

1794 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

sianism in the Maccabean Period," in J. Neusner, et al., eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 104-105.

¹⁰ Neusner, op. cit., pp. 265-282, concludes that the messianic idea has no place of consequence in the Mishnah, though he admits that it later became a driving force in Rabbinic circles. Cf., L.H. Schiffman, "The Concept of the Messiah in Second Temple and Rabbinic Literature," in *Review and Expositor* 84 (1987), pp. 235-246, especially p. 242, who comments on the lack of emphasis on messianism in Tannaitic materials and suggests that "the experience of the destruction of the nation and its cult center in the first revolt [66-74], and the prohibition of even visiting the ruins of Jerusalem in the second, must have led the sages to seek other means for the immediate redemption of Israel."

¹¹ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Solomon," in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 66 (1995), pp. 114-119.

¹² See *ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

¹³ On Josephus' audience, see L.H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 46-50.

¹⁴ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portraits of the Pharaohs," in *Syllecta Classica* 4 (1993), pp. 52-54.

¹⁵ For a discussion of this passage, its sources, and Josephus' possible reasons for inserting it, see L.H. Feldman, *Judean Antiquities* 1-4 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 200-202, nn. 663-664.

¹⁶ See S. Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus* (Wien, 1930), p. 117, n. 143, for other medieval Jewish parallels.

¹⁷ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Balaam," in *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993), pp. 48-83.

¹⁸ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Jethro," in C.A. Evans and S. Talmon, eds., *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 481-502.

¹⁹ See Feldman (above, n. 14), pp. 49-63.

²⁰ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Ehud," in J.C. Reeves and J. Kampen, eds., *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of Ben Zion Wacholder on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Sheffield, 1994), pp. 189-193.

²¹ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Elijah," in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 8 (1994), pp. 61-86; "Josephus' Portrait of Elisha," in *Novum Testamentum* 36 (1994), pp. 1-28.

²² See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Jehoichin," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 139.1 (1995), pp. 11-31.

²³ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Gedaliah," in *Shofar* 12 (1993), pp. 1-10.

²⁴ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Daniel," in *Henoah* 14 (1992), pp. 37-96.

²⁵ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Ezra," in *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993), pp. 190-214.

²⁶ See L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 288-341.

²⁷ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Version of

Samson," in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 19 (1988), pp. 204-210.

²⁸ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Interpretation of Jonah," in *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 17 (1992), pp. 8-11.

²⁹ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Deborah," in A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, and J. Riaud, eds., *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikipowetzky* (Leuven-Paris, 1986), pp. 123-124.

³⁰ See L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Hezekiah," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992), p. 608.

³¹ L.H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' Version of Esther," in *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), pp. 168-170.

³² L.H. Feldman, "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The 'Aqedah,'" in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 75 (1984-85), pp. 215-217.

³³ L.H. Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' Portrayal of Man's Decline," in J. Neusner, ed., *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 340-342.

³⁴ Feldman, "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter," pp. 219-222, 235-236, 242-246.

³⁵ See L.H. Feldman, "The Influence of the Greek Tragedians on Josephus," in Asher Ovdiah, ed., *The Howard Gilman International Conferences, 1: Hellenic and Jewish Arts: Interaction, Tradition and Renewal* (Tel Aviv, 1998), pp. 51-80.

³⁶ Feldman, "Hellenizations in Josephus' Portrayal of Man's Decline," p. 344.

³⁷ L.H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Jeroboam," in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 31 (1993), pp. 43-46.

³⁸ So also P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome: His Life, His Works, and Their Importance* (Sheffield, 1988), pp. 141-150.

LOUIS H. FELDMAN

JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:

Jacob Neusner writes that "Judaism in America is different from Judaism as it has ever been known, and as it is practiced everywhere else in the world today."¹ The study of American Judaism is therefore a fascinating if complex phenomenon. The practice of Judaism in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century has been influenced by a number of factors. While this fifty-year period saw the development of the four major American Jewish denominations (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist), American Jews were divided into those who observed Halakhah and those who only practiced selected elements of the Jewish legal system. Sociologists Marshall Sklare and Joseph Greenblum explained that for most American Jews, religious practices were acceptable if

 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1795

they could be redefined in modern terms, did not require social isolation, were responsive to and in relative harmony with what they perceived to be the dominant ethos of American religious culture, were child-centered, and required only periodic observance.² Even Orthodox Jews, for the most part committed to the observance of the full spectrum of Jewish religious practices, showed signs of selectivity in their degree of punctiliousness in their practice of different commandments. The difference in attitude and approach to practice between these two groups became more pronounced over the course of the second half of the twentieth century.

Traditional Judaism holds that all of the commandments of the Torah must be practiced in their entirety. In contrast, the American non-orthodox movements have consciously and deliberately set out to reinterpret traditional religious concepts and have made changes in how the Jewish religion is practiced. One accordingly must distinguish between American Jews who are committed to observing Judaism as a religion and those who wish primarily to retain an ethnic identity. Jacob Neusner has called this first group “Judaists” to distinguish them from those who see their Jewish identities as social or cultural rather than religious. The problem of distinguishing between “ethnic” and “religious” Jews is complex. Much religious behavior can be understood as expressions of ethnicity, and much ethnic identification may mask religious yearnings.

Much of the practice of American Judaism in the second half of the twentieth century took place in the synagogue. Jack Wertheimer summarizes a generally accepted view when he writes that “the American synagogue attracts more members and affords greater opportunities for participation than any other voluntary institutions established by Jews in the United States.”³ While Judaism had popularly been regarded as based on home practice, the synagogue attempted to fill the void left by steadily declining home-based ritual observance. This attempt was more successful in some cases than others. Some congregations grew into large, vibrant, lively places, while others developed reputations as “bar mitzvah factories.”

Many American Jews are willing to exper-

iment with different types of religious ceremonies. They are searching for a vague sense of meaning, which frequently is described by the word “spirituality.” The assumption is now prevalent that it does not really matter what you believe. What is important is to participate in the experience. This participation hopefully will create a spark of spiritual holiness that will enrich one’s life by transforming one’s soul. God may or may not play a central role in this process, but one does not have to believe in traditional notions of God in order to practice Judaism.

The practice of Judaism in the second half of the twentieth century has been deeply influenced by the impact of individualism on American society. Since the 1960s, Americans have come to regard religion more and more as a matter of personal choice rather than an inherited obligation. This choice includes being able to choose one’s perspective within one’s denomination, but it also includes the ability to choose from among different religious denominational alternatives. It even means having the choice of choosing whether to affiliate with any religious tradition or to remain completely removed from religious activity of any type. This individualistic approach has produced a religious marketplace in which faiths and denominations openly compete for believers from outside their congregational spheres to supplement their existing memberships.

Within Judaism, the Reform movement has been the most aggressive in participating in this religious marketplace, developing a series of programs to introduce non-Jews to Judaism. Sizable numbers have converted to Judaism, including many non-Jews married to Jewish partners. “Jews by choice” bring a different perspective with them into the synagogue. Some observers have noted that converts to Judaism see Judaism in more purely religious terms, whereas many Jews by birth see it in more ethnic terms. But this observation is only partially true and has to be supplemented by other ways of looking at the impact of converts on Jewish belief and practice. The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey indicates that there were approximately 185,000 converts to Judaism in the United States at that time. These individuals appeared to observe as

1796 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

many or more rituals as born Jews, an indication that many if not most converts take their new religion very seriously. In homes in which a spouse had converted to Judaism, rituals such as lighting Sabbath candles were more likely to be observed than in homes in which both partners were born Jews.

One of the problems in describing Judaism in the second half of the twentieth century is that the dominant American Jewish identity focused on what has been termed “civil Judaism.” As Jonathan S. Woocher has explained, this Judaism affirms the unity of the Jewish people, their mutual responsibility, the need to work for the survival of the Jewish people in a threatening world, the centrality of the State of Israel, a nostalgic appreciation for the value of Jewish tradition, a stress on doing good deeds and promoting philanthropy, and seeing their Jewishness and Americanness as compatible and indeed complimentary forms of overlapping identity.⁴ As a consequence, most American Jews did not see direct association between Jewish identity and actual religious practices. Instead, they focused on “feeling” Jewish, a subjective state that has become harder and harder clearly to identify and that is too amorphous easily to be transmitted from parent to child. As a consequence, many children and grandchildren of such Jews, even ones highly involved in the Jewish community, have drifted away from that community.

Distinctions within Orthodoxy: For the Orthodox and a small number of non-Orthodox traditional Jews, Judaism is defined through the halakhah, which dictates all aspects of daily life, ritual as much as ethical. Increasingly, however, sociologists have identified subgroups within Orthodoxy, defined by their adherents’ level of ritual practice: “traditionalists” (also called ultra Orthodox or Haredi), “centrists” (until the 1980s frequently referred to as modern Orthodox), and “nominals” (also called non-observant Orthodox). Samuel Heilman and Steven Cohen categorized these three groups on the basis of indicative observances, beginning with the fact that Orthodox men show higher rates of ritual observance than Orthodox women, who are not understood to be obligated to perform many rituals, including prayer and donning phylacteries. Asking questions about

fasting also proved a useful tool for distinguishing between the three subgroups, as only within the traditional Orthodox group did 100% of the men fast on all fast days.

Strictness of observance of the dietary laws also distinguished the three groups, as did observance of Sabbath law, with the traditional Orthodox being the most punctilious in both regards. Notably, while in the 1950s there were many non-observant Orthodox, whose use of electricity on the Sabbath, for instance, distinguished them from the traditional Orthodox, their numbers have dropped, as has their percentage of the Orthodox population in the United States. This makes sense because in the period surrounding World War II, many American Jewish immigrants and children of immigrants, while not strictly observant themselves, had grown up in Orthodox homes and had absorbed the belief that any other form of Judaism was inauthentic. But such non-observant Orthodoxy was a phenomenon of a specific generation. The following generation was far more Americanized and had far less emotional affinity with Orthodoxy. Some joined Conservative or Reform congregations, and a substantial number left religious life entirely.

Others were influenced by their Orthodox upbringing and embraced traditional Judaism as Baalei Teshuvah (singular, Baal Teshuvah), literally, people who repent. In the 1970s, the Baal Teshuvah phenomenon was widely reported in the Jewish and general press. Particularly influential was a long article written by Ellen Willis in *Rolling Stone Magazine* on her brother Chaim, who studied at Aish HaTorah Yeshivah and became an Orthodox rabbi. While Willis herself had no intention of becoming Orthodox, her description of the Baal Teshuvah world was generally sympathetic, and the article was repeatedly reprinted by Orthodox organizations. Many others noticed the phenomena and commented on it, in part because it went against what most observers expected would be the momentum towards greater acculturation and higher levels of assimilation. Despite the fact that this movement attracted a great deal of attention, the numbers involved were relatively small and within a few years a percentage of Baalei Teshuvah

 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1797

reverted to their original levels of observance.

Another distinction between the traditional and modern Orthodox concerned dating and sexuality. The traditional Orthodox followed the practice of arranging a small number of dates leading rapidly to a decision to marry. In some Hassidic communities, parents made the decision, and the marriage ceremony might occur after the couple had only met a few times. In contrast, the modern Orthodox have adopted many of the broader societies' attitudes. Even otherwise highly observant individuals may ignore prohibitions on pre-marital sexual contact. While the halakhah prohibits any physical contact whatsoever between unmarried men and women many modern Orthodox rabbis freely shake hands with women and even kiss them on the cheek.

In the 1950s and even later, there was little difference in practice between many Orthodox and Conservative congregations. Both groups used the term "congregation" rather than "temple," the common designation within Reform, to refer themselves. Worship was conducted almost entirely in Hebrew and few, if any, deletions were permitted. Male worshippers wore head coverings (*kippot*) and prayer shawls (*tallitot*), and traditional practices, such as the priests' blessing of the congregation (*Birchat Cohanim*) continued to be performed even in Conservative settings. The major difference was the fact that most Conservative synagogues allowed men and women to sit together, a practice countenanced in few Orthodox synagogues.⁵ As the second half of the twentieth century wore on, the central Orthodox congregational organizations put a tremendous amount of pressure even on those few Orthodox congregations to eliminate the practice. They also pressured all congregations to erect a physical barrier between the men's and women's sections (*mehitzah*). Orthodox rabbis became more traditional and were unlikely to consider a post at a congregation that allowed such practices. In the 1950s, many young men from a Orthodox backgrounds attended Yeshiva College and the Orthodox Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) but then took a Conservative pulpit. By the end of the century, this was extremely rare.

The Conservative Movement: Marshall Sklare has argued that the Conservative movement was in large part a second generation phenomenon. In the post-World War II period, the attraction of the movement to this generation meant that hundreds of new Conservative synagogues were built throughout the country, particularly in suburbia. American Jews saw Conservatism as a happy middle-point between the Orthodoxy of their youth (or that their parents had left as to constraining) and the Reform temple that was seen as too "church-like." This appeal meant that practice in the Conservative movement varied tremendously. Nevertheless, by the 1950s, a Conservative style of religious observance was developed that was distinct from Orthodoxy on the one hand and Reform on the other. The Conservative movement emphasized observance of the Sabbath and the dietary law but allowed the use of electricity under certain circumstances and even permitted driving to Sabbath and holiday worship. Technology thus could foster ritual Jewish practice. Unfortunately, the distinctive Conservative approach to observance was never followed by the vast majority of the membership, which rejected strict norms of Sabbath and dietary observance.

In the ground-breaking decision allowing driving to worship services on the Sabbath or a holiday, the Conservative movement took into account the fact that most Conservative Jews did not make decisions regarding, for instance, where to live based primarily on the strictures of traditional Jewish ritual law. There was, however, a minority that held to strict observance of Jewish law and ritual. Daniel Elazar and Rela Mintz Geffen write that the distinction between elite and mass thus is "more characteristic of Conservative Judaism than of any other branches."⁶ The distinction between the elite and masses made it possible for the more traditional elements in the individual congregations to exercise a high degree of control over all officially expected ritual practices. While the majority in most congregations observed few of the more demanding ritual behaviors, the elite ensured that the synagogue would insist in the public arena of a maximalist approach to religious practice.

1798 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

This approach may have alienated numbers of nominally Conservative Jews. People unwilling to adopt the forms set forth by their congregations distanced themselves from religious practice in general. Still, by the 1980s, many members of Conservative congregations felt a renewed need to explore religious practices in the same way that Reform and Reconstructionist Jews were being encouraged to do. These experimental approaches included everything from New Moon (*Rosh Hodesh*) groups for women to meditative spiritual retreats. In the earlier decades, these experimental approaches at times were discouraged or even repressed by the elite because they ignored or violated halakhic ordinances.

By the mid-1980s, the senior Talmudists at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), who had been influential enough to stop many attempts at religious innovation had passed away or retired. Once JTS decided to ordain women in its Rabbinical school, most of the remaining traditionalists left the movement. They formed the Union for Traditional Conservative Judaism (UTCJ), later changing the name to the Union for Traditional Judaism (UTJ), an acknowledgement that they no longer shared core beliefs or practices with the Conservative movement. The UTJ stood for a rigorous halakhic approach to Judaism, which differed little from centrist or modern Orthodoxy. Led by David Weiss Halivni, the UTJ allowed for a self-conscious acceptance of critical scholarship. Weiss Halivni had taught Talmud at JTS before taking the Lucius N. Littauer Professorship of Classical Jewish Civilization at Columbia University. Weiss Halivni was determined to synthesize modern critical biblical scholarship with halakhic commitment. In his *Revelation Restored* and other works, he argued that it was possible to acknowledge the historical development of the biblical texts and at the same time to remain committed to the tradition of revelation.⁷ But even the most liberal of the modern Orthodox refused to consider any sort of conglomeration or merger with Halivni's traditionalist movement. Its ideological origins and overt acceptance of critical scholarship meant that association with it would mark any associated group as

definitively separate from Orthodoxy. We thus see the extent to which the Orthodox and non-Orthodox are divided by more than differences in levels of ritual observance.

Tradition within Contemporary Judaism: For many American Jews, religious practice is a way to express a connection to "the tradition," a distinctive concept in modern or postmodern society, quite different from what existed in the pre-modern world, when members of society followed traditional ways at least in part because they could not conceive of any other way of living. This is a fundamentally different situation from that of the American Jew who consciously and deliberately chooses to observe all or selected elements of the tradition. As Samuel Heilman puts it,

To maintain tradition when all about you others do not, to define a world of sacred order when the profane is the order of the day, to assert that change need not occur when all around you everything has undeniably changed, is a fundamental transformation of the meaning of tradition, the sacred, and the past.⁸

American Jews have a choice whether to accept the tradition in whole or in part. They also have a choice how they will put those beliefs into practice. The Orthodox may choose to practice the tradition in its entirety in their belief that this is what God commands them to do. But most American Jews who choose to practice traditional rituals do so because those rituals speak to them. They understand that they are free to choose what practices to observe, to ignore, or even to transform into new forms. But how should these observances be understood? Charles Liebman distinguishes between "ritual" and "ceremony." The terms are used interchangeably in casual conversation, and they frequently are used in a general sense, even by specialists. But Liebman argues that "ritual" should be understood as stylized repetitious behavior that is explicitly religious. It involves intentional bodily engagement believed to be efficacious and connects the participant to the transcendent presence of God by allowing him or her to do exactly what God commanded. The worshipper believes that ritual sways God to perform or not perform a given act, but

JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1799

that this can only occur if the ritual is correctly performed.

Ceremony, on the other hand, is done in large part to affirm that the individual is a member of a social and cosmological order. It is a voluntary action intended to give meaning to the individual's life and so is not necessarily regarded as being commanded by God. The ceremony, accordingly, does not need to be performed in a precise manner. Rather, there is a large measure of flexibility which allows the participants to mold the ceremony to fit their needs and desires. The ceremony gives a concrete representation of the social order of the group and therefore is viewed as a serious and sometimes solemn event. But this can change over the course of time, depending on the ethos of the particular group. Since the ceremony is not believed to be preordained, it is appropriate to place certain individuals in charge of the preparation and performance. This may be the rabbi or cantor, or it may be a small number of congregational members. Either way, they are expected to prepare a ceremony that is both appropriate and suitable.

Orthodox Jews observe the mitzvot because they believe God commanded them to do so. Such observance thus qualifies as ritual. Non-Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, are unlikely to perform "rituals," because they do not believe that the precise manner in which a religious act is performed matters to God. Rather, increasing numbers of Jews perform "ceremonial" acts. When a woman lights candles in the synagogue even though the sun has already set, the congregation sees her act as symbolically ushering in the Sabbath. From a ritual point of view, lighting the candles after dark is prohibited. But from a ceremonial point of view, her act is meaningful and beautiful. Liebman provides other examples. Many Reform congregations conduct a ceremony in which three or even four generations of a family pass a Torah scroll from arms to arms, ending up with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child's holding the scroll. This makes no sense from a ritual point of view, because the only ritual purpose for taking the scroll out of the ark is to read the weekly lection. But from a ceremonial point of view,

the congregation is celebrating the ties between grandparents, parents, and child in the symbolic context of the temple. The Torah passing ceremony emphasizes generational continuity and affirms each family member's participation in this transmission of Judaism in a world that seems to dismiss such ties.⁹

Another example is the increasing popularity of *havdalah*, a series of blessings that marks the distinction between the Sabbath and the secular week. In this short service, blessings over wine, spices, and light fulfill specific ritual obligations. But Liebman cites the use of *havdalah* within communal Jewish life as an example of the increasing importance of ceremonial behavior among non-Orthodox Jews. The ceremonies are far more elaborate than in traditional contexts and often conclude with all of the participants' holding hands in a circle and singing. Many find this inspiring and spiritually uplifting but are open about the fact that they have no intention of conducting this ritual in their homes the following week. At home, they do not observe even those ceremonies they very much enjoyed in the communal setting of a conference or other Jewish gathering.

Non-Orthodox Jews have such a sense of synagogue rites precisely because they see them as ceremony rather than ritual. Synagogue services are a series of symbolic representations that allow the worshipper to derive a variety of religious and spiritual meanings from what transpires. If those present are left largely untouched, they feel free to criticize the performance of the ceremony. This is a particular problem in the Conservative movement, where the majority of congregants see worship as ceremonial, while many of their rabbis view it as ritual. Reform benefits from the fact that clergy and laity alike recognize a symbolic purpose to religious activities. Virtually all Reform Jews hold that intention is what matters most and that the precise manner in which a religious act is performed is inconsequential. They thus confirm the importance of ethics over ritual.¹⁰ Reform rabbis thus frequently recall the tale of the ignorant eastern European boy who whistles in the synagogue on Yom Kippur because he does not know any better. In response to the congregants' anger,

1800 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

the Baal Shem Tov declared that the boy had sent the most efficacious prayer to God: he did what he felt was right rather than simply what was demanded by the ritual.

The Reform movement's new interest in ceremony has attracted enormous attention. Many congregations observe two days of Rosh Hashshana whereas earlier virtually all observed only one. Most congregations have increased the amount of Hebrew used in worship, and a series of new prayer books has appeared to meet this need. The latest ones include extensive transliterations, reflecting the reality that most congregants cannot read Hebrew sufficiently to keep up with the new trend. Even ceremonies such as *Tashlich*, an ancient folk custom in which, at the New Year, bread crumbs are thrown into flowing water symbolically to represent the casting away of sins, have been recovered. This has occurred despite the fact that once many Jews viewed this ceremony as smacking of superstition, so as to be exactly the type of custom modern Jews should avoid. But, clearly, times have changed, and Jews now inhabit a world in which it has become clear that logic and science cannot answer all questions. They intuitively understand that they need to seek out an emotional response to what they see around them that may not be explainable in purely rational terms. They are therefore much more open to at least trying new types of ceremonies. If the original meaning does not suit them, they work to fine new understandings. This approach has become particularly popular in Reform congregations, part of a dramatic reorientation in that movement.

Reform Jews once emphasized the "religious" aspect of their identity and minimized or even denied the ethnic component. The movement stressed that Judaism was an ethical system based on a pure form of monotheism. Traditional ritual was held to distract the worshiper from what is central in the Judaic message. Reform congregants thus came to expect a Sabbath experience comparable to the formal Protestant services their Christian neighbors attended. But over the course of the last generation, the Reform movement has moved dramatically towards embracing many of the traditional

practices that had been jettisoned at the end of the nineteenth century.

Classical Reform Judaism developed a rigid and ossified form of practice that created its own orthodoxy. Neo-traditionalists comment that Classical Reformers are just as determined to prevent the performance of certain rituals as Orthodox Jews are determined to ensure that those rituals are done. In some cases, fervent opposition can develop over the reintroduction of rituals simply because of aesthetic concerns. For example, the marching of the Torah around the congregation was not done in Classical Reform congregations because such movement could not be carefully choreographed and because many found the traditional kissing of a prayer shawl or prayer book that had touched the scroll to be unseemly. While there was never any theological opposition to the practice, its reintroduction could create serious and ongoing conflict.

Increasing Reliance on Halakhic Codes: A number of scholars have observed that in pre-modern Jewish society, Jews knew what observances were expected or demanded. Living in a closed environment that remained constant over many generations made it natural to conduct oneself in a certain manner. But modernity undermined the stability. The sense of continuity was damaged, if not destroyed. It became harder instinctually to know how to practice Judaism. The Orthodox reacted by relying heavily on halakhic codes. Indeed, some believe this has contributed to the increasingly stringent decisions being made by Orthodox decisors, and thus Haym Soloveitchik has argued that the nature of contemporary Orthodox spirituality has been transformed, with religious texts now playing a controlling role in communal life far beyond what had been the norm in earlier generations. This was a new kind of religiosity, rooted in texts and transmitted in schools. The Orthodox home supplemented what was being taught in the yeshivah rather than the other way around. "Having lost the touch of His presence, they seek now solace in the pressure of His yolk."¹¹ Despite Soloveitchik's criticism, many Orthodox Jews in the yeshivah world are pleased with the

JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1801

increasing attention to halakhic texts and the higher degree of ritual conformity. Many non-Orthodox Jews likewise felt the absence of an all-encompassing Jewish society they could draw on culturally and religiously. But being neither willing nor able to commit themselves to an Orthodox lifestyle, some took whatever inspirations were available and improvised. This led to the creation of new observances and the re-casting of pre-existing ones to meet new spiritual needs.

The social implications of halakhic observance have changed, partly as a consequence of the increasing acceptance accorded to Jews and Judaism in the United States. As late as the 1950s, keeping kosher meant bringing lunch to work, that eating out was almost impossible, and that going away to a hotel for vacation, except in a few locations, was out of the question. By the 1980s, every major city and quite a few moderate sized ones had kosher restaurants, numerous hotels and resorts maintained kosher kitchens and some kashered their entire kitchens for Passover, and Rabbinic organizations scrambled to certify thousands of grocery-store products as kosher.

This wide-spread acceptance of observance made it much easier to be a traditional Jew and also seemed to be a tremendous victory for the modern Orthodox, who had long argued that it was possible to be both modern and Orthodox. But it also initiated a trend away from moderate Orthodoxy, such that, by the 1980s, the modern Orthodox were on the defensive. The traditional Orthodox accused them of compromising religious observance to the point where they were virtually indistinguishable from many non-Orthodox Jews. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that many of the teachers in modern Orthodox schools were quite traditionally observant. Thus the children in these schools in many cases were taught a perspective dramatically at odds with the ethos and practices of their parents. Moreover, even moderately observant parents felt that the ultra-Orthodox had a religious authenticity that they, who had compromised with American cultural mores, lacked. Eager to reinforce their Orthodox credentials, the modern Orthodox began to refer to them-

selves as "centrist" rather than "modern." Concurrently, the community adopted more and more stringencies. For example, whereas in the 1950s modern Orthodox women did not cover their heads after marriage, by the 1980s, this was a frequent practice. Virtually every aspect of halakhic behavior came under scrutiny.

As the twentieth century progressed, American Jews were observing fewer and fewer rituals. The pattern was for the grandparents, who may have come from Europe, to observe more, their children to observe fewer, and their grandchildren to observe little or nothing. The number of Jewish rituals performed was seen as indicating the individual's degree of assimilation, and the decreasing levels of observance thus were cited as proof that assimilation was increasing. But in recent years, sociologists have come to believe that the studies had over-emphasized the simple question of whether a ritual, such as the lighting Hanukah candles, was performed. Rather, this information had to be supplemented with an understanding of why individuals were or were not practicing a given ritual. Further, there had to be sensitivity to the possibility that Jewish religious sentiment was being transformed in ways that were not picked up by the traditional questions. By the 1990s, a split seemed to emerge. Increasing numbers of Jews of all ages were rediscovering their Jewish heritage. Many were experimenting with various types of observances, including innovative approaches. At the same time, a large population was alienated from Jewish practice and seemed content to remain secular.

The emergence of a Jewish "civil faith" led many American Jews to work long hours as volunteers for the Jewish federation and other local and national Jewish organizations. Their Jewishness was expressed publicly. They defended Israel on T.V. and spoke about anti-Semitism at local churches. No one could accuse them of hiding their Jewish identities or of stressing private ritual observances over communal needs. But by the 1980s, many felt that this civic Judaism lacked spiritual content precisely because it was so public. Many Jewish institutional

1802 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

leaders observed little ceremony in their family lives. One rabbi told journalist Charles Silberman that “These federation leaders may be Jews in public, but they’re goyim at home.”¹² By the end of the century, this began to change, particularly among the younger generation of federation volunteers. This trend was encouraged by the federations themselves, which organized seminars and weekend retreats to expose volunteers to Jewish religion. Whereas once the federation maintained a strict neutrality—religion being divisive in a community split into distinct religious movements—over the past two decades it has emerged as a proponent of voluntaristic ceremonialism. Concern with the future of Judaism has been one of the major reasons.

Many of the older Jewish leaders have become increasingly concerned that the younger generation may not follow in their footsteps. And, indeed, many younger people are alienated from Judaism in any of its forms. But others are increasingly active. The Jewish practices of many younger people developed in response to exposure at summer camp or youth group rather than from what they observed at home or in their synagogue. These informal Jewish experiences are very important because they enable young people to see Judaism practiced in a vibrant environment, which is frequently in dramatic contrast to what they observe in their local communities, where Jewish practice might be uninspired and uninspiring.

Judaism has always been a religion in which holy texts and commentaries are central. And yet, it is clear that one cannot rely on the text to explain religious practice in the United States. Even among the Orthodox, religious practice can be idiosyncratic, depending on social and cultural factors in addition to halakhic ones. In the non-Orthodox denominations, religious practice is determined almost completely by subjective factors. The experiential element of religion is becoming more important, and practices that emphasize spirituality have gained in popularity as a result. In previous generations, religiosity was intrinsically connected to a comprehensive belief system. Jews of all denominations were also much more likely to accept the authority

not only of local rabbis but of denominational leaders. Tradition, however that concept was understood, also weighed heavily on the individual and congregation. By contrast, at the end of the twentieth century, individually centered spirituality is the criteria by which religious meaning is gauged. Synagogues that have been able to market themselves as emphasizing the experiential element of Judaism have generally gained membership, while those that have focused on intellectual discourse, social justice, or doctrinal rigidity have lost members. Many congregations have found that religious practices formerly held privately in the home can now be offered as communal activities that attract significant numbers. An example is the Sabbath dinner, once a home activity separate from the synagogue worship that might precede or follow it, but today frequently part of an encompassing Friday evening synagogue program, appreciated for its convenience and sociability.

Most American Jews have become comfortable with the personal picking and choosing of what frequently is referred to as “salad bar religion.” Of course, most American Jews had picked from among the various traditional practices from their earliest days in the country. But it was regarded as a problematic reality that needed to be overcome or swept under the rug, depending on one’s perspective. But by the 1980s, the American consumerist mentality had so influenced American attitudes to religion that a pick-and-choose approach to religion was no longer seen as problematic. Rather, American Jews were consciously and deliberately evaluating various Jewish practices to find a good “fit.” Many wished to combine Jewish institutional affiliation with spiritual elements from Eastern practices, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Sufism. Particularly influential in the 1970s was Transcendental Meditation, a formal program of meditative practices taught in centers devoted to this spiritual approach.

Jewish religious leaders face the challenge of encouraging sincere spiritual seekers while at the same time preventing the emergence of syncretistic practices that might be incompatible with Judaism. Many Jews were, without a doubt, interested in combining

JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1803

practices from in and outside of their religion. While there were initially widespread concerns that this would destroy authentic Jewish practice, most congregations have been able to incorporate elements from outside without undermining Jewish religious authenticity. Many rabbis were concerned that congregants' religious practice was superficial. Further, some seemed to drop out entirely after their children completed Bar or Bat Mitzvah training. On the other hand, Southern Florida has emerged as a center of Jewish religious activities for the golden-agers. For example, seventy-six percent of South Palm Beach county's Jewish population and sixty-seven percent of North Palm Beach county's Jewish population was aged sixty or older at the end of the 1990s. Such senior citizens increase their level of Jewish practices and frequently become very active in their congregations. Many, particularly in places like South Florida, Arizona, or other retirement locations, join "condo congregations," located in or near a condominium.¹³ Retirees tend to practice Judaism in different ways from younger singles or families, due in part to their different lifestyle.

Some Jewish practices have been lifted entirely out of the Jewish religious framework and pushed as spiritual practices that can be used by all. The primary example of this is the commercialization of Kabbalistic practices, esoteric mystical doctrines that have been transformed into bite-size psychological insights combined with quick spiritual exercises. Pop Kabbalah got a lot of publicity from the steady stream of Hollywood celebrities who spoke about how Jewish mysticism helped them beat depression or addiction or enrich their lives and bring them closer to their loved ones. Many American Jews expected their religious practice to help them solve personal or family problems. Whereas traditional Judaism placed ritual in the theological realm, American Jews place in the therapeutic. Spiritual practices are expected to connect people with the sacred, but also to help them make their lives easier, better, or fuller. Many American Jews believe or at least hope their practice would be psychologically and even medically beneficial. Even when no explicit promises are made, congregations often try to mold Jewish prac-

tice into the style of a health club workout. Synagogues have begun to market "spiritual workouts." For example, Temple Beth Sholom of Miami Beach, Florida, offered what they refer to as the "twenty-nine minute workout." The newsletter advises congregants to "wake-up early, drop the kids off, slip out of work, and join us for your morning spiritual exercise." This included ten minutes of Jewish "word or prayer or holiday of the week," followed by a ten-minute Hebrew lesson, and then ten minutes of learning and singing Jewish music.¹⁴

New Understandings of the Concept of Mitzvah: Arnold Eisen argues that scholars have wrongly associated the word mitzvah solely with Orthodoxy. These scholars suggest that a mitzvah is a commandment performed according to the halakhah. To perform a mitzvah, a Jew has to believe he or she is performing an act in direct response to the will of God. Practice cannot count as a mitzvah, according to this line of thinking, unless it enacts a religious belief. Eisen argues that "the restriction of 'commandment' to behavior that is directly ascribed to divine decree probably misses and misrepresents the vast majority of action performed by *pre-modern* Jews, let alone their modern descendants."¹⁵ Eisen follows Franz Rosenzweig, who believed that Jews had observed the commandments over the course of hundreds of years because social reality compelled and made sense of those observances. This practice added richness and meaning to the lives of people who may have lived in poverty or suffered from religious persecution. Thus, the word mitzvah has a much wider denotation. As Eisen puts it, "if we ignore this wider denotation of Mitzvah, we miss a great deal of reflection and activity undertaken in response to complicated sets of imperatives arising out of the distinctive Jewish identity that such Jews recognized and wished to maintain."¹⁶

All of the American Jewish religious movements see themselves as advocates for the performance of mitzvot. The Conservative movement was the most influential in modern American Jewish attempts to redefine the word mitzvah in the context of halakhic practice. The Conservative movement was dominated by JTS for most of the twentieth century. After Cyrus Adler died in 1940,

1804 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Talmud professor Louis Finkelstein became the undisputed leader of the seminary and therefore the most influential man in the movement. By March, 1949, the Conservative movement had 365 affiliated congregations. That number was to rapidly grow. By 1954, it had 492 congregations. This growth was due primarily to new suburban congregations being founded at a rapid rate. But suburban life created new challenges the Conservative movement was not wholly prepared to face. There was always a struggle being waged within the seminary, the congregational body, and the Rabbinical association for influence in the movement. Until the end of the 1970s, jts remained very traditional, with the exception of the Reconstructionist Mordecai Kaplan. Kaplan represented a minority within the Conservative movement that believed that Judaism was in a post-halakhic period. What was important was not law but standards. Eventually, the left-wingers would push Kaplan into allowing them to create their own movement, which became Reconstructionism.

Rector Saul Lieberman wielded enormous influence because of his vast talmudic scholarship and authoritarian determination to impose halakhic standards on the movement. But Albert I. Gordon, the leader of the United Synagogue, the Conservative movement's synagogue arm, believed that congregational leaders should play an important role in formulating Conservative ideology (and, by implication, policies on religious practices). This led to a series of confrontations with Louis Finkelstein and eventually resulted in Gordon's resignation.¹⁷ Another power struggle developed when the Rabbinical Assembly, the movement's Rabbinical union, began to advocate an approach to the Agunah problem—which prevents from remarrying Jewish women who cannot obtain a divorce—that the jts Talmud professors felt was unacceptable. Finkelstein successfully lobbied to create a Joint Law Conference that effectively ensured that the Talmud professors would control the process and could thus prevent the institutionalization of any policy they opposed. The conference was dissolved in 1968, which allowed the Rabbinical organization to proceed with a variation of its original plan.

The Conservative movement remained split into leftist, centrist, and rightist factions. While many of those on the left held radical theological views, the determining issue remained very much one's position on Jewish law rather than Jewish belief. At the same time, suburban congregations were developing their own culture, which respected traditional practice even as it abrogated halakhic commitment. By the time Gerson D. Cohen became chancellor in 1972, the movement was ready for change. Cohen was much more willing to consider change than his predecessor, and attention soon focused on the role of women in the ritual life of the Conservative synagogue.

Religious practice in general has been strongly influenced by the feminist movement. Women came to play a larger and larger role in contemporary Jewish practice. Egalitarianism has been accepted as obligatory in all Reform and Reconstructionist congregations and is the dominant form of practice in most Conservative ones. Women have become prominent not only as lay leaders but as rabbis and cantors in all but the Orthodox. The feminist revolution had a dramatic impact on Jewish practice in American Judaism. Particularly noticeable is the impact of feminism on the liturgy and liturgical practice. Prayer books are being re-edited to reflect gender sensitivity, or even gender neutrality. Many congregations that use older prayer books verbally change what is written in order to reflect this need. Foremothers as well as forefathers are now referred to in the Amidah as elsewhere in the liturgy.

In a broader sense, there has been a conscious effort to incorporate women's spirituality into liturgical experiences. This influence has been felt in the Conservative movement. In 1955, the Rabbinical Assembly issued a ruling allowing women to participate in the Torah service. In 1973, the Rabbinical Assembly law committee issued a ruling allowing women to be counted in a prayer quorum, the minyan. That same year, the United Synagogue adopted a resolution urging jts to admit women to its Rabbinical school. This obviously was not a binding resolution, since the United Synagogue could hardly order jts to make

 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1805

such a radical change. But it did make it clear to all that the lay leadership wanted change. In 1977, the Rabbinical Assembly adopted a resolution asking Chancellor Cohen to appoint a special committee to study the possibility of training women rabbis. He enthusiastically followed this suggestion, establishing the Commission for the Study of the Ordination of Women as Rabbis. In 1979, the commission issued a report that argued there was no halakhic barrier to the ordination of women. The committee's vote, eleven to three, indicated that there was wide support for such a decision. Cohen then attempted to bring the question to a vote among the JTS faculty. Many partisans on both sides of the issue saw the question as holding tremendous symbolic importance. Traditionalists saw it as the last stand for a Halakhic Conservative movement. Liberals saw it as an essential step in giving religious rights to all females. The debate, which went on for four years, became quite bitter. Some traditionalists felt it was inappropriate to allow all faculty to have an equal vote. They question how a professor of modern Hebrew literature or homiletics could evaluate the issue with the same legal depth of a Talmud professor. But a closed approach to decision-making was no longer acceptable in the Conservative movement. In October, 1983, the JTS faculty voted thirty-four to eight to accept women into the Rabbinical program. In May, 1985, Amy Eilberg graduated as the first woman ordained a rabbi by the Conservative movement.

Private Judaism and the Increasing Focus on Personal Spirituality: Due to the voluntaristic nature of Jewish life in the United States, levels of observance could be puzzling to someone expecting religious consistency. Some practices attracted a large enthusiastic following, while others were observed mainly by the most devout (or, more precisely, the most observant). Steven Cohen explains that many Jews are interested in observances that reflect their "affection for Jewish family, food, and festivals."¹⁸ Cohen distinguished between those who had a "commitment to content" versus those who had a "commitment to continuity." For the many American Jews who were

more interested in maintaining some sort of ethnic identity than expressing their theology through consistent ritual practice, holidays that connected them with family-related memories, experiences, and aspirations were most likely to be observed. They wanted to recall their positive childhood memories of certain Jewish holidays and to pass on their family legacy to their children by recreating similar scenes in their own homes. Furthermore, these holidays could evoke a higher spiritual importance by connecting members of the family with a sense of historical continuity and a transcendent religious message.

Many Jews crammed into packed synagogues for Rosh Hashshana and Yom Kippur but then disappeared for most of the rest of the year. The two exceptions were Passover and Hanukkah, primarily observed in the home rather than the synagogue. Both parallel Christian holidays observed not only by Christians but celebrated in a secular manner by society as a whole. Hanukkah, in particular, has assumed an importance all out of proportion to its significance in the Jewish calendar, at least in part because of its proximity to December 25. The holiday's primary observance is the lighting of candles over the course of eight days. It also provides an opportunity for gift-giving, joyous songs, and special foods, all engaging within the family setting and, especially, to children, frequently the main focus of American religion. Sociologists and theologians have attempted to explain Hanukkah's huge popularity in terms of what it signifies religiously for American Jews. For example, Jacob Neusner notes that "it bears the message of defiance—the few against the many, the holy against the profane—and victory over oppression that Jews find congenial."¹⁹ Numerous other explanations are certainly possible.

Passover similarly is primarily observed in the home. Despite the fact that it is one of the three pilgrimage festivals that are supposed to be celebrated with special prayer services in the synagogue, the holiday is primarily observed by holding family seder (ritual meals) on the festival's first or first and second nights. The seder comprises an extensive home ritual, printed in a special work called a haggadah. For decades, the most

1806 JUDAISM, THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

popular haggadah in America was the Maxwell House Haggadah, available free in supermarkets. But in the 1980s and 90s, virtually every Jewish group edited and published its own haggadah, each reflecting the groups specific theology and ideology. *Tikkun* magazine, a leftist publication, published yearly inserts that could be used as supplements to the traditional text. Other groups produced feminist haggadot, gay and lesbian haggadot, Zionist haggadot, university student haggadot, and so forth. Some focused on a particular social or political perspective, while others were more concerned with meeting the needs of a specific sociological target group.

Samuel Heilman points out that a polarization took place in the late 1960s and 70s, producing two distinct types of American Jew. The division occurred because there was a choice over how individuals would choose to express their Jewish identity in concrete behavioral terms. The more common type subordinated Jewish involvement to American identity. Heilman refers to these people as “Jewish-Americans” and explains that their Jewish attachments were similar to those of other hyphenated Americans, such as Italian-Americans or Irish-Americans. Such hyphenated Americans absorbed American values and American cultural patterns. They adapted their behavioral patterns to those most accepted and expected in the United States, leaving behind any behaviors associated with “the old country.” What was left was lighting Hanukkah candles, a Passover Seder, which might or might not include an extensive ritual element, attendance at a synagogue for the High Holy Days, and the celebration of life cycle events with a rabbi and/or in a synagogue.

The second, smaller group was deeply committed to perpetuating Jewishness not only as an ethnicity but also as a religion. While not necessarily Orthodox, individuals within this group were likely to be highly observant. Even Reform Jews in this category were surprisingly observant in a manner consistent with Reform theology and practice. For many Jews in this category, Jewish identity became more and more all-consuming. Their daily and weekly activities were substantially filled up by Jewish activities

of one sort or another. Many attended synagogue regularly and studied in adult education classes one or more nights a week. Most sent their children to Jewish day schools, which obligated them to attend a wide variety of school-related functions. Most found that not only their religious lives but also their social lives revolved around Jews and Judaism. In between these two groups was a large middle that was not nearly as committed as the second group but not as assimilated as the first. But in the 1960s and 70s, the middle group eroded substantially. As Heilman writes, “. . . one either took Jewish life and Judaism more seriously and actively engaged it . . .” or “. . . one let meaningless rituals and old traditions fade . . .”²⁰

But by the 1990s, sociologists began to identify a new middle group that deserves attention. Steven Cohen and Arnold Eisen refer to this segment of the Jewish community as “moderately affiliated American Jews.”²¹ Cohen divides American Jews into the moderately affiliated, the involved, and the peripheral. The moderately affiliated are still practicing certain rituals in relatively high percentages. For example, eighty-five percent attend a Seder. This is in contrast to ninety-six percent of the involved that do, and fifty-nine percent of the peripheral. Eighty-six percent of the moderately affiliated light Hanukkah candles as opposed to ninety-five percent of the involved and sixty-seven percent of the peripheral. But only fifty-two percent of the moderately affiliated are synagogue members, as opposed to seventy-eight percent of the involved, and sixteen percent of the peripheral.²²

Charles Liebman presents two models to explain how the individual Jew has related to Judaism in the modern period. One model is that of public Judaism, in which the individual is seen as part of the collective entity. The individual has responsibility and obligations to fulfill toward this entity and does not have the right to pursue selfish interests to the exclusion of the collective needs of the Jewish people as a whole. Private Judaism refers to the individual meaning each person finds in the religion. For those privatized Jewish commitments, what matters is the spiritual benefit that the individual Jew derives from the beliefs and prac-

tices of the religion.²³ The 1980s and 90s were a time in which private Judaism became more and more popular, and public Judaism became less and less. Much of this was a reflection of the increasing focus on personal spirituality. In addition, many of the challenges that seem to require a corporate response had been solved. The Jewish people seemed more secure than they had at anytime in recent memory. While not at peace, the state of Israel was no longer facing a short-term threat to its survival. Soviet Jewry was no longer being refused permission to emigrate. Jewish communities in countries such as Syria that had been kept captive had been permitted to emigrate. Ethiopian Jews who had faced civil war and starvation had been airlifted to Israel. While isolated problems remained in such places as Iran, the general situation of world Jewry was good. American Jews thus felt free to turn their attention inward.

Notes

¹ Jacob Neusner, *Fortress Introduction to American Judaism: What the Books Say, What the People Do* (Minneapolis, 1984), p. 5.

² Marshal Sklare and Joseph Greenblum, *Jewish Identity on the Suburban Frontier* (Chicago, 1979), pp. 57-59.

³ Jack Wertheimer, ed., *Jews in the Center: Conservative Synagogues and their Members* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London, 2000), p. 1.

⁴ Jonathan S. Wocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1986), pp. 67-68.

⁵ Jonathan Sarna, "The Debate over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 363-394.

⁶ Daniel J. Elazar and Rela Mintz Geffen, *The Conservative Movement in Judaism: Dilemmas and Opportunities* (Albany, 2000), p. 71.

⁷ David Weiss Halivni, *Revelation Restored: Divine Writ and Critical Responses* (Boulder, 1997).

⁸ Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry* (New York, 1992), p. 13.

⁹ Charles S. Liebman, "Ritual, Ceremony, and the Reconstruction of Judaism in the United States," in Roberta Rosenberg Farber and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., *Jews in America: A Contemporary Reader* (Hanover and London, 1999), pp. 307-308.

¹⁰ Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbol: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York, 1996), p. 41.

¹¹ Haym Soleveitchik, "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy," in Rosenberg and Waxman, op. cit., p. 351. The article was originally printed in *Tradition* 28:4 (1994), pp. 64-130.

¹² Charles E. Silberman, *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today* (New York, 1985), p. 211.

¹³ Joel L. Levine, "Why People in the Sunbelt Join a Synagogue," in Dana Kaplan, ed., *Contemporary Debates in American Reform Judaism* (New York and London, 2001), p. 57.

¹⁴ *A World of Jewish Opportunities, Temple Beth Shalom*, vol. LX, no. 1-14 October, 2001.

¹⁵ Arnold M. Eisen, *Rethinking Modern Judaism: Ritual, Commandment, Community* (Chicago and London, 1998), p. 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Abraham J. Karp, *Jewish Continuity in America: Creative Survival in a Free Society* (Tuscaloosa and London, 1998), p. 247.

¹⁸ Steven Cohen, *Content or Continuity? Alternative Bases for Commitment* (New York, 1991), p. 4.

¹⁹ Neusner, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

²⁰ Samuel C. Heilman, *Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the Twentieth Century* (Seattle and London, 1995), p. 72.

²¹ Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2000).

²² Steven M. Cohen, "Jewish Continuity over Judaic Content: The Moderately Affiliated American Jew," in Robert M. Seltzer and Norman J. Cohen, eds., *The Americanization of the Jews* (New York and London, 1995), p. 411.

²³ Charles S. Liebman, "Jewish Survival, Antisemitism, and Negotiation with the Tradition," in *ibid.*, pp. 442-443.

DANA EVAN KAPLAN

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KARAITE JUDAISM: Karaite Judaism is characterized by its denial of the authority of the Oral Law of the rabbis as represented in the Talmud and Rabbinic codes. The denial of Rabbinic authority led Karaites

(literally: scripturalists, but there are other suggested etymologies of the term) to develop their own fully formed alternative to Rabbanism (the common term for Rabbinic Judaism in the context of discussions of