

ness. Even the *Avaryan*—the individual who categorically rejects the practice of Judaism—is at the onset of *Yom Kippur* welcomed to join with us in worship.

But it is one thing to open our doors and hearts even to a convict, and another to give the impression that we are indifferent even to the most flagrant breaches of moral principles. A difficult balancing act is required. We must resist the temptation to jump to condemn our fellow man, because we can never be in the same situation. Yet we must also, especially in an age of crass materialism, go out of our way to demonstrate our overriding commitment to the ethical values which are generated by our faith in the Living G-d. □

Formative experiences in my Jewishness

Seymour Melman

I am a child of the Great Depression. Born in 1917 and raised in a Yiddish-speaking household of Russian-Polish parents and grandparents, my childhood years were also affected by the upward economic mobility of my father, a pharmacist in the East Bronx, who had reached the U.S. as a 17-year-old fugitive from the Czar's police. But he, like millions of others, was vulnerable to investments that failed. Within our own family the prospect of economic well-being was transformed into a nightmare of marginal existence. By age fifteen I saw the Great Depression blighting the working people and lower middle-class populations of that neighborhood. Unemployment and evictions of families—huddled with their household goods on the sidewalks—were commonplace. Bank failures destroyed modest savings.

No explanation for all this was offered in my public schools. Capitalism had a business cycle, and President Hoover intoned that "Prosperity is just around the corner." But where was that corner? The despair that shrouded the community was more meaningfully addressed on street corners, at political meetings, and in the widely read leftist literature. The lesson to me was that my schools had little to offer by way of explaining the most important conditions of life.

My interest in the condition of Jews was shaped by my parents' and grandparents' accounts of their

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lives in Europe, and also by my studies in Jewish history in the rather good curriculum of the Hebrew school that I attended after public-school hours. The minority status of Jews and its accompanying weaknesses were brought home to me in the classic works of Theodore Herzl, Pinsker, Ahad-Haam, and particularly Ber Borochov. The historic pattern of Jewish vulnerability to scapegoating was clear and made visible by the rising fascist movements in Europe and the development of fascist organizations in the United States. The lesson to me was that the Zionist idea of changing the minority position of Jews by self-government and occupational normalization was attractive as a scheme for directly altering the core condition of Jewish vulnerability. We regarded a clear view of, and opposition by Jews to, the fascist movements as indispensable for dealing with the position of Jews in our time. At the same time we were critical of the military buildup that had been started in the U.S. during the latter 1930s. For we were suspicious of the motives and policies of the U.S. government as giving little or no evidence of opposition to fascist movements in Europe and elsewhere. The U.S. government's policies during the Spanish Civil War confirmed our worst suspicions.

During the year 1939-40 I was an Avukah Fellow, living in a *kibbutz* in Palestine and traveling about the country. It was an extraordinary time, the first year of World War II. I was exposed to the full range of ideas and institutions of the very dynamic Jewish community of Palestine.

The Realities of Zionist Politics

When a student colleague and I left Palestine in the spring of 1940, we were thoroughly searched by the British authorities, interrogated at some length, and suffered confiscation of various papers and photographs, notably those showing Jews and Arabs in some joint activity. An open police file seemed to contain photocopies of all our correspondence. Of greatest concern to me was that the authorities not discover political papers that were concealed in the bindings of some books as well as a certain cannister of film. The latter had newsreel film of the Jewish revolt in all the main cities against the British rules severely restricting further Jewish immigration and forbidding the purchase of land by Jews. The film was to bring the news to the U.S. and bypass British censorship.

We delivered these films to one of the Labor Zionist headquarters in New York where they were promptly destroyed. The reason was soon made apparent during a visit to Justice Louis Brandeis to report our observations in Palestine. Justice Bran-

deis responded that he felt the Palestinian Jews had lost their heads in protesting as forcefully as they did. He regarded it as absolutely essential that both Roosevelt and Churchill be accorded unqualified support by all Jews as an indispensable requirement for achieving the destruction of the Nazi power.

Brandeis' approach and policy analysis made a strong impression on me and my Zionist friends. In our view, unqualified, carte-blanche support to Roosevelt and Churchill was unthinkable in view of the U.S. and British role in facilitating Franco's victory over the Spanish Republican government by an arms embargo. They would possibly act against the German and Italian fascists, but with methods that suited their political world view, not ours.

For me the lesson of this encounter was fundamental and durable.

Reactions to the Holocaust

The years 1945 to 1948 brought a marked change in the way my parents and closest family viewed the position of Jews and my own political activities. Since I was a teenager, my parents, my father in particular, had regarded "Seymour's activities" with a certain amusement, a youthful enthusiasm that he would overcome as he came to maturity and sought a proper place in the world.

In response to the Holocaust, the horrendous news and photographs of the extermination camps, my family, like others of their generation, were overwhelmed with guilt—unspoken—for their brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins. Suddenly their long obsession with "making it" in America was paralleled by an obsession to support the most far-out activities and movements that declared themselves for rescuing the Jews of Europe or for transporting them to Palestine, or for battling the British for the grant of a Jewish state. So these men and women who had thought of Zionism as some sort of idealistic, esoteric, and farfetched goal transformed into militant activists who used the Holocaust as a rationalization for supporting the fascist wing of the Jewish community in Israel, led by Menachem Begin. The end justified the means.

The founding of the Jewish State in 1948 was seen as a political defeat by me and many of my friends. We judged that a nationalist Israel would confront a rivalry without foreseeable end with Arab nationalist counterparts.

Late in 1948 I was invited to give an educational talk to a Hashomer Hatzair youth group in Brook-

lyn on the history of Zionism in the U.S. I did that, with emphasis on the internal politics of the Zionists and how that correlated with occupational and social class. At the close of the talk I referred, briefly, to the role that Jewish leaders played during World War II. Jewish leaders were trapped into the function of shielding Roosevelt and Churchill as they participated in holding back information on what might have been done to save many Jews from the extermination program.

A few days later I was on the receiving end of shrill denunciations on the telephone from U.S. representatives of Israel's Hashomer Hatzair: how dare you say such things about our leaders? I stated that every point I had made was based upon solid evidence and I offered to make this known to the group at a further meeting. That meeting was cancelled. Then the cancelled meeting was reinstated, and this time I delivered a substantial account of the history of negotiations with German leaders and the American and British governments bearing on possible exit of Jews from Europe during World War II; and the policies of England and the United States that frustrated all the proposals that were made for rescuing some substantial part of the Jews of Europe from the Nazi murder machine.

For the next fifteen years after that long evening, I did not receive a piece of mail from any Jewish organization. I have never favored conspiracy theories. But it seemed that in making this modest and unreported analysis before a rather small group in Brooklyn, I had touched a nerve on an enormously sensitive issue. There was a massive reluctance among people concerned with the fate of Jews at that time to concede that political decisions by Jewish leaders during World War II had played a part.

Surprising Turns in America and Israel

During the early 1950s I found myself, several times over, doing a task that had surrealist quality. The McCarthyism plague had struck a number of classmates and friends from City College days, as various military-serving laboratories and other government organizations discharged, wholesale, staff members whose qualification for discharge was that they had obtained an academic degree from City College. So there I was, several times over, ridiculing the idea that these men, long known to me, could have been either Communist ideologists or Communist dupes or in any way willingly hostile to the security of the United States.

Appearance before these loyalty review boards was a horrendous experience. Though not a lawyer and

not fine-tuned to the niceties of testimony before such groups, I was fully sensitive to the idea that I was participating in a proceeding where innocence rather than guilt had to be proved. If I was a credible witness before these boards, it was probably owing to combined circumstances: having known these people for many years; having been a national officer of the student Zionist federation; having served in the U.S. Army; and finally being an instructor at Columbia University.

In 1956 I took responsibility for conducting a wide-ranging investigation that reported on the methods that could be used for carrying out a workable inspection system to control compliance with international disarmament treaties. This work required detailed studies on the methods of secret military operations and secret arms production systems. One of my students at the time was Moshe Kelman, a hero of the Palmach, who was well connected with the Israeli Army. A few months later I arrived in Tel Aviv for a two-week crash course on secret military operations and production systems (which later turned out to be the same as guerilla warfare).

The officers of the Israeli Army were brimming over with confidence after their victory against Egyptian armies in 1956. After completing my studies with them, I tried to turn the lesson around and suggest that dedicated Arab nationalists could one day have the full capability of turning the art of secret military operations against them. There wasn't much of an audience for those ideas. The lesson for me was that arrogant nationalism helps to blind people from coherent understanding of realities.

Continuing the Struggle for Justice

During the long political struggle occasioned by the U.S. War in Vietnam there were many opportunities for joint work with Rabbi Abraham Heschel. I remember that in 1966 I called on the executive committee of Clergy and Laity Concerned to suggest preparation of a study on U.S. war crimes in Vietnam, thereby making a powerful moral case against the government's war. The representative from the American Jewish Committee quickly stated that this study should be put in the hands of Herman Kahn at the Hudson Institute. I was astounded to hear such a suggestion from anyone in that group and so was Heschel, who didn't lose any seconds before rescuing that project from oblivion.

In June, 1984, in the company of nine other colleagues (economists, engineers, and scientists) I helped to conduct the first U.S.-Soviet Symposium

on Conversion from Military to Civilian Economy; held in Moscow and to be followed by a meeting in the United States. These discussions laid bare a crucial feature of both the United States and the Soviet Union. Both countries are in the grip of military-industrial complexes, varying in style and detailed history but requiring that both societies develop ways to change over from military to civilian work as an indispensable condition for effecting a real reversal of the dreadful arms race. On reviewing the course of events that preceded the conduct of this symposium, I am persuaded that I had brought to bear for this important purpose the whole array of knowledge and values that I had accumulated over many years.

For Jewish nationalists of liberal persuasion the emergence of militant Zionist extremism in Israel and America creates a crisis of values: will the liberals be prepared to stand against their fellow nationalists who now champion the sort of rightist fanaticism that is the hallmark of fascist movements?

For me the lesson is clear: it is a moral obligation of Jews who value human life, personal and political freedom, political democracy, human decencies, and a peaceful, productive future for the Jews of Israel and everywhere else to give support in every available way to the people and parties in Israel and in the United States who stand against the ultranationalist, authoritarian, militarist, and clericalist-fundamentalist tendencies in Jewish life who know that there is no military solution, and who bend every effort toward achieving a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has warped the quality of so much of Jewish life during the last forty years. □

FORMS OF PRAYER FOR JEWISH WORSHIP; DAYS OF AWE. *ed. Assembly of Rabbis of Reform Synagogues of Great Britain.*

THE SABBATH EVENING SERVICE. *Chaim Raphael.* Behrman House

In 1972, after my partners and I had handed in our first manuscript, our editor Chaim Potok called us into his office at the Jewish Publication Society and said briskly, "Let's talk about what your book will look like. What are your thoughts about paper?" We stared at each other blankly and I finally said, "I've never thought about paper. Paper doesn't matter. The *design* matters." Chaim contemplated me silently for a moment and then informed me in no uncertain terms that not only did paper matter, paper

color mattered, paper weight mattered, paper size mattered, etc. What began for me then was an awakening process which continues today. I notice and care about the aesthetics of the book I am holding in my hand. And I care most of all about liturgical books. Which brings me to the High Holy days *machzor* published by the Reform Movement in England.

Long before I can take in changes in the ordering of the prayers, additions or omissions in the liturgical cycle, or the facility of the translation, I am confronted by the sheer look of the volume. The design. How it feels in my hands as I pick it up for the first time. And it has to be said, this *machzor* could very well represent one of the worst design decisions ever perpetrated on a *machzor*. The failures are all the more glaring since this *machzor* succeeds by five years the publication of the Rabbinical Assembly *machzor* which, regardless of other deficiencies, is quite elegantly beautiful. With the R.A. volume as a model, choosing a paper so thin that the words bleed through from one page to another, choosing a severe black cover and a very masculine design seems nothing short of criminal. This is not the volume we pick up in loving expectation as we begin our entrance into the holiest of times. Its appearance is too harsh, too forbidding, to help us open ourselves up in the way the R.A. volume is able to do.

Earlier I used the word "masculine" to describe the design and this needs to be explored. I talk here, not about a conscious decision to render this a masculine volume—harsh black on implacable white, unadorned save for occasional line drawings—but an unconscious, and therefore all the more unpromising quality of masculinity that pervades this volume. It's there in the design and it's there in virtually all the translations. Indeed, the editors acknowledge this in their introduction when they write: "While this liturgy was being revised, another revision was taking place in the attitudes of the society which it serves, concerning sexual injustice in general and women's rights in particular. This revision has retained masculine terms and masculine designations for God, because at the time of revision there were no others in normal use." Perhaps the most circular argument of all has just been offered for the absence of any non-male God language. People don't generally use it so the editors don't include it. People don't generally use it *because it is not now in any of our standard prayerbooks*. Surely this is a case where the leaders should begin to see it as their responsibility to lead.

Additional Readings a Plus

But there is some good news here. Unlike almost any other *machzor*, this one has stretched mightily to

include some wonderful contemplative and meditative material throughout. Most exciting is the breadth of coverage. Within the *Kol Nidre* section alone, we find material added from, among others, Maimonides, Sforino, Max Arzt, J. H. Hertz, Philo, A. Menes, and Machzor Vitry. And, with few exceptions, the material is provocative and well-chosen. In fact, the editors' decision to include certain material has caused me to think about an issue that has remained unresolved in my mind for a long time: how to unfreeze liturgy so that contemporary Jewish history can be recorded within the ongoing liturgical process in a way that is neither maudlin nor excessively time-bound. This volume doesn't truly include liturgical additions which answer this problem, but the additional readings here may become the forerunners of actual liturgy one day. Eugene Heimler's selection about Buchenwald in the *Yom Kippur mincha* service is not so time restrictive that its sense would be inappropriate as additional liturgy. And yet, I do not understand what form such a liturgical piece would take. I know we need to be accepting of more boldness—both in God language and in new liturgy or we will surely find ourselves saddled with prayer books heavy with old language, frozen prayers and voluminous "additional readings" which will forever cause us the discomfort of not being *quite* sure whether they're to be used as additional real liturgy, private readings or simply asides to the text itself.

Much of the language here is stilted and somewhat graceless, despite the liberties the editors have assumed in their translations. Perhaps my American ear is not attuned to the British nuance but I thought the language of many of the translations lacked the flow and grace one would hope to find in a new *machzor*.

One very important addition is the 150 page study anthology at the end of this *machzor*. The material in this section exhibits the same breadth and profundity found in the meditative selections. Here, though, because it is all gathered together and arranged categorically, I am awe struck by the brilliance of some of the choices made. Again, selections by Rav Kook, Steven Schwarzschild, Judah Magnes, Reb Nachman, Zev Shanken, Milton Steinberg, Samuel Belkin, the Mishnah, and Pesikta Rabbati can only deepen our understanding of topics such as "Responsibility," "Truth," "Cheshbon Hanefesh—Self Judgment," "Fasting," and "On Doubt," to name a few.

There is representational art in the Raphael volume as well as in the *machzor*, though, thankfully, far less frequently in the *machzor*. In each, I found the artwork misplaced, random, functionless, inap-

propriate and ugly. I don't recall ever having seen a successful example of art merged with a liturgical volume, except for various *haggadot*.

The Sabbath Evening Service

I am, in general, an admirer of Chaim Raphael's work. However, I have questions about the success of *The Sabbath Evening Service*.

Unlike the *machzor* above, the design of this book, aside from the artwork mentioned earlier, is quite elegant. Its appearance aside, I am more concerned with its purpose and goals. It appears to have been designed to be used in synagogue, at home and as the text for a study group. It would be an extraordinary feat if any one volume could fulfill all three roles well. This one does not surprise by its inability to do so.

The design tells us most strongly that it is meant to be a study text. Each prayer has its own chapter with explanatory notes below. And yet the introduction is addressed "For the Worshipper." And it is as a liturgical document that it is at its most dismal. One is never able to see the service as a whole; one cannot possibly feel the ebb and flow of the service when each section of the service is presented in precisely the same format. Furthermore, how can the serious *davenner* use a prayer book where the *Sh'ma*, which normally is three paragraphs long, occupies eight pages.

As a study text it is more successful. Directions are clear and brief, and the commentary and annotations, while varying tremendously in quality, are, in the main, interesting. Certainly we are introduced to the author's sense of beauty in the language. Passages such as,—"LET US LIE DOWN: As we lie down or lie awake at night, we grope for reassurance that can strengthen us with hope and courage for the day that lies ahead. A *haskivenu* prayer goes back to talmudic times. The Hebrew is gentle and meditative, with poetry that lies sweetly in the mind."—may not say all that could be said about

haskivenu, but the author's love for and sensitivity to the language of this prayer will cause the reader to read it just a bit slower and more carefully than before. (Sharon Strassfeld)

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK IN ISRAEL. *Ori Devir*. Adama. \$14.95.

This gorgeous, immensely helpful and practical—maps to get there—guide to beautiful places in Israel ought to be required reading for everyone going on a second trip to Israel—and maybe a first. It makes you remember that we celebrate "the Land," in our tradition, not the politics. And, among other reasons, here's why.

FRUITS OF THE EARTH. *Ricky Friesem-Naomi Moushine*. Adama Books. \$8.95

Unlike so many cookbooks these days that surround the recipes with extensive prose, this book and its recipes are brief and surrounded by white space. The design, therefore, is more noteworthy than the contents. Orange and Avocado Salad, for instance, "Mix slices of orange with avocado. Season." (*Alicia Seeger*)

MIRIAM'S WELL, Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year. *Penina V. Adelman*. Biblio Press. \$9.95 pb.

In meetings all over the country Jewish women have been reinforcing their Judaism through storytelling, song and dance and references to Torah. The creative ceremonies are outlined here month by month.

Even if you are not lucky enough to be part of a Jewish women's group, this book may inspire you to celebrate, to meditate, to create a ritual to enhance the way you observe the Jewish calendar. (*Alicia Seeger*)