in his divine system of creation? What in the world was running through the warped, evil, scatalogical mind of His when he robbed old people of the power to control their bowel movements? Why in the world did he ever create pain?.....Oh, He was really being charitable to us when He gave us pain! Why couldn't He have used a doorbell instead to notify us of bodily dangers,or one of His celestial choirs? Or a system of blue- and red neon tubes right in the middle of each person's forehead. Any jukebox manufacturer worth his slat could have done that. Why couldn't He?....."

***What does this passage reveal about the human condition?

***What connection can you draw between this response and that of Job?

From Archibald MacLeish, J.B. -- (a play loosely based on the book of Job)

1. "Then Why test him if God knows?....."

2. "Your sin is simple--You were born a man." (one friend's thoughts to J.B.)

3. "I'd rather suffer every unspeakable suffering God sends, knowing it was I that suffered, I that earned the need to suffer, I that acted, I that chose, than wash my hands with yours in that defiling innocence; Can we be men and make an irresponsible ignorance responsible for everything? I will not listen to you!"

(J.B.'s response to one of his friends)

****What do these quotes suggest concerning the nature of evil and suffering?

****What responses are offered?

I. A BIBLICAL VIEW OF GOD

The Bible does not contain a monolithic view of God. The God concept in the Bible is actually an amalgam of various (and sometimes divergent) qualities.

Essentially, the biblical view of God is a theistic one -- that is God in the Bible claims the following characteristics (attributes):

1. God is One, alone (there are no other gods).

   a) Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.
   (Deut. 6:4)

   b) You shall have no other gods beside Me. You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them....
   (Ex. 20:3-5)

2. God is the Creator of the Universe.

   a) In the beginning, God created heaven and earth...
   (Gen. 1:1ff)

   b) Thus said God the Lord,
   Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
   Who spread out the earth and what it brings forth,
   Who gave breath to the people upon it
   And life to those who walk thereon.
   (Is. 42:5)

3. God is a spiritual person (not a physical human being) who expresses will, love, concern: in other words, he has personality.

   a) The Lord became angry with Moses, and he said, 'There is your brother Aaron the Levite. He, I know, speaks readily.
   (Ex. 4:14)

   b) ...you cannot see My face, for man may not see Me and live.
   (Ex. 33:20)

4. God is Omnipotent (all-powerful). God can do anything--upsetting the laws of nature; that is, performing miracles.

   a) Job said in reply to the Lord, "I know that you can do everything, that nothing you propose is impossible for you."
   (Job 42:1-2)

   b) Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the Lord drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split.
   (Ex. 14:21)

5. God is super-natural and trans-natural; (dwelling outside as well as inside the world.

a) If I ascend to heaven, You are there;
If I descend to Sheol, You are there too.
If I take wing with the dawn to come to rest
on the western horizon, even there Your hand
will be guiding me...
(Ps. 137:8-10)

b) Who measured the waters with the hollow of His hand
and gorged the skies with a span, and meted
earth's dust with a measure, and weighed the
mountains with a scale and the hills with a balance?
(Is. 40:12)

6. God is Omniscient (All-Knowing). God knows past, present and future.

a) God understands the way it is; He knows its source;
For God sees to the ends of the earth and observes
all that is beneath the heavens.
(Job 28:23-24)

b) With You is the fountain of life; and by Your light
do we see light.
(Ps. 36:10)

7. God is All-Good.

a) Though the wicked sprout like grass,
Though the evildoers blossom,
It is only that they may be destroyed forever.
(Ps. 92:8)

b) Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
(Gen. 18:25)

8. God has chosen Israel to be the elect people.

a) You only have I singled out of all the families
of the earth;...
(Amos 3:2)

b) And the Lord has affirmed this day that you are,
as was promised, God's treasured people...and God
will set you, in fame and renoun and glory,
high above all the nations...
(Deut. 26:18)

Also, the Bible depicts God as the Divine Lawgiver who hears prayer and responds (though we may not know how or when).

II. GOD IN THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH THOUGHT

During the Medieval times, (circa 600 to 1500 C.E.) Jewish thinkers were greatly influenced by Greek and Arabic philosophy. This philosophy posited that the human intellect could achieve true knowledge of the universe, if it is properly employed. In response to this belief, Jewish thinkers sought to demonstrate that a sound intellect confirmed what the Bible taught.

Medieval Jewish thinkers attempted to prove God's existence by means of various arguments:

1. Ontological argument: In Greek, ontos means "being, existence." This argument tried to derive God's existence from the idea of God, claiming that the idea implies existence. It is expressed as follows: "I have an idea of being (God) who has all the properties; that is He is perfect. Now, perfection implies existence of that which is perfect; therefore, God exists. If this were not the case, it would mean that I am able to think of something that is more perfect. This contradicts my original assumption."

2. Teleological argument: The word telos in Greek means "purpose, design, order." This argument is based on the observation that there is order in the universe. This order implies the existence of an organizing mind behind it -- that is God.

3. Cosmological argument: "This is based on the idea of motion. We know that things move. We know that nothing moves by itself but is moved by something else. This process cannot go on forever. There must be a force that moves, but is not moved -- a Prime Mover; that is God.

4. The Moral argument: If morality exists, it must have its source in the spiritual realm of being -- that is God. If God did not exist, then we would not have known what is right and what is wrong. There must be a God who is considered the best and only criterion by which to judge things.

Also, Jewish Medieval thinkers attempted to describe the Nature of God (that God is one), and God's characteristics (attributes).

III. GOD AND MODERN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

With the advent of modernity (1650 to present), new systems of thought came into existence. Modern science and philosophy gave rise to entirely new modes of thinking. These new trends seemed to deny classical belief in God. Until modern times, God was conceived of in terms of "theism" (see above). However, the Age of Reason challenged Theism, and the ever-increasing knowledge of the world confronted ancient beliefs.

Modern Jewish thinkers have tried to conceive of new God concepts which better face the realities posed by science, reason and, most recently, the Holocaust. The following is a brief synopsis of

modern God concepts:

1. Deism: There are two main components to Deism: First is the idea that God, having created the world, withdrew from it completely (hence God cannot intervene in history or perform miracles, etc.). Second, Deism holds that all essential truths about God are knowable by unaided natural reason (that is without help from the Bible or Revelation). (cf. Theistic Finition, below)

2. Pantheism: This belief states that the universe as a whole is identical with God. God is nothing other than the integrated complex of beings, forces, and laws that constitute the universe.

3. Panentheism: Panentheism differs from pantheism in that in panentheism the universe as a whole, while inseparable from God, is understood to be only a part rather than the whole of God (as is the case in pantheism). In Panentheism, God includes the world in his being, but his being extends beyond the universe as well.

4. Atheism: This position expresses the belief that there does not exist a supreme, conscious, and intelligent being. In other words, atheism denies theism.

5. Agnosticism: Agnostics believe that it is impossible to know whether there is a (theistic) God or not. Hence, one must suspend judgment regarding the possible existence of God.

6. Theistic Finitism: This belief system stresses two points: a) God is all-good and cares about humanity; b) God is not all-powerful. God's powers are limited by existence, not by choice. Otherwise, most of theism (see above) still applies to the concept.

7. Religious Naturalism: This concept is a form of panentheism (see above). God is "the activating or energizing agent within nature, not external to nature." God and nature are not one and the same (pantheism).

Today each of these theologies boast ardent Jewish proponents. Of course, when departing from a theology of theism, one must also rethink the place and meaning of Bible in one's theologic system because the Bible itself essentially expounds a theistic view of God.

This presentation was based on the following materials:

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Gertman, Stuart A., editor. What is the Answer. New York: UAHC, 1971

Jacobs, Louis. Jewish Thought Today. New York: Behrman House, 1970

Neusner, Jacob, editor. Understanding Jewish Theology. New York: KTAV, 1973

Reines, Alvin. "The Word God," Polydoxy, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1979

Soncino, Rifat. "Four Basic God Concepts in Judaism" (unpublished). 1978.

Names of God

Adonai - My Lord; the general term used for God
Elohim — means (literally) Gods; used especially in connection with the attribute of justice
El Shaddai — God of the mountains or God of might; the *shin* on the *mezzuzah* case refers to this name for God
Ha Kadosh Baruch Hu — The Holy One Blessed Be He; *Kadosh* means holy, or sanctified
Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh — I Will Be That I Will Be (*Exodus* 3:14ff)
HaShem — The Name
HaMakom — The Place
Tzur Yisrael — Rock of Israel
Shechinah — Indwelling Spirit

HaNoruh — The Awesome
HaGudol — The Great
HaGibor — The Strong
M'chayeh HaMaytim — Who Brings The Dead To Life
M'chayeh Hakol — Who Gives Life To Everything
Magen Avraham — Shield Of Abraham
Ro'ee — My Shepherd
Shomeyuh Tefilah — The One Who Hears Prayers

from:

God: The Eternal Challenge
A.R.E. mini Course
by Sherry Russell
1980

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This article was written by KP editorial assistants Norman Mark Klein and Steven Denker

why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? ten jewish responses

Since ancient times, Jewish thinkers have wrestled with the problem of how to justify and reconcile belief in God's unlimited power, goodness, and mercy with the presence of evil and suffering in the world. Moses asks God: "Why are there righteous people whose lot is good and righteous people whose lot is bad, evil people whose lot is good and evil people whose lot is bad?" (Berachot 7a) Similarly, the prophet Jeremiah asks: "Why do the wicked prosper, the treacherous thrive?" (12:2) The medieval Jewish philospher Hasdai Crescas writes in *Light of the Lord* that this question is one that has perplexed prophets and philosophers.

Nachmanides, the fourteenth-century scholar notes in his commentary on Job that the problem of innocent suffering "is at the root of apostasy in every nation and people."

The relationship between God and the Jewish people is based on a biblical covenant: God promises the Israelites divine protection in return for their worshipping and obeying God's law. Accordingly, sin reaps God's punishment, walking in God's way leads to fullness of life. In the words of the prophet Hosea: "The paths of the Lord are smooth—the righteous can walk on them, while sinners stumble on them." (14:10) In Proverbs it is written: "No ills befall the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble." (12:21) Maimonides, too, aligns himself with this position in his *Guide to the Perplexed*, saying: "All the calamities that befall men and all the good things that come to men . . . are determined . . . through equitable judgment . . . ." But despite such assertions, we remain perplexed.

The following are ten Jewish responses to the age-old problem of theodicy—the defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in the face of the existence of evil:

1. We cannot understand God's ways.

The Book of Job—the classic story of a righteous man who suffers but remains obedient to God—concludes that humans cannot understand the ways of the Almighty. In the third century C.E., Rabbi Yannai echoes this view: "It is not in our power to understand either the well-being of the wicked or the sorrows of the righteous." (Avot 4:15) And, in our day, Elie Wiesel, Holocaust surviver and author, writes: "Perhaps someday someone will explain how, on the level of man, Auschwitz was possible; but, on the level of God, it will forever remain the most disturbing of mysteries." (*Legends of Our Time*)

2. Reward and punishment are meted out in the afterlife.

In the Book of Daniel, reward is promised and punishment threatened in the afterlife: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to everlasting abhorrence." (12:2) The Talmud also teaches that suffering in this life brings reward in the next life: "The Holy One brings suffering upon the righteous of the world in order that they may inherit the future world . . . ." (Kiddushin 40b) In the Mishnah, Rabbi Ya'acov says: "This world is like an antechamber before the world to come. Prepare yourself in the antechamber in order to enter the banquet hall." (Avot 4:16) Saadia Gaon, head of the Babylonian Academy of Sura in the tenth century, says that, on earth, evil people are rewarded for whatever good they may have done, and good people are punished for their few failings; when they enter the afterlife, they face the final reckoning. (Emunah Vedeot, Chapter 5)

3. Suffering has a purpose.

Suffering has been explained as a form of discipline. A Yemenite midrash asks: How are the people of Israel like the olives used to make oil for the menorah in the Temple? The answer: They only obey commandments and act righteously when they are being crushed!" (Midrash HaGadol on Exodus 27:20) Moshe Flinker, an Orthodox teenager who was hiding from the Nazis with his family during World War II, longed to share in the suffering of the

tion. He writes in his diary: "I see myself as a traitor who fled from his people at the time of their anguish. Moreover, it sometimes seems to me that only those Jews who have suffered, who have carried the heavy burden to exile, will be saved in the redemption of our people...." Young Moshe later died in a concentration camp. (*Young Moshe's Diary*)

4. Protesting God's injustice.

Unable to understand why God would destroy Sodom and Gemorrah with all their inhabitants, Abraham asks: "Will the judge of all the earth not deal justly?" (Genesis 18:25) The prophets were known to have protested against God's injustice, even as they protested against Israel's failure to abide by the covenant. In a well-known chasidic tale, Rebbe Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, overcome by the pain of Israel's suffering, interrupts the Yom Kippur service, raises his fist, and proclaims: "I, Levi Yitzhak, son of Sarah, of the city of Berditchev, have come on behalf of my client, Israel, to summon the God of Justice to trial. Speak, I demand of Thee, what hast Thou against the Jews? Wherein have they sinned to be thus tormented?... I will not stir from my place...until Thou hast put an end to the sufferings of Israel." (J.S. Minkin, *The Romance of Hassidism*) Levi Yitzhak later repents for his arrogance, but to this day his protest echoes among Jews in times of adversity.

5. God suffers along with humanity.

Midrashim on the Exodus story depict God as suffering with the Israelites in their struggle for redemption: "The Redemption is for Me and for you. It is as if I will be redeemed with you, as it says 'the nations and their gods.'" (Exodus Rabbah 15:12) Contemporary philosopher Irving Greenberg says that God helps humanity not by intervening to stop suffering but rather by being present with those in pain. According to Greenberg, the answer to the question "Where was God at Auschwitz?" is "God was there starving, beaten, humiliated, gassed, and burned alive." (*The Third Great Cycle in Jewish History*)

6. Suffering is caused not by God but by humankind.

Humankind has been granted freedom of choice by God. We find in Deuteronomy: "Behold I have placed before you life and goodness as well as death and evil [30:15]...choose life so that you and your children might live." (30:19) Thus the evil that befalls humanity is of its own making. Maimonides declares that evil deeds stem from human ignorance. (*Guide to the Perplexed*, III, 11) Eight centuries later, the modern Jewish thinker, Mordecai Kaplan, says that evil results from human failure in dealing creatively with the world's problems. Unlike Maimonides and Kaplan, who attribute evil to a *lack* of knowledge or *inaction*, philosopher Emil Fackenheim in *God's Presence in History* observes that the innocent suffer not because of human failure but because of evil actions taken with *obvious intent* by men. Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits asserts in *Faith After the Holocaust* that God's face was hidden at Auschwitz because people had chosen evil, disobeying His commandment to choose life. The Lurianic mystics of medieval Safed maintained that God is the force for goodness and justice in the world, but that God is driven from the world by the evil men do. Human suffering is increased by evil deeds, which drive God further and further

7. God ignores human suffering.

Richard Rubenstein writes in *After Auschwitz*: "A God who tolerates the suffering of even one child is either infinitely cruel or hopelessly indifferent." A Holocaust survivor says: "The Torah speaks of God's mercy; there was none. The Torah speaks of divine justice; where was it? The Torah speaks of God's providence; where was He? The Torah speaks of faith; but I have grave, serious doubts. The Torah speaks of a listening God, hearing our prayers; but I experienced Him as unhearing and deaf to our shrieks and our outcries." (*The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors*)

8. Don't ask.

Questioning God can be dangerous, as the story of the martyred Rabbi Ishmael illustrates. So good a man was Rabbi Ishmael that the heavens shook when he cried out in agony. Yet, the Romans continued to torture Ishmael to death. During his torment, the angels asked God: "Is this Your law, and is this the reward for obeying it?" God replied: "If Ishmael cries out again the whole world will be destroyed." (A. Jellinek, Bet HaMidrash)

9. God gives, and God takes away.

The following story is told about Rabbi Meir and his wife Beruria, who lived in the second century: Rabbi Meir's sons died on Shabbat afternoon while he was studying at the synagogue. When he returned home Beruria said: "I have a question. The other day someone came and gave me some precious things to hold for him. Today, he came and asked for them. Do I have to give them back?" Rabbi Meir said: "Of course you must give them back to their owner." She then told him that their children had died. Meir was overcome with grief. Beruria then quoted Job: "...God has given and God has taken away, may God's name be blessed." (Job 1:21)

10. There is no God.

In the second century, Elisha ben Abuyah saw a man die while fulfilling one of God's commandments, the observance of which promised long life. As a result, Elisha ben Abuyah denied God and became an apostate. (Jerusalem Talmud, Hag. ii. 1) One Holocaust survivor writes: "We were sent forth to find out once and for all if there is a God. That's the meaning of the camps. It was meant to bring Him out into the open if He existed at all....And God failed the test, proving His own non-existence." (*The Faith and Doubt of Holocaust Survivors*)

Additional responses to this perplexing and endless dilemma can be formulated but, more often than not, people do not search for their own answer until they are personally confronted by a tragedy that challenges their faith in God.

The Many Faces of Judaism - Excerpts
- Gilbert S. Rosenthal

GOD

Reform

Reform Judaism, unlike Orthodoxy, is very interested in theology or ideas about God. The early Reform rabbis who were strongly influenced by German non-Jewish philosophers such as Kant and Hegel wrote a good deal about God. They described God as a spirit in the universe that maintains order in nature and morality in people. They could not accept the Orthodox view of a supernatural God who performs miracles and interferes with the laws of nature. Miracles such as the parting of the Red Sea or the sun standing still for Joshua were interpreted by Reform scholars as ancient tales or legends that tell more about how people thought of God than how God actually acts in the world.

Modern Reform thinkers have developed new ideas about the meaning of God, and they now speak of a more personal God. Although they do not think of God as a person in the human sense, they believe that God's personality or spirit is present in us and in our world. God is felt in our history, especially in our Jewish history. The Reform scholar Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz writes that the truest idea of God will inspire us to keep Torah in our lives and preserve the Jewish people. Any idea of God that does not do these two things is improper and false. And to deny the existence of God altogether, he argues, will lead to chaos in our society.

Some Reform thinkers suggest that God is a part of nature and is the living power in the universe. Others believe that God is a force we feel as we struggle to evolve and develop physically and morally. Clearly, Reform ideas about God are rich and diverse. They vary widely from an almost Orthodox, supernatural God who performs miracles and revealed the Torah, to an almost naturalistic idea of God as a power in the universe.

Orthodox

BELIEFS ABOUT GOD

Orthodoxy accepts the traditional views of God as developed in the Bible, Talmud, and Midrash and as taught in the writings of medieval philosophers. To an Orthodox Jew, God is a spirit in the universe that has created all things and keeps all things alive. God is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, and universal. God sees our actions; hears our thoughts, prayers, and words; God is aware of all we say and do. People understand God's will by studying Torah and performing mitzvot, the commandments.

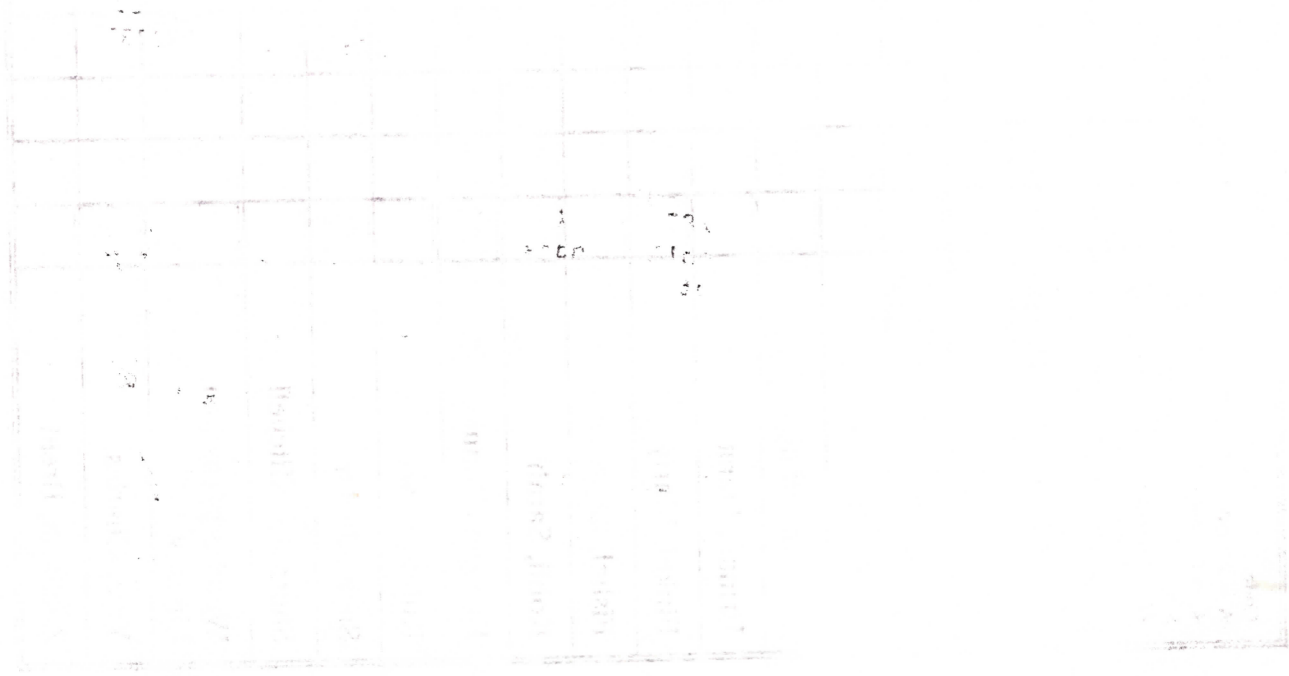
Believing that God is all-powerful and totally in control gives rise to a difficult question: Why is there evil in the world? In our times this question has taken on a new meaning, and modern Jewish thinkers have asked, "Why did the Holocaust take place: and where was God when six million Jews were sent to their deaths?" Not many Orthodox thinkers have dared to deal with this subject. One who has, Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits, admits that we simply cannot know the purpose behind the Holocaust. We certainly cannot think that all the Jews were slaughtered because they were sinners. To believe that would be to think of God as unspeakably cruel. But even though we as human beings cannot understand God's purpose in the Holocaust, we can take comfort in knowing that the state of Israel was born out of that tragedy.

TEMPLE ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE REGISTER

CLASS Confirmation DAYS Monday TEACHER Rabbi Aryeh Azriel ROOM NO. 4

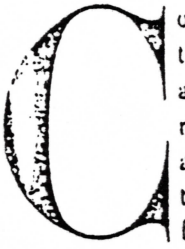
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Conservative

GOD



onservative Judaism is like Reform in that its thinkers and leaders have taught varied views about God. Some believe in a personal, supernatural God who listens to prayers and is keenly aware of human events. Thus, Solomon Schechter wrote that God is not a mere idea but a spirit found everywhere—in the temple, in the court of law, in the family, on the farm, in the marketplace, and at moments when we enforce God's laws. Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser wrote that God is not a person, but is greater than any person; God's personality or presence fills the world.

The late religious thinker Professor Abraham J. Heschel wrote several books on the subject. Heschel was a mystic. He believed that we should not try to prove the existence of God but we should feel God's spirit or presence in the order of the universe and in the moral laws we find among human beings. According to Heschel's belief, we feel a basic "amazement" when we experience the glories of nature and history, an amazement that we cannot express properly or put into words. We also feel God's presence when we pray, study Torah, and perform mitzvot.

On the other end, there are many Conservative thinkers who do not accept the idea of a supernatural or personal God. Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, for example, wrote of God as a power or process in people and in the universe that makes for human salvation or fulfillment. Rabbi Robert Gordis believes that God is the creative power in the universe and the force behind social, political, and scientific progress in the world. Gordis says that God may be found both in the order of nature and in the course of our history. We cannot know what God *is*; we can only feel God's workings through our world and the people in it.

Reconstructionist

GOD



ordecai Kaplan's ideas about God are untraditional. Kaplan is a "humanist-naturalist." He is a humanist because he finds God in people and in human experience. Our potential and our striving to do better, to reach higher, to achieve greater things, and to rise above the lowly animals reflects the power of God. And Kaplan also finds evidence of God in the universe and in nature because the universe has order and laws, rules and design. Nature's order is designed to help us to achieve our highest goals. In this way, Kaplan believes that we must found our belief in God on modern, scientific, and rational facts and on a faith in humanity and in the universe as having the elements we need for raising our own moral and ethical behavior.

Kaplan defines God as the power or process that makes for human salvation and fulfillment, for the realization of the "highest ideals for which men strive." Basically, Kaplan has a deep faith that people (and the universe of which people are part) have in them a force or power driving them to reach for ideals such as justice and truth, goodness and peace. Just as gravity is a power in nature which cannot be seen but is always felt, so there is a power in human

beings and in the world that makes us search for betterment and fulfillment. That power is what we call "God."

Reconstructionism does not teach that God is a person living in heaven and writing our deeds in a book. That concept, says Kaplan, is silly, childlike *supernaturalism*. We can't see or feel God and we should not try to. Nor should we try to know God through mystical experiences. Even the belief in miracles seems childish and primitive since modern science has taught us that the laws and dynamics of the universe cannot be suspended or stopped. Therefore we should not think of God as a miracle-worker. Nor should we think of God as a judge who will reward or punish us in the next life. Our concern should be for *this* world, not the next. We are expected to live the good life here and now. The idea of a God who will reward or punish in some next life is just not a modern way of thinking, according to Kaplan.



In the library of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, students can keep up with what's happening on the world scene, even as they continue their studies of the Jewish past.

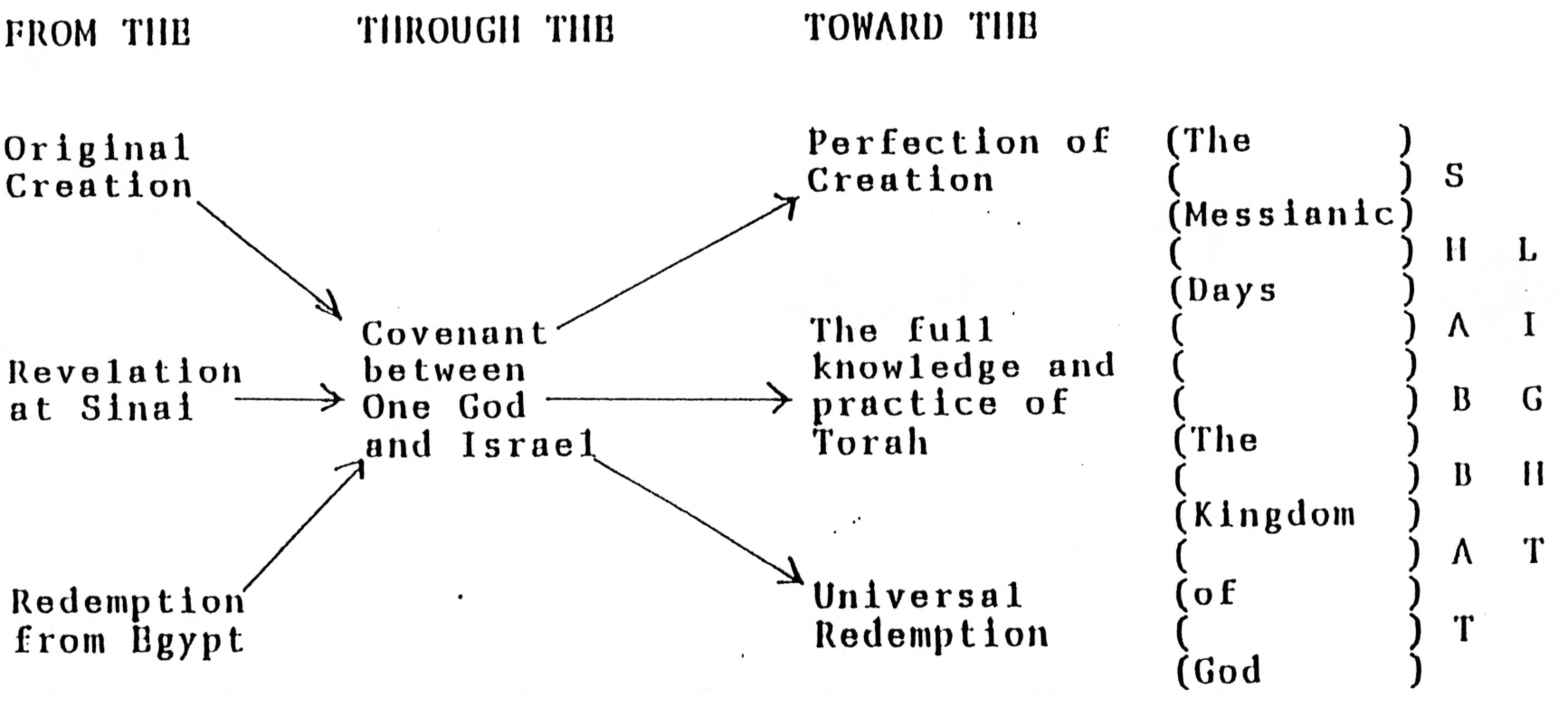
But the most radical change in the way Kaplan thinks about God is his idea that God's power is limited. For if God were all powerful, how could He allow evil and suffering in the world? The Reconstructionists believe that there are things that are within God's power and things that God cannot control, at least not now. For God's holiness has not yet filled the world. That part of life and the world not yet filled with God's presence is what we call "evil." We must have faith that someday God's spirit will fill the entire world and evil and suffering will disappear. Our task as human beings and as Jews is to bring that day ever closer.

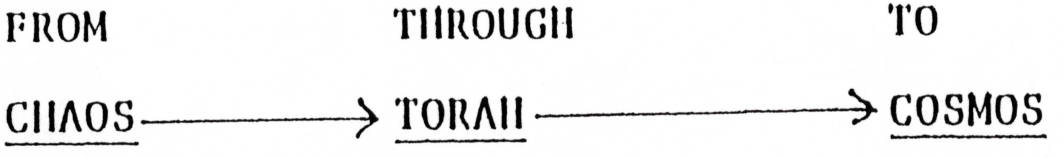
With the exception of Rabbi Milton Steinberg, Reconstructionist thinkers have accepted these ideas about God. Steinberg felt that Kaplan's definition of God was too cold and rationalistic. He wanted to think of God as more than just a power or process; he longed for some mystery in religion because he felt that life itself contains some mystery and wonder. But most Reconstructionists have sided with Kaplan.

SUPPLEMENT: THE PITTSBURGH, COLUMBUS AND CENTENARY STATEMENTS:
A COMPARATIVE CHART

1875--Pittsburgh	1937--Columbus	1976--Centenary Perspecteve
The God Idea		
We recognize in every religion an attempt to grasp the infinite One, and in every mode, source or book of revelation held sacred in any religious system the consciousness of the indwelling of God in man. We hold that Judaism presents the highest conception of the God-idea as taught in our Holy Scriptures and developed and spiritualized by the Jewish teachers in accordance with the [illegible]al and philosophical progress of their respective ages. We maintain that Judaism preserved and defended amid continual struggles and trials and under enforced isolation this God-idea as the central religious truth for the human race.	The heart of Judaism and its chief contribution to religion is the doctrine of the One, living God, who rules the world through law and love. In Him all existence has its creative source and mankind its ideal of conduct. Through transcending time and space, He is the indwelling Presence of the world. We worship Him as the Lord of the universe and as our merciful Father.	The affirmation of God has always been essential to our people's will to survive. In our struggle through the centuries to preserve our faith we have experienced and conceived of God in many ways. The trials of our own time and the challanges to modern culture have made steady belief and clear understanding difficult for some. Nevertheless, we ground our lives, personally and continually, on God's reality and remain open to new experiences and conceptions of the Divine. Amid the mystery we call life, we affirm that human beings, created in God's image, share in God's eternality despite the mystery we call death.

PRAYER


FROM THE
THROUGH THE
TOWARD THE
Original Creation
Revelation at Sinai
Redemption from Egypt
Covenant between One God and Israel
Perfection of Creation
The full knowledge and practice of Torah
Universal Redemption
(The Messianic Days)
(The Kingdom of God)
S H A B B A T


FROM
THROUGH
TO
CHAOS
TORAH
COSMOS

The Shema

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is One.



Hear,



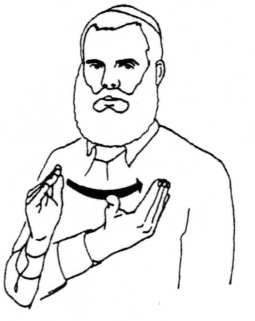
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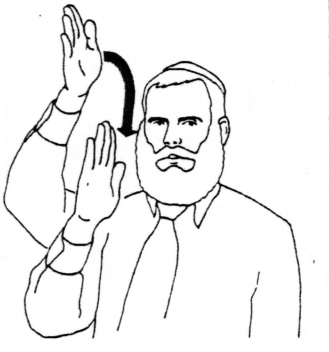
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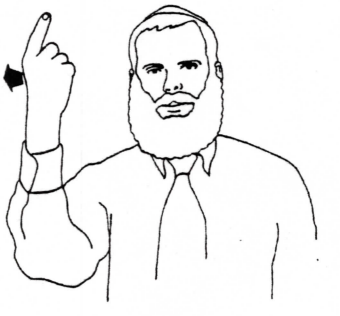
God.



The Lord



is



One.

Blessing Over the Sabbath Candles

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.



Blessed



are



you,



O Lord



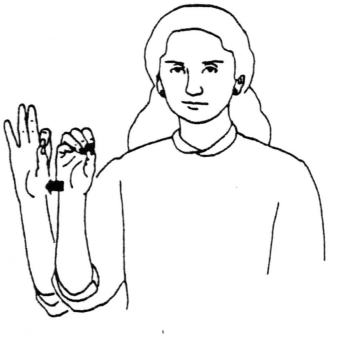
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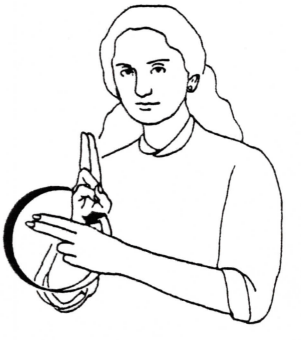
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King



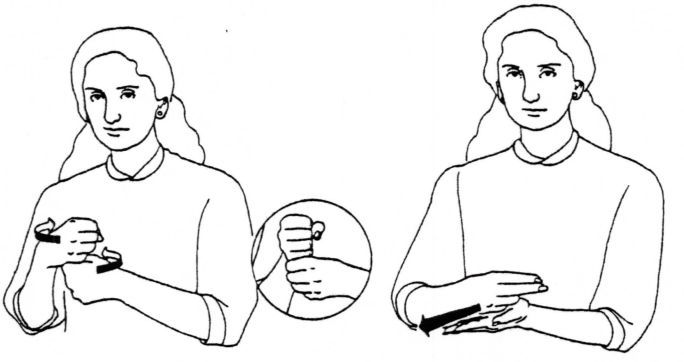
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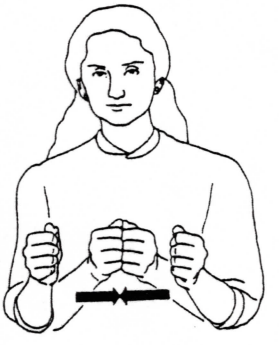
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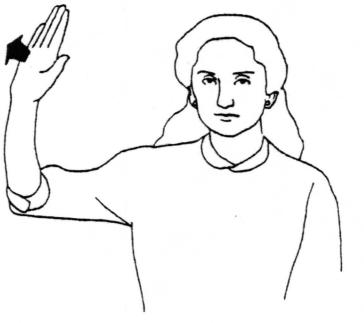
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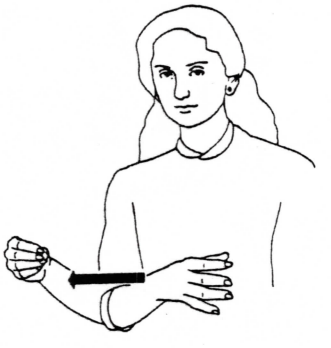
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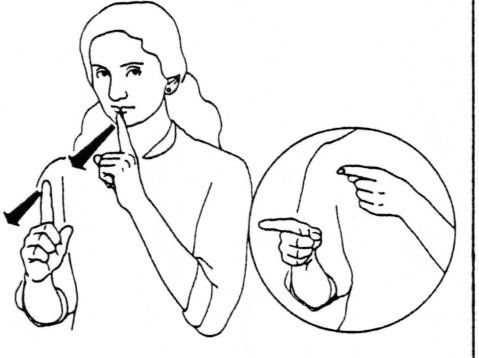
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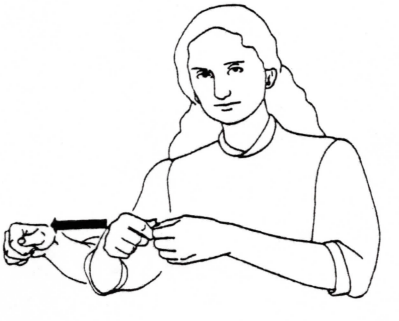
and



commanded



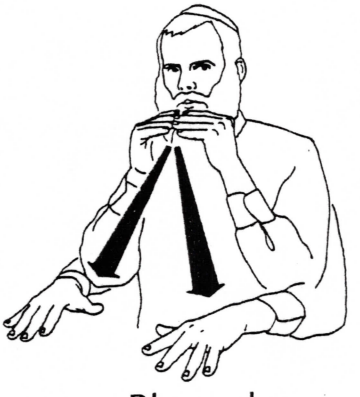
us



to kindle the Sabbath lights.

The Kiddush

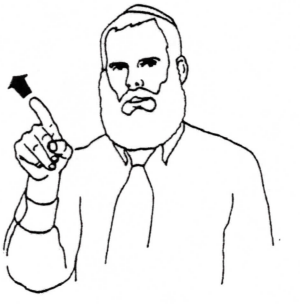
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine.



Blessed



are



you,



O Lord



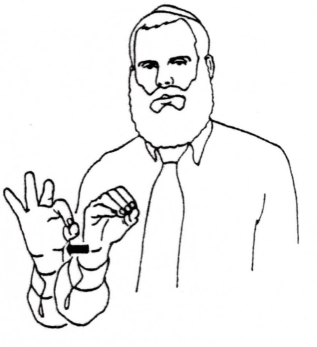
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God,



King



of



the universe,

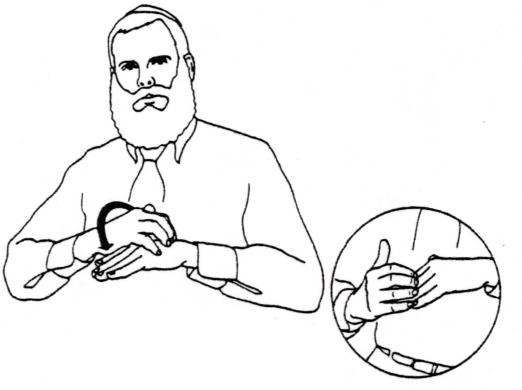


who



created

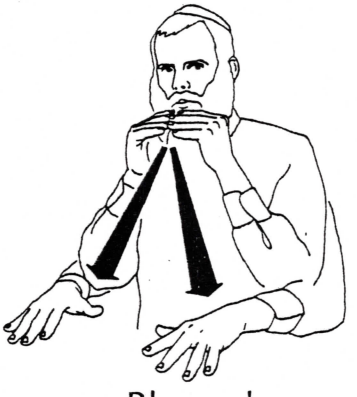




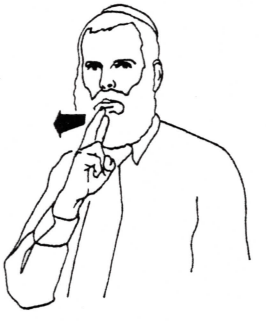
the fruit of the vine.

Blessing Over Bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.



Blessed



are



you,



O Lord



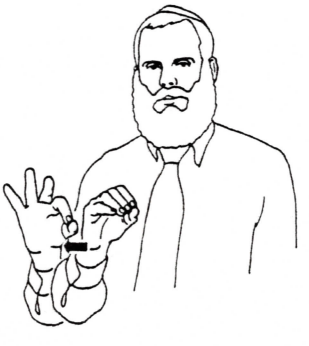
our



God,



King



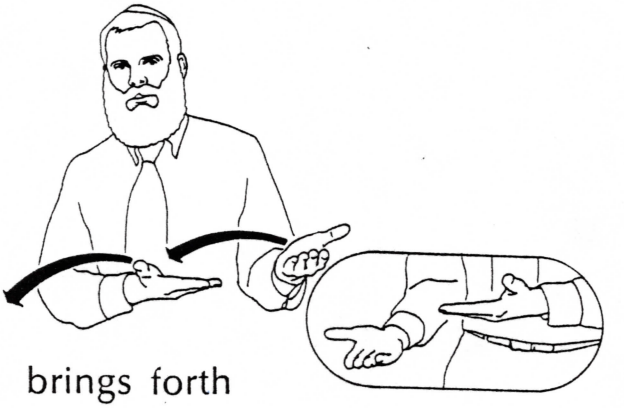
of



the universe,



who



brings forth



bread



from



the earth.



Baltimore Jewish Times
MAY 19, 1989 39

Thinking About God

SHIRA DICKER
Special to the Jewish Times

My son, age four and three quarters, wants to know if God is a man or a woman, a daddy or a mommy, married or single or divorced. He wants to know what Hashem, as he is fond of calling Him/Her, eats for breakfast and whether He/She is also the God of Christian people and "people from Africa".

And then, as if recalling some lesson learnt long ago, my inquisitive son ceases his questions and says, "God is a man and a woman, but doesn't have a body. God is like a big spirit that watches over us." Hearing him repeat the words I have told him dozens of times, I am moved to smile and then feel uncertain. How does one speak honestly about something one knows nothing about?

Here is my dilemma. I don't want to give my child what I believe to be a false and unfair picture of God — that of a bearded patriarch sitting on a heavenly throne watching over the Jewish people and intervening in affairs, a deus ex machina. My own historical and especially post-Holocaust theology negates the existence of that sort of diety. Nor do I want my child's notion of God to be imbued with all sorts of magical or supernatural powers. That would be reducing religion to Disneyland. On the other hand, I don't want to

How does one speak honestly about something one knows nothing about?

disregard the presence of God, for I don't believe in a random universe either.

What I am left with is a hovering, benevolent spirit, neither male or female, both male and female; intangible, unknowable.

I am always struck when I encounter people who speak with such certainty about God. Whether it is our Christian-Pacifist Hutterian friends speaking about God manifesting Himself in their lives, about God choosing missions for them, or a Lubavitch acquaintance who prefaces each announcement with *Im Yirtzah Hashem* (God willing), or simply my son's nursery teacher telling the wide-eyed children about the miraculous revelation at Mount Sinai. I am overcome by a feeling akin to envy. I truly wish that I could so easily pin down God's nature, God's essence, God's purpose.

I am not a cynical person. I believe, like Anne Frank, in the basic goodness of people. I don't view the Torah as written by the hand of God, but I feel it is suffused with Divine inspiration. I believe that there were and are prophets, maybe even messiahs. Upon sighting a blue-black Vermont midnight sky illuminated by stars I intone the blessing *Oseh Ma'aseh B'resheet*, expressing my awe-struck gratitude to the force that has created the wondrous world.

Bathing my children, I marvel at the beauty of their form, at the wisdom that fashions bodies to encase intellects, tempraments, souls. I look at my sturdy son demonstrating an aquatic antic to his spellbound — and equally sturdy — 10-month old sister and I note that their faces are variations on a theme, that they share their father's wide feet and wrists, my full lips, and the combined features of innumerable ancestors dating back to the beginning of time.

Living within the safe and lovely cocoon of my own life I see ample evidence for the direct hand of the Divine, guarding, overseeing, nurturing. We are not threatened by epidemics, our home is not in a war zone. Our problems are the problems of the middle-class; we are dissatisfied with our jobs, we are not creatively fulfilled, we are too fat, we don't have enough money.

But it is misfortune in the lives of others that makes me question the nature of God and attribute my own good fortune to sheer luck. An acquaintance loses an infant son to a freak toy accident. A young, outspoken writer-friend dies of leukemia, leaving behind a wife and two children. There are wars. People are maimed, tortured, killed. Thousands starve to death in under-developed countries. People wander without homes. Young girls are raped. Disease ravages lives.

To believe that a transcendent force is responsible for my good fortune is to believe that it is also responsible for the misery in the lives of others. I am left believing only in my own dumb luck.

When I was growing up my mother would often tell me the story of my adoption at the age of five months, ending the tale with a sigh and the expressed belief that it was all *b'shert*. *B'shert* is a word that means, approximately, predestined, and it is easy to see why she, the recipient of an infant daughter after six years of infertility believed that it was meant to be. As a child, the concept of *b'shert* always struck me as faulty but I never knew why. It was only when I grew up and met the tormented birth mother whose unwilling and painful relinquishment of me had made my adoptive mother's *b'shert* possible that I realized that once again, it was all dumb luck, and only on one party's behalf. *B'shert* is easy to believe in if you only see the victorious side of the story. It is the knowledge of the other, tragic side, that raises troubling questions.

What am I to convey to my child about God? Already he sees contradictions even in the nebulous concepts I have handed him. I have told him God is benevolent, and that He/She is the creator of the world. Adam wants to know why, if God is good, that cats chase and kill mice, why lions eat lambs, why are there wars, why are there earthquakes? He has learned in school about God helping the Jews, about the power of prayer. He doesn't understand why Laura's mother died of a brain tumor, why God won't send down a new toy when he asks for it, why people have an inclination to be good and an inclination to be bad. He asks me why, if Hashem really, really exists, can't we see Him/Her?

I can only be honest with my child and tell him what I believe. I believe that we are not living purposeless lives and that an answer will be revealed to us, in this life or the next. I believe in the aspiration to greatness and the possibility of global peace. I draw my child close and tell him that we are filled with the spirit of greatness, the spirit of God.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is our attachment to the utmost.
Prayer takes the mind out of the narrowness of self-interest, and enables us to see the world in the mirror of the holy.
Prayer clarifies our hope and intentions.
It helps us discover our true aspirations, the pangs we ignore, the longings we forget.
It is an act of self-purification, quarantine for the soul.
It gives us the opportunity to be honest, to say what we believe, and to stand for what we say.
Prayer teaches us what to aspire to.
Prayer implants in us the ideals we ought to cherish.
Prayer is the essence of spiritual living.
Prayer revives and keeps alive the rare greatness of some past experience in which things glowed with meaning and blessing.
Prayer makes visible the right, and reveals what is hampering and false.
Prayer is more than a light before us; it is a light within us.

ABRAHAM J. HESCHEL

REASONS FOR PRAYING

Yes	*No*	
_____	_____	1. *Need to express innermost feelings:* People need to show gratitude, humility, excitement, wonder, awe, amazement, appreciation, and thankfulness for being alive.
_____	_____	2. *Fulfillment of desires:* People have needs and desires and often turn to God (through prayer) to help them achieve those desires or help them in times of trouble or distress.
_____	_____	3. *Relationship with God:* Through prayer, people try to clarify and establish a personal, loving, and intimate relationship with the Power behind the universe. Prayer can enable an individual to feel a partnership with God in completing the work of creation.
_____	_____	4. *Fear:* People have basic fears, problems, and guilt feelings and turn to prayer to enunciate and clarify them.
_____	_____	5. *Identification:* Prayer enables the Jew to identify with past, present, and future members of the Jewish people, as well as with a particular community or peer group engaged in prayer activity and ritual.
_____	_____	6. *Ethical responsibility:* Prayer gives people the opportunity to evaluate themselves and their society by assessing the needs of others and evaluating their own values in the light of the values expressed in the prayers.
_____	_____	7. *Study:* The act of Torah study itself is considered a form of Jewish worship and is included within prescribed prayer rituals. It is vitally important in enriching one's intellectual abilities and adding to knowledge about living good lives.
_____	_____	8. *To shape experience:* The act of prayer can significantly change a given event. Saying a blessing at the appropriate time raises the experience to a higher and more spiritual level. Both the experience and the individual are enriched by a prayerful act.
_____	_____	9. *Self-discipline:* Regulating one's life around prayerful activity makes one sensitive, on a daily basis, to the wonders, mysteries, and challenges of living.
_____	_____	10. *Joy of language and words:* Many people enjoy the beauty and power of well-written poetry. Prayer is written, for the most part, in the language of poetry and many enjoy this type of emotional and intellectual experience.
_____	_____	11. *Mitzvah:* People engage in traditional prayer activities because they feel commanded by God to do so.

PRAYER

(A Jewish Perspective)

In Judaism, prayer is considered the service of the heart; it is a way of communicating with God, and is approached with all our heart, all our soul and all our might.

There are many ways of reaching out to God. In ancient days, Jews communicated with God by offering sacrifices which were accompanied by rituals and ceremonies. Eventually these ceremonies became so complicated that only special religious leaders (Temple priests and Levites) could conduct them or lead the singing.

Religious practices began to change after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. Without a temple, the priests could no longer offer sacrifices; therefore, a new form of worship was required. In exile, in Babylonia the Jewish people began to gather on the Sabbath to study the Holy Book, and to reach out to God directly, with words, without priests, altars or sacrifices.

The custom of coming together to study and pray in a neighborhood synagogue continued even after the Jews returned to their land, even though the Temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt. It was the existence of the synagogue that enabled Judaism to survive. After the fall of the Second Temple, Jews were able to continue to worship the one God, using prayer as a substitute for sacrifice. The design of the synagogue service as developed at that time was incorporated into early Christian worship. The first part of the Eucharistic Service retains the structure of Jewish worship services at the beginning of the Common Era.

Prayer consists of more than mere words and can take different forms. Traditionally, in Judaism, study of Torah is regarded as prayer and acts of kindness (gemilut chasadim) are also considered a form of prayer.

The heart of the worship service for all branches of Judaism is the Sh'ma, the watchword of the faith, which proclaims that there is one God for all humanity who exists for all eternity. Ultimately, students learn that prayer, whether expressed in terms of praise, petition or thanks to God, inspires us to remember the commandments; to do justice, to love mercy and to understand God's will.

"May it by Thy will, O God, to extend peace, great and wondrous, in the universe. Let all the peoples of the earth recognize and know the innermost truth; that we are not come into this world for quarrel and division, nor for hate and jealousy, contrariness and bloodshed; but we are come into this world to recognize and know Thee. Be Thou blessed forever."
(Chasidic literature)

PRAYER

(A Christian Perspective)

Prayer is, for both Christians and Jews, humanity's godward consciousness, arising out of experience and given expression in word or deed. At its heart, prayer is not a simple petitioning of the Creator for various favors, but a celebration of God as a presence recognized in and through the human experience. This recognition has been verbalized in many ways. Some of these verbalizations have proven to be more adeqately expressive of the "God-experience" than others. These are the prayers which have lasted, and which have been transmitted to us in the form of "traditional" prayers.

Further, God deals with persons not only individually, but in groups, in communities. Hence, there are corporate prayers, expressions toward God by the believing community, celebrating that particular community's special experience of God. These corporate prayers are the backbone of liturgical prayer, both Christian and Jewish.

I

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל, לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת, וְלֹא שָׂמָנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה;
שֶׁלֹּא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ כָּהֶם, וְגוֹרָלֵנוּ כְּכָל־הֲמוֹנָם.

We must praise the Lord of all, the Maker of heaven and earth, who has set us apart from the other families of earth, giving us a destiny unique among the nations.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי
הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא,

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

It is our duty to praise the Master of all, to exalt the Creator of the Universe, who has not made us like the nations of the world and has not placed us like the families of the earth; who has not designed our destiny to be like theirs, nor our lot like that of all their multitude.

(Birnbaum)

II

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא נָטָה שָׁמַיִם וְיָסַד אֶרֶץ,
וּמוֹשַׁב יְקָרוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וּשְׁכִינַת עֻזּוֹ בְּנִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים.
הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין עוֹד.

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.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים
לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

III

Let us revere the God of life, and sing the praise of Nature's Lord, who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is proclaimed by the starry skies, and whose wonders are revealed in the human heart. He is our God; there is none else. With love and awe we acclaim the Eternal God, the Holy One, blessed be He.

It is our duty to praise the Master of all, to exalt the Creator the Universe -- that it is He who stretched forth the heavens and founded the earth; His seat of glory is in the heavens above; His abode of majesty is in the lofty heights. He is our God, there is none else.

IV

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ לְיַחֵד אֶת־
שְׁמוֹ, וְגוֹרָלֵנוּ לְהַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתוֹ.

We praise Him who gave us life. In our rejoicing He is God; He is God in our grief. In anguish and deliverance alike, we praise; in darkness and light we affirm our faith. Therefore we bow our heads in reverence, before the Eternal God of life, the Holy One, blessed be He.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי
הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

It is our duty to praise the master of all, to exalt the Creator of the Universe that it is He who made our portion to unify His name and our destin, to make His kingdom reign.

ALTERNATIVE "ADORATIONS"

from

GATES OF PRAYER

with English text and literal translation.

SOME THOUGHTS ON PRAYER

I have always found prayer difficult. So often it seems like a fruitless game of hide-and-seek where we seek and God hides..... Yet I cannot leave prayer alone for long. My need drives me to Him. And I have a feeling that He has His own reasons for hiding Himself, and that finally all my seeking will prove infinitely worthwhile. And I am not sure what I mean by "finding." Some days my very seeking seems a kind of "finding". And, of course, if "finding" means the <u>end</u> of "seeking", it were better to go on seeking.

Praise Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.
Curse Me, says God, and I will know that you love Me.
Praise Me or curse Me,
And I will know that you love Me.

Sing out My graces, says God.
Raise your fist against Me and revile, says God.
Sing out graces or revile,
Reviling is also a kind of praise, says God.

But if you sit fenced off in your apathy, says God,
If you sit entrenched in, "I don't give a hang," says God,
If you look at the stars and yawn,
If you see suffering and don't cry out,
If you don't praise and you don't revile,
Then I created you in vain, says God.

Public worship expresses the sanctity we feel in the social bond. A congregation at worship is a society declaring its devotion to that which we call God, a fellowship of men forged by faith in Him. Here is an experience that can deepen the social spirit and strengthen the bond of sympathy among men. If in public worship we realize that my prayers are also the prayers of the man who is by my side, it will make us more effectively aware of our common humanity and implant a spirit which will be potent for social good. They who worship God together bring Him into their mutual relations. If public worship does not produce this result, then it is but private worship in a public place. If it does bring men closer together under the influence of God, then it is a way to the sanctification of human society.

If God is not, then the existence of all that is beautiful and good, is but the accidental by-product of blindly swirling atoms, or of the equally unpurposeful mechanisms of present-day physics. A man may believe that this dreadful thing is true. But only the fool will say in his heart that he is glad that it is true. For to wish...there should be no God is to wish that the things which we love and strive to realize and make permanent, should be only temporary and doomed to frustration and destruction. Atheism leads not to badness but only to an incurable sadness and loneliness.

Through prayer we struggle to experience the Presence of God. Let us be sure that the One we invoke is the Most High, not a god of battles, of state or status or 'success' - but the Source of peace and mercy and goodness. Let us pray, knowing that: "The gods men worship write their names on our faces, be sure of that. And a man will worship something - have no doubt of that either. He may think that his tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of his heart - but it will not. That which dominates his imagination and his thoughts will determine his life and character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we are worshipping, for what we are worshipping we are becoming."

HINENI

here I am again
without much to offer by way of moral worth
I've a rich collection of defeats
maybe that's to your liking?
I don't know, do you?
if I'm to be quite frank
your likes and dislikes have never been
all that clear to me
presumably love is something you're in favor of
and I've found it possible to love
but never without a certain anguish
whether that's the way you intended it
or that's a problem all my own
I can't say, can you?
I've never wanted to pain others
I've never wanted to pain myself
I guess I can plead good intentions
but I needn't tell you about good intentions
and the road to hell
I've often wondered: did you yourself intend
when you got it all going
that to live would be so complicated
to find a way in the world so hazardous?
did you have any idea at all
that living would involve such confusion
and such heartbreak?
I can't be sure any of this will mean much to you
I can't even be sure that you exist
as more than a figment of my own mysterious psyche
it's a risk to open up to you
who knows, I may be branding myself a terrible fool
but what's not a risk? what's guaranteed to be foolproof?
so here I am again
praying for some modest bravery
so that I can go on saying to you: here
I am again

Stanley F. Chyet

II. Some Themes of the High Holy Days and Pilgrimage Festivals --

A. THE HIGH HOLY DAYS

ROSH HASHANAH

Some Central Themes

1. Creation;
   birth of the world.

2. Day of Judgment;
   day of self-judgment;
   self-evaluation

3. Forgiveness of sin;

4. Purification of life;

5. Meaning of "New Year";
   time and timelessness;
   swift passage of time.

Some Related and/or Secondary Themes

1. MALKUYYOTH -- Divine Rule
   God as King
   Kingdom of God
   Universalism
2. ZICHRONOTH - Day of Remberance
   God's remberance of Sarah;
   birth of Isaac, God's rememberance of Hannah; birth of Samuel.

3. SHOFAROTH - Shofar, Moral awakening, Akedah: faith, obedience, dedication, etc.
4. Days of Awe.
5. Renewal; newness.
6. Sweetness; joyfulness.
7. Whiteness; purity.

YOM KIPPUR

Some Central Themes

1. Sin;
   guilt;
   self-questioning;
   confession.

2. Repentance -- returning;
   atonement;
   reconciliation, unity with God;
   making amends with one's fellow;

3. Vows and resolutions:
   Kol Nidre;
4. Mercy and forgiveness;
5. Choice -- "Life or death, good or evil."
6. Yizkor --

death	immortality
loss	hope
grief	humility
eternity -	timelessness

Some Related and/or Secondary Themes

1. Fasting; hunger (of manifold types); self-affliction;

2. Humility of man.
3. Scapegoat - many associations

4. Jonah - escapism; universalism; patriotism-nationalism; sleeping (many associations), etc. Israel's mission; avoiding the unpleasant (1.13); one last effort (1.13); vows (2.10); futility (4.3); others...

TESHUVA

The Three Things My Father Discovered

The great Jewish humorist, Sam Levenson, in describing the Jewish American experience, once wrote, "My folks were immigrants and they fell under the spell of the American legend that the streets of America were paved with gold. When my father got here, though, he found out three things: First, he saw that the streets were not paved with gold. The second thing he noticed was that the streets were not even paved, and last, but not least, he discovered that he was the one who was expected to do the paving." There are three precepts that the Jew must understand before beginning anything new . . . first, the dream of what ought to be; secondly the reality of how it is, and last, but not least, what must be done to make life more livable for everyone. Perhaps that, above all, should be the Jewish watchword during this New Year.

– Rabbi Stephen Chaim Listfield

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is it Possible to Merit Eternity in One Hour?

Rabbi Judah the prince was crying: "It is possible to gain eternal bliss in one hour." About whom did Rabbi Judah say this? About Rabbi Eliezer b. Durdia. Rabbi Eliezer was a sinful man all his life. One time a prostitute told him during an immoral moment, "Eliezer b. Durdia, you will never be able to repent of your sins."

Eliezer, quite upset, went to the edge of the city to the mountains, crying, "Mighty Mountains, please ask God to forgive me." "Why should we help you, Eliezer; we have enough of our own troubles and sins," replied the mountains.

"Heavens and Earth. . . " – "We have too many sins. . . "

"Sun and Moon. . . " – "We are too busy. . . "

"Stars and Planets. . . " – "Who are you?!"

Eliezer thought, "It must all depend on me. Nobody else can help set my wrongs right."

Eliezer sat down, his head fell on his knees, and began crying and wailing. A heavenly voice cried out, "Rabbi Eliezer b. Durdia is hereby granted eternal life."

Rabbi Judah concluded his story by saying, "It's not enough that the penitents are forgiven and granted eternal reward, but they are also given the title Rabbi."

But why was Rabbi Judah crying? He cried because he saw that it was possible for a man to achieve in one hour what righteous people take many years to achieve, for the righteous do not work at it with all their strength all their years. Why was Eliezer called "Rabbi"? From him they all learned the power of one hour of true repentance.

And so it is with us. It is never too late. Each of us continually faces the challenge of having one act decide the future for us. One moment could change our life for better or for worse.

– Rabbi Richard M. Yellin

REPENT, BUT DON'T WALLOW IN REGRET

Friend, don't be a perfectionist. Perfectionism is a curse, and a strain. For you tremble lest you miss the bull's-eye. You are perfect is you let be.

Friend, don't be afraid of mistakes. Mistakes are not sins. Mistakes are ways of doing something different, perhaps creatively new.

Friend, don't be sorry for your mistakes. Be proud of them. YOu had the courage to give something of yourself.

– Fritz Perls, Psychiatrist
in Fritz, by Martin Shepard
p. 210

* * * * * *

THE ENEMY

He and I are old friends,
For I have known him many years.
We have met countless times
on the field to do battle.
Never have I been able to
Repel his first assault, so great his strength.
He strikes with the lust that a man feels for a woman.
With viciousness that only a fire of passion can create.
It would appear my foe knows every weak point,
and begins his attack there.
If in my lifetime I am ever able to defeat him,
the victory would make me whole.
For this is the enemy that every mortal knows,
Few have truly defeated.
For my enemy lurks within a fortress.
I cannot breach.
He lives within me.

– Gomelia Baker, in
The Struggle for Significance
by John H. Brennecke and
Robert G. Amick

TESHUVAH: WE MUST DESIRE TO SIN

When we examine what our sages have to say on the subject of sin, we discover that in their opinion the man who longs to sin is worthier and more perfect than the man who has no desire to sin and suffers no pain when he rejects sin. They even went so far as to say that the worthier a man is and the more perfect, the greater will be his desire to sin and his pain in rejecting sin. In this connection they say that the greater the man, the more powerful is his impulse to evil. Not content with this they say that the reward of the man who exercised self-control is in proportion to the amount of pain the effort at self-control causes him. As they say: "According to the amount of pain involved in doing good so is the reward." Even more than this, they positively commanded a man to have the desire to sin and they warned him never to say that he would not commit this sin because of the laws of his nature even if the Torah had not forbidden it. I refer here to the passage: "Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: A man should not say: It is impossible for me to eat milk and meat together, it is impossible for me to wear garments of mixed kinds, it is impossible for me to have a forbidden sexual union. But he should say: It is quite possible for me, but what can I do if my Father in Heaven has commanded me not to do it?"

– Maimonides

TESHUVA: FIRST OR LAST?

Once, we are told, a traveller making his way through a difficult and perilous countryside came to the bank of a river too deep to be forded. Return he could not, nor remain where he was. How, then, was he to come to the other side? Then he bethought himself of the purse which dangled from his girdle, containing in the form of gold pieces all his worldly wealth. In the extremity of his need he began to toss the coins one by one into the river, hoping so to raise a pathway for himself over its bed.

In vain! The bag emptied; the river still could not be crossed.

Finally one gold piece remained. Holding this in his hand, the traveller cast about for some other device. Looking here and there he espied a ferry boat far down the river which in his frenzy he had failed to notice earlier. Regretting that he had wasted his treasure to no purpose, yet fortunate in that one coin was left to him for passage money, he hastened to the boat, gave the gold piece to the ferryman and crossed to the other side, so saving his life and going on his way.

Bahy Ibn Pakuda (the author of this parable) was trying to say that penitence ought to be man's first expenditure, but that it proves too often his last – the sole remaining device available to him when all else has been spent. . . For the wise and the prudent it is the first coin in the purse - that disbursement of the spirit which makes possible the negotiating of life's most dreadful passages - which enables us to go on our way safe and rejoicing.

But for the foolish, the insensitive, the reckless, the undiscerning, it is the last coin in the purse, the one which – when every resource has been exhausted, when we are left with only our need and desperation – purchases a secure crossing to fresh possibilities and hopes.

– Rabbi Milton Steinberg

* * * * * *

THE PURIFICATION OF MY SOUL

As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute nature of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to "the golden key which opens the palace of eternity," carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

MEMO

TEMPLE ISRAEL

DATE: October 18, 1989
TO: Confirmation Students
FROM: Rabbi Aryeh Azriel
SUBJECT: Confirmation Assignment

The next Confirmation class will be held:

Monday, October 23

6:30 p.m.

Temple Israel

Your assignment for this class will be to read **"Marriage and the Family", chapter 25, page 212** in your book. Also, please read the enclosed material, **"Marriage in Jewish Life and Tradition".** Please bring this with you to class.

Thanks, see you **Monday, October 23!**

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October 16, 1990

Dear Parents:

The following is general information regarding the trip to New York:

1) Everyone will meet at Eppley Airport at 5:30 a.m. on Thursday, October 25th. We will be departing Omaha at 6:20 a.m. on Midway, Flight #156.

2) We will be returning to Omaha on Sunday, October 28th, departing LaGuardia Airport at 7:00 p.m. on Midway, Flight #395. We will arrive in Omaha at 10:40 p.m.

3) Our hotel accommodations will be at Omni Park Central, Seventh Avenue at West 56th Street, New York, New York. Our telephone number will be (212) 757-3374.

4) Each participant may bring one large piece of luggage to be checked through and one small "carry-on" bag if it fits under a plane seat.

Nice clothing (dress or skirt for the girls, jacket and tie for boys) must be worn Friday night and Saturday morning for services. It is suggested that students may wish to wear nice clothing when we attend Broadway show as well.

Casual clothing (nice pants, shirts and sweaters for boys and similar clothing for girls including socks or stockings) can be worn on Thursday during the day, Saturday evening and Sunday and for travel on the airplane. Sloppy clothing may be worn in the hotel only. Participants should bring comfortable walking shoes.

The weather is often cold and rainy in New York during this time of year. Participants should bring warm clothing, especially sweaters and lined jackets, raincoats, headcovering, umbrella, etc.

5) Parents who plan not to be in Omaha while we are in New York are asked to give the Rabbi Azriel an address and phone number where they might be reached.

6) The hotel room telephone may be used for two purposes only:

a) to leave wake-up calls
b) to call the room of a chaperon

Any other phone calls made from the room will be charged to the student. Parents who wish to phone their children can call any time during the day and leave a message. The participant will return the call in the late afternoon or evening.

7) One purpose of the trip is for the participants to become better acquainted with all their classmates. It is important, therefore, that they take advantage of this opportunity to become friends with all the members of the class.

8) When participants go to their rooms at curfew, they are not permitted to leave the room. Participants may never leave the hotel without an adult chaperon.

9) Proper behavior in the hotel and throughout our stay in New York must be stressed. We will be in a strange city and the participants must not socialize with strangers. All illegal activities, including the use of alcohol and drugs, are strictly prohibited.

All of these rules are created out of regard for health and safety and a desire to learn and witness manifestations of Judaism not possible in Omaha. Students who violate the rules will be sent home immediately, and any additional expense will be billed to the student's parents.

The cost for this trip is $100.00 for each participant. Please make the $100.00 check payable to Temple Israel and submit by Thursday, November 15, 1990. The additional money was acquired through a generous grant from the Livingston Foundation. Each participant will need to bring extra money along for breakfasts, lunches and spending money.

I am also enclosing an itinerary which details each day's sight-seeing activities.

Thank you for your cooperation in planning for this exciting trip. I look forward to seeing your child next week.

Shalom,

Aryeh Azriel
Rabbi

Enclosure

Temple Israel

7023 Cass Street Omaha, Nebraska 68132 Phone (402) 556-6536

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TORAH · TRUTH · PEACE

Aryeh Azriel, Rabbi - Sidney H. Brooks, Rabbi Emeritus

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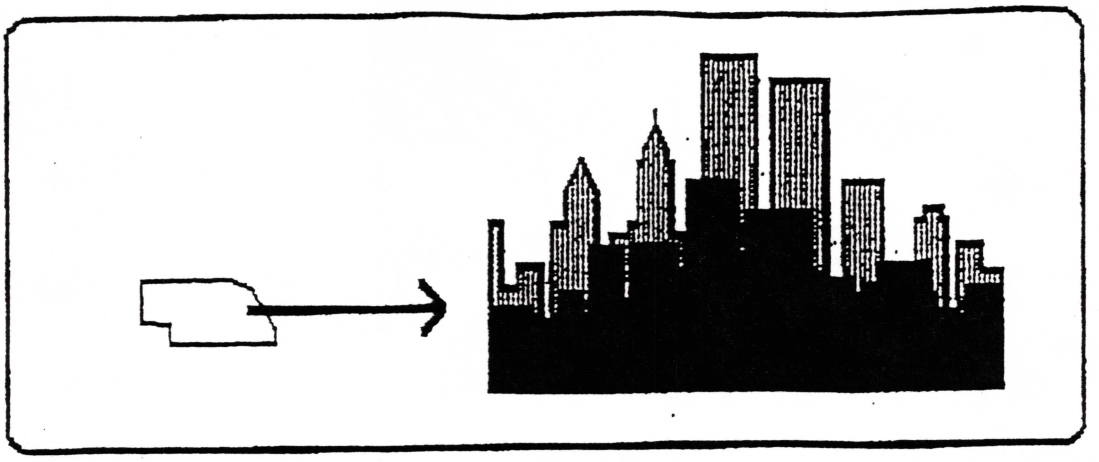
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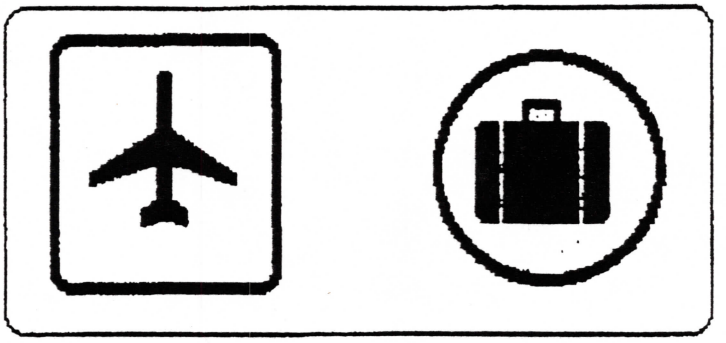


Temple Israel
of Omaha
presents

The 1990 Confirmation Trip
to
New York City

October 25-28, 1990

Thursday, October 25



We'll depart from Omaha at 6:20 AM this morning, flying non-stop to New York's LaGuardia Airport. We arrive there at 11:25 AM, and then travel by vans to our hotel, the **Omni Park Central**, at 56th street and 7th Ave. Upon arrival, we'll have a chance to drop our bags, and then, after meeting our guide in New York, Rabbinic Student Aaron Panken, we'll head downtown to famous **Greenwich Village.**



Washington Arch

Greenwich Village, extending west of Broadway from 14th street southward to about Spring St. is rich in history. Its quaint old houses have sheltered many famous artists and writers. The main streets are lined with a fascinating array of little craft and curio shops, restaurants, art galleries, coffee shops, and "Off-Broadway" theatres. Among its most famous landmarks is Washington Arch in Washington Square Park at the foot of Fifth Ave, designed by Stanford White in 1893. We'll have a chance to eat lunch and see the home of NYU, the **New York University**.



After lunch, we'll go to the Brookdale Center for a tour of the New York campus of the **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.** This is the oldest institution of Jewish higher education in the Western Hemisphere. The college has a Rabbinic School, School of Education, and a School of Sacred music, offering degree programs leading to careers as Rabbis, Cantors, communal workers, educators, and scholars.

The new building, located in Greenwich Village, includes classrooms, an auditorium/chapel, conference center, administrative and faculty offices, library, student-faculty lounge, and rehearsal halls for cantorial students. The college has an impressive library, with autographed manuscripts of Italian and German Rabbis from the 16th century to the present, 16th century editions of Hebraica, one of the best modern Hebrew literature collections, and a fine collection of periodicals from Europe and Israel.

Following our visit to HUC-JIR, we'll have a chance for some informal meetings with students who are studying there, to learn a bit more about their studies, and the other opportunities that the College-Institute offers. Then, we'll leave HUC-JIR and travel uptown to **Temple Emanu-El**, the largest synagogue in the world.



Over 5000 families belong to Temple Emanu-El, and the main sanctuary seats over 2500 people in its vast hall. In plan, the Temple follows the basilica common in Italy. The exterior walls are made of variegated limestone. The dominant feature of the exterior is the great recessed arch off Fifth Ave., enclosing a rose window with its supporting lancets and the three entrance doors. On the exterior, the motifs of

The symbols of the Twelve tribes of Israel appear on the front of the Temple; Biblical verses in Hebrew characters appear on the front of the Beth-El chapel, which connects with the main temple on the north. The chapel is a two-domed structure reminiscent of the Byzantine churches of the Near East.

Just outside the Temple, a "Garden of Freedom" was dedicated during the American Bicentennial in 1976. A Vermont marble bench, surrounded by plants, has the following inscription: "*This garden is dedicated to the people of the Untied States in grateful recognition of 200 years of religious freedom - 1776-1976.*"

After a short walk through the Park to our hotel, we'll have a chance to change and rest. Later this evening, we'll go to the world famous **Carnegie Deli**, for tremendous New York deli sandwiches. Then we'll head downtown, to the Circle in the Square Theatre, to see the **Off-Broadway Show** called **"The Rothschild's."**

After our show, we'll return to our hotel, for a good night's rest!

Friday, October 26th



Today, we'll wake up early, and take the train downtown to Battery Park, the southernmost point in Manhattan. There, we'll catch the ferry for the **Statue of Liberty**. We'll spend the whole morning climbing the Statue of Liberty, given as a gift in 1886, to commemorate our alliance with the people of France during the American Revolution.

After the Statue, we'll take the new ferry to **Ellis Island**. This island, just opened to the public in September, houses a museum which chronicles the course of immigration to America from 1892 to 1954. Many of our parents and grandparents entered this country through the gates on Ellis Island, which became a symbolic sight of welcome to weary travelers after a frightening sea journey.

We'll return to Battery Park in the early afternoon, and after a walk through the **Wall Street area**, we'll visit the **World Trade Center**, site of the two second tallest

buildings in the world. After the amazing view from the observatory on the 110th floor, we'll descend to the street, and spend the rest of the afternoon in smaller groups, visiting places we'd like to see in New York. Options for this time include the New York Stock Exchange, the South Street Seaport, museums, shopping, and anything else we can think of!

We'll arrive back at our hotel in time for Shabbat dinner and services with other Confirmands from the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. After our New York Shabbat experience, we'll spend some time walking around New York's beautiful Upper West Side, home of many cafes and stores. We'll also pass by **Lincoln Center**, New York's professional art center, home of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the New York City Ballet, and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as the gorgeous fountains which look amazing at night. After this long, wonderful day, we'll return to the hotel and get some rest for Shabbat.

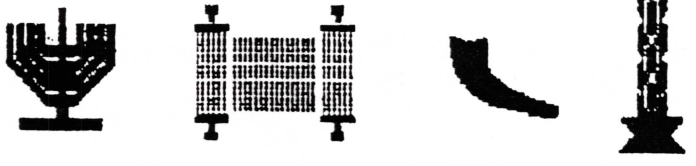
Shabbat, October 27

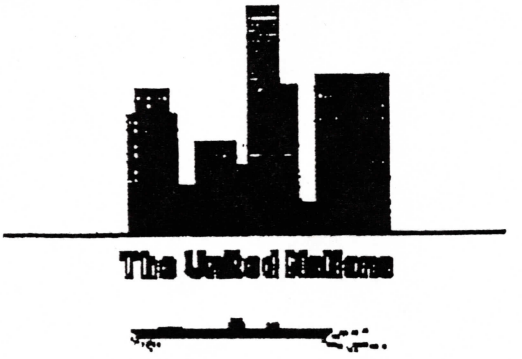
After a lateish wakeup, we'll head over to Shearith Israel, **the Spanish-Portugese synagogue**, one of New York's oldest congregations. For more than three centuries, Congregation Shearith Israel has been identified with the history of New York. The Greek Revival style building was erected in 1897.

In the north entrance hall, there are two massive millstones. They date back to a mill erected in the latter part of the 17th century above which the Dutch Church of Manhattan held its services from 1623-1633.

Three of the Torah scrolls in the Ark came from the Sephardic Congregation in the Hague and were rescued from the Nazis. The beaten brass lamp that is kindled during Chanukah was made in Holland and may well be over 300 years old. The Ner Tamid in front of the ark has been in continuous use since 1818.

In addition to the main synagogue, there is a Colonial Chapel known as the Little Synagogue. It is a composite of the synagogues occupied by Shearith Israel for more than three centuries under three flags: a decade under the Dutch, a century under the British, and , since 1783, under the United States.





After lunch, we will tour the United Nations. Probably very few visitors to the United Nations connect the international peace organization with Jewish contributions to world civilization, but inscribed on the wall of the UN stairway (at 43rd and 1st avenue) across the street from the complex are the words of the prophet Isaiah: "*nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they study war no more.*"

Isaiah's vision of a war-free world has become so universal that the same idea is expressed on the base of a statue the Soviet Union donated to the United Nations. The statue, an impressive nine-foot sculpture of a man beating a sword into a plowshare, stands on a broad granite base in the rose garden north of the General Assembly Building. The work of Russian sculptor Evgeniy Vuchetich, the statue won the "Grand Prix" diploma at the Brussels World Exhibition in 1958. On the base are inscribed the words "*we shall beat our swords into plowshares,*" another part of the same verse from Isaiah.

Drawing the attention of thousands of people visiting the UN is the gift of Israel to the United Nations - 4,000 square feet of stone slabs from the Kastel Hills near Jerusalem. The stones are in a special garden patio within the open area that connects the UN's three major structures: the 39-story Secretariat Building, the Conference Building, and the General Assembly.

After our visit to the United nations, we'll walk over to Fifth Avenue, where we'll have a chance to see **Rockefeller Center**, with its tall buildings, ice skating rink, Radio City Music Hall, and the headquarters of NBC Broadcasting. We'll also stop by Fifth Avenue, where we'll have a chance to see some of the more famous stores and do some quick window shopping.

As the afternoon ends, we'll head downtown to **Chinatown**, for a Chinese Banquet at the Mandarin Inn Pell - where we'll sample Chinese food at its American

best! When dinner ends, after some free time in Chinatown, we'll walk through **Little Italy**, and then return to our hotel for Havdallah, and a good night's rest.

Sunday, October 28

After breakfast on our own in the area of the hotel, we'll take the train downtown to the **Lower East Side.** In this area once lived the largest Jewish community in the world. More than 1,562,000 Jews - most of them from Eastern Europe - rushed to America's shores between 1881 and 1910, and the vast majority settled here on the Lower East Side.

Life for the immigrants was hard. They lived in tenement houses and eked out a living mostly as peddlers or in the expanding clothing trades. In addition to the settlement houses, which were created to help the immigrants adjust to the American environment, the newcomers organized their own societies to meet their varied needs, and gave their overwhelming support to Yiddish press and Yiddish theatre.

A Macy's, Gimbel's, or Abraham and Straus' merchandising empire did not happen overnight! From the peddler's pack and the pushcart of the street to the hole-in-the-wall store, many immigrants, without trades, found this to be their humble;e beginning. In the late 1880's, the Lower East Side became the center of the "push-cart" trade.

Most of these early beginnings are now memories. True, some of the institutions are still doing business at the same old stands, but business is not what it used to be. Nevertheless, you can still see the Jewish Daily Forward, a Yiddish newspaper which played an important part in the Americanization of the newcomers, as well as the Educational Alliance Community Center. You can still see plenty of Hebrew and Yiddish signs and wander through many store that specialize in Jewish books and ceremonial objects, like the Hebrew Publishing Company, and the Zion Tallis Manufacturing Company.

This afternoon, if time allows, we'll visit the **Jewish Museum** across from Central Park, where there are exhibits on all aspects of Jewish life in the modern world. Two of the current exhibitions are of interest, one which depicts pictures of the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, which is on loan from Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem; the other is an exhibit which focuses on the Jewish home, and its development in the end of the 19th century.

Finally, we'll return to the hotel, collect our belongings, say goodbye to Aaron, and travel in vans to the airport for our return trip home. We'll leave New York's LaGuardia Airport at 7:00 PM, arriving in Omaha at 10:40 PM.

Thanks for coming to New York!
We'll see you soon!

RABBI AZRIEL'S ITINERARY
CONFIRMATION TRIP TO NEW YORK
OCTOBER 25 - 28, 1990

Rabbi and the Confirmation group will be leaving Omaha on Thursday morning at 6:20 a.m. They will be returning to Omaha on Sunday evening, October 28th at 7:00 p.m. They will be departing from LaGuardia airport in New York. Sarah Juster will be accompanying the group.

They will be staying at the Omni Park Central, Seventh Avenue at West 56th Street, New York. Their telephone number is (212) 484-3300.

On Saturday afternoon, October 26th, Rabbi will be leaving New York for Chicago to attend a wedding. He can be reached at his in-law's home (the Azriel's) (708) 640-1274. Sarah Juster and Aaron Penkin will be staying with the group on Saturday evening.

Rabbi will be returning to Omaha on Sunday evening (10:35 p.m.).

Students going on New York Trip:

1) Joel Boehm
Home #: 397-9173

2) Daniel Epstein
Phone: 333-4617

3) Dana Erman
Home #: 333-0569

4) Clara Fishel
Home #: 392-0226

5) Sarah Kohll
Home #: 391-5603

6) Mitchell Sherman
Home #: 496-3523

7) Lindsey Weinberg-Taxman
Home #: 397-5816

8) Charles Yale
Home #: 333-3366

9) Brent Zacharia
Home #: 333-0739

10) Marty Finkel
Home #: 333-5888

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1) Joel Boehm
Home #: 397-9173

2) Daniel Epstein
Phone: 333-4617

3) Dana Erman
Home #: 333-0569

4) Clara Fishel
Home #: 392-0226

5) Sarah Kohll
Home #: 391-5603

6) Mitchell Sherman
Home #: 496-3523

7) Lindsey Weinberg-Taxman
Home #: 397-5816

8) Charles Yale
Home #: 333-3366

9) Brent Zacharia
Home #: 333-0739

10) Marty Finkel
Home #: 333-5888

Sarah Juster
Home #: 496-4604

RABBI AZRIEL'S ITINERARY
CONFIRMATION TRIP TO NEW YORK
OCTOBER 25 - 28, 1990

Rabbi and the Confirmation group will be leaving Omaha on Thursday morning at 6:20 a.m. They will be returning to Omaha on Sunday evening, October 28th at 7:00 p.m. They will be departing from LaGuardia airport in New York. Sarah Juster will be accompanying the group.

They will be staying at the Omni Park Central, Seventh Avenue at West 56th Street, New York. Their telephone number is (212) 484-3300.

On Saturday afternoon, October 26th, Rabbi will be leaving New York for Chicago to attend a wedding. He can be reached at his in-law's home (the Azriel's) (708) 640-1274. Sarah Juster and Aaron Penkin will be staying with the group on Saturday evening.

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~~Rabbi~~ Rabbi Azriel

RABBI AZRIEL'S ITINERARY
CONFIRMATION TRIP TO NEW YORK
OCTOBER 25 - 28, 1990

+ Conf. group

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Sarah Juster
Home #: 496-4604

~~Rabbi Azriel~~
Home #: 334-4456

+ Aaron Penkin

* Is Sara staying with group on Sat. p.m.?
Is Mrs. Azriel going?

Temple Israel
Omaha, Nebraska

DATE: October 15,1990
TO: Confirmation Students
FROM: Rabbi Aryeh Azriel
RE: Confirmation Class

The next Confirmation class will be held:

Monday, October 22

6:30 p.m.

Temple Israel

I looking forward to seeing you on
Monday, October 22!

Temple Israel
Omaha, Nebraska

DATE: October 3, 1990
TO: Confirmation Students
FROM: Rabbi Aryeh Azriel
RE: Confirmation Assignment

The next Confirmation class will be held:

Monday, October 8

6:30 p.m.

Temple Israel

Your assignment for this class will be to write a two (2) page paper about your own personal theology on God.

Thanks, see you **Monday, October 8!**

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