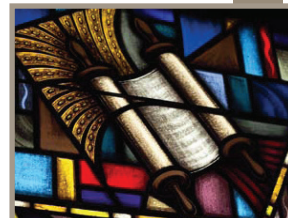


# The Reform Advocate

Volume VIII, Number II: Summer 2016

## THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

Reclaiming & Renewing  
Our Heritage for the 21st Century



### *Dear Friends,*

As we approach the sacred season of the High Holy Days, we send our greetings to all of the friends of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism. We trust that you have continued to follow the Society's great progress over the past year with interest and enthusiasm. Over the past 8 years, the SCRJ has truly emerged as a recognized and respected voice within the international Reform Movement, as we continue our advocacy of the historic ideals and worship traditions we cherish as Reform Jews.



Reflecting upon the accomplishments and blessings of the past year, we have much to be grateful for. Our expanding programs and outreach at Hebrew Union College is helping a new generation of our leaders encounter their Reform heritage. Our publications program continues to expand with the successes of *The New Union Haggadah* and the 50th Anniversary Edition of the classic history, *The Rise and Growth of Reform Judaism*. Our work with Reform congregations around the country continues to inspire new opportunities for Classical Reform worship for the diverse memberships of our Movement. And our partnerships in Israel and Europe are helping to spread our vision to Jews throughout the world.

Many of you will experience the need for the Society's efforts in deeply personal

ways during this holy season. So many of the beautiful prayers of our Reform tradition – known and loved by so many of you since childhood – have disappeared from the worship of most Reform temples. The magnificent music

that brought power and inspiration to the experience of the New Year and the Day of Atonement is heard only rarely. These challenges face many of you most intensely at this time of year. We of

the SCRJ, affirming the diversity within the contemporary Reform Movement, are committed to the re-enfranchisement of many faithful members of our congregations. At the same time, we seek to present a meaningful and viable alternative to a new generation of younger Jews – including interfaith families – who are equally in need of worship that is accessible and inclusive.

The Society looks forward to your continuing participation and support of our work. Our vision is broad and expansive – our ability to achieve our mission is limited only by the resources available. We will be grateful for your generous gift of support for the Society's work in this holy season of renewal.

On behalf of the Board and the Staff of the SCRJ, we wish you and your loved ones many blessings of joy, health and peace for the New Year!

## A POIGNANT PRAYER FOR OUR TIMES

*from the Union Prayer Book for the High Holy Days,  
Sinai Edition, Afternoon Service for Yom Kippur*

Help us, O God, to speed the dawn of our people's ancient Messianic hope: the great day of reconciliation, when poverty, prejudice, and hatred no longer threaten to destroy us; when we shall truly have transformed our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning-hooks.

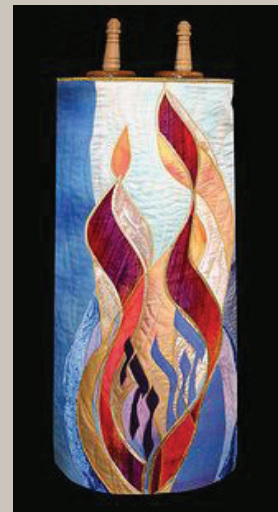
When nation shall not lift up sword against nation;  
nor learn war any more,

When our wealth is used to feed the hungry and heal the sick;  
when the goodness of our fragile planet is preserved and protected  
for the well-being of all.

When we cherish the world and hold it in trust for our  
children's children.

When the weak become strong, and the strong compassionate.

And that which has been commanded shall come to  
pass: Let justice roll down like waters, and  
righteousness like a mighty stream.



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## SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP WITH HEBREW UNION COLLEGE ENTERS A NEW AND EXPANDED PHASE



*Rabbi Berman and students at Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem, April, 2016*

Since its inception in 2008, the Society for Classical Reform Judaism has sought to fulfill its mission of preserving and renewing our heritage by reaching out to the current new generation of future leaders of our Movement, preparing for the rabbinate and cantorate at our seminary, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. For the past seven years, we have been facilitating programs at HUC's campuses in Cincinnati, Jerusalem and Los Angeles, featuring lectures, seminars, and worship services reflecting the history, thought and liturgical traditions of Classical Reform. These experiences enable an entire new era of rabbis to encounter and explore their own heritage as Reform Jews – both as a personal option for their own personal spiritual commitments as well as critical resource for serving the diverse constituencies of their future congregations.

The entire structure and depth of our work with the College has significantly broadened with the implementation of the new Ackerman Professorship for American and Reform Jewish Studies. This new faculty position, occupied by Dr. Gary P. Zola, was facilitated by the Society with a major gift of our Founding Board Member, Edward Ackerman of Dallas, Texas. All of

the SCRJ's programs at HUC are now developed and facilitated as official, formal academic programs under this formal institutional umbrella. Dr. Gary Zola now works closely with Rabbi Howard Berman in organizing our programs, which are no longer "guest appearances" of an outside group, but are official activities of the training process – with academic credit and official status. With the full support of the resources, staff and facilities of the Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, our various activities now have a much more central profile in the students' perception and participation.

Our annual SCRJ Institute at the Jerusalem campus, held during the week of April 4, was another great success. The enthusiastic and committed way that the Israeli administration and faculty throw themselves into this experience each year is deeply moving and gratifying. From the prominent display of the Society's banner over the main entrance of the campus on King David Street throughout the week, and the full participation of the Israeli and First Year American rabbinic and cantorial students in our various seminars – this year's SCRJ Institute culminated in the annual Service and Concert of Classical Reform Music, held for the entire Jerusalem community and filling the College Synagogue with the great music and liturgy of our heritage. The impact that this intensive annual experience



has on all of our American students – from all three USA campuses – as they engage in this major encounter with Classical Reform during this critical and formative first year of their studies, cannot be overstated. And equally important is the way that the Israeli students have come to view our influence with such respect and appreciation – clearly understanding the major resource that our shared Reform heritage offers the Movement there as it struggles for a sense of rootedness and connection in the face of the marginalization it constantly faces in Israeli society.



Another highlight of our Jerusalem programs each year is the weekend of activities honoring the Society at Har-El Congregation. As always, Rabbi Ada Zavidov and Cantor Evan Cohen and all of their wonderful members welcomed Rabbi Berman for the Sabbath of April 8-9 with incredible warmth and love. The Shabbat Services that weekend were of Har-El's regular monthly series of Classical Reform worship – with their 8 voice choir, piano and harp, and readings from our joint publication, *B'Hadrat Kodesh* – enriching their Services regularly with the most beloved *Union Prayer Book* texts translated into Modern Hebrew. This remarkable volume has become an important resource for the broader Israeli Reform Movement as well, and is now being used by a number of other congregations

– putting the Society's name and mission squarely in the vision of our fellow Reform Jews there.

Our HUC work continued dramatically with the phenomenal success of a new and rather revolutionary program we inaugurated during the week of May 23 – the first cross-campus Summer Intensive Course in American Reform Jewish History and Thought. For the first time in HUC's history, twelve students from all three American campuses registered for this unique opportunity, and came together in Cincinnati for an intensive week of study of the documents, events and liturgy of historic Reform Judaism – taught by Dr. Gary Zola, Professor Richard Sarason, and Rabbi Howard Berman. Day long discussions of our heritage, "pilgrimage" visits to such landmarks as the College's historic campus, library, museum, and Plum Street Temple – were dramatic eye, mind, and heart opening revelations for the students from Los Angeles and New York – many of whom had never been to the College's spiritual center, and who have only minimal experience of study of this critical subject that we believe should be at the core of their rabbinic training. The entire group then went on for the weekend in Charleston, SC, to experience the birthplace of American Reform – with further study and worship at the historic synagogue, K.K.Beth Elohim, founded in 1749 – where the first organized effort at creating an American Reform Judaism unfolded in 1824.

The major impact that this experience clearly had on each of these students was deeply encouraging. They were moved, challenged and inspired – and many of them were liberated from the usual stereotypes and misconceptions they had about their own Reform history and identity. It was particularly meaningful to realize how all of them had already been familiar with the Society through their encounters with our work during their First Year studies in Jerusalem. Among the most important moments of the entire week were the personal one-on-one conversations Rabbi Berman was able to have with many of them... nurturing relationships that will be important for deepening their connections with our cause. Each of them are now engaged in writing research papers on some aspect of the themes we studied together during the week...and each of them now become effective allies and ambassadors for the SCRJ on their respective campuses. We are confident that they will be important voices of support as we seek to expand our efforts in LA and New York in the near future.

## HOW I BECAME CAPTIVATED WITH THE BEAUTY OF CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

by Rabbi Edward P. Cohn  
Rabbi Emeritus, Temple Sinai, New Orleans, Louisiana

Years ago I sent a “chutzpadick” letter to one of the great rabbis of our American Reform Jewish movement, Rabbi Louis L. Mann of the Chicago Sinai Congregation. The letter was in response to his congregation’s centennial publication I happened upon in a college library. The pamphlet, authored by Rabbi Mann, provided a brief outline of the “Ideals of Sinai.” Mind you, I was all of 15 years old and my world view of Reform practice was limited to my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. As I read the pamphlet, I was astonished to learn that Sinai held a Sunday morning worship service! I blush now to think how I lectured one of America’s great spokesmen of Classical Reform Judaism about conducting such a Sunday morning service.

Like Rabbi Hillel when he was asked to teach the Torah on one foot, Dr. Mann, though recuperating from an illness at the time, replied with great patience in a lengthy handwritten response explaining the rationale and history of the principles of Classical Reform Judaism as practiced by Sinai Temple. Dr. Mann’s long letter concluded:

*I hope I have cleared up some things in your mind, and am looking forward to such a time when we can sit down together and explain the origin and development of each of the processes of Reform Judaism and why and where.*

Only a year later, during my freshman year at the University of Cincinnati and my first year in the undergraduate program of our Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, I came face to face with Classical Reform Judaism when attending my first service at the old and beloved K.K. Bene Israel, known as the Rockdale Avenue Temple. It was a service conducted on a Shabbat morning by Rabbi Murray Blackman, who ironically, twenty years later, I succeeded as Senior Rabbi at Temple Sinai of New Orleans!



In the magnificent sanctuary, Rabbi Blackman welcomed those present and instructed us to rise and turn in the red *Union Hymnal* hymn number 47, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.” Believe me, nothing like that had been sung in my home congregation at Baltimore’s Temple Oheb Shalom. Nevertheless, as time went by, I came to be absolutely captivated and smitten with the beauty of Classical Reform’s addressing a personal God, its tenacious optimism, its openhearted inclusivity, its pride of the American spirit, and of course, its uniquely inspiring esthetics.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were times of enormous national and international turmoil. The political assassinations of President Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were accompanied by urban riots, bloody and ugly civil rights demonstrations, and anti-Vietnam war rallies. Additionally, the displacement and turmoil experienced in the larger world was echoed by an unsettling and, for many, unwelcome transition within our Reform movement’s liturgical expression. For many a “Jew in the pew,” the absence of the *Union Prayer Book* was a traumatic development. Congregations began planning multi-media sound and light show experimental services. Some of them included jarring, unfamiliar liturgical music.

Upon ordination in 1974, I was honored to serve as an assistant rabbi at The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia. It was then that I came to understand that an aspect of my personal rabbinic calling might well be as a bridge builder and a peacemaker between the advocates of what was becoming an increasingly traditional and ethnic Reform Judaism, and those who felt no desire for change and who were at a loss as to why their services had become so unfamiliar.

Guitars were replacing organ music. Talitot (tallises – prayer shawls) and kippot(yarmulkas) were increasingly in evidence. Talented cantors intent on introducing participatory tunes came to congregations which had not had cantors in a century – if even then! This was the period characterized by *The Jewish Catalog* of do it yourself Judaism. Formality was out and “touchy/feely” became the rage.

None of this was bad! However, its arrival was perceived by many as abrupt and off-putting. Moreover, the rationale of this neo-Reform was often poorly communicated to longtime and devoted members of our movement’s congregations. Unnecessary alienation was often the result: “Why did they have to change the Shema?”

So, how might we go about the “care and feeding” of still Classical-leaning Reform Jews of this second decade of the 21st Century? Answer – we make sure to provide them their moment in every service. We thereby underscore that our Classical members continue to matter and that their spiritual satisfaction also remains our priority. Let me also underscore my experience that by no means are those with Classical Reform preferences to be found only among our elder membership cohort. That is a total misconception. There are many folks in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are devoted advocates of Classical Reform principles and worship expressions..

**INTERFAITH FAMILIES,  
NON-HEBREW READING JEWS,  
CHRISTIANS & PEOPLE  
FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS**

**Who Have Attended Worship Services**

**PLEASE TAKE THE INTERFAITH FAMILY &  
JEWISH LIFE SURVEY NOW!**

**Your Answers Will Help Us Create  
More Inclusive Services & Communities**

*See Survey Links and Details on Page 11...*

In conclusion, nothing we have noted here places a burden on the synagogue budget, but rather serves to engender not only goodwill and friendship, but will inevitably solidify their continued support, loyalty and devotion to the congregation with which they have been affiliated for generations. Presented in this way, and with the utmost of sensitivity, we also succeed in providing yet another option by opening the door of Classical Reform Judaism to Jews who come from more traditional backgrounds but are searching for something else. And finally, of no little importance, Classical Reform Judaism offers a hospitable and welcoming atmosphere for the many LGBTQ families, intermarried families, and Jews by Choice who are drawn each year to join and strengthen our Reform Jewish ranks. The more we know and understand about the beauty of Classical Reform Judaism, the more we will welcome it as a win/win for all!



## MEANT TO BE...

by Jill S. Silverstein, Ed.D.



Somehow my journey to Judaism was ‘beshert’ – meant to be. I grew up in a nice Midwestern suburb, attending a Presbyterian church where my mother was active in the choir and as an Elder. For a Midwesterner, I grew up in a reasonably liberal, ecumenical home. Between my grandparents and parents – well, we were an ‘interfaith’ family. My mother had found her way to this church when she and my father married – away from my grandmother’s dour, Scandinavian Lutheran practice. I guess the difference between the fundamental practices was lost on me. I didn’t understand the Trinity or God as being human – but I liked the music. Music seemed to be a pathway to spirituality for me.

I was a budding musician, studying both piano and organ. Given the dearth of organists everywhere, by the time I was 14, I was regularly called upon to substitute on Sunday morning in all sorts of churches. None of the services did it for me, but it was meaningful to be able to enhance people’s spiritual experience by providing beautiful music. Even with exposure to all of the mainstream Protestant denominations, I could find no faith-based home that suited me.

Most family members on both sides were not really ‘practicing’ Christians. Along with the Lutherans and Presbyterians, there was the Jewish corner – a cousin of Mom’s who had married a Jew, converted and was raising the children Jewish. We spent Chanukah with them – and then Passover as we got older, and on occasion, Rosh Hashanah. We did not go to temple with them – and looking back, I am not sure Hal and Shirley were all that ‘religious’ in the temple attendance. But their practice interested me. The idea that the Torah was the book interested me. The focus on family and community and charity rather than rigid attendance at services intrigued me. But in that wonderful “Garrison Keillor-esque” Midwestern Scandinavian Lutheran way, no one talked about any of the “good stuff” about which I wanted to know – why did Aunt Shirley convert? What did she like about Judaism?

I went off to college – still grounded in my music – regular gigs playing for various church services, funerals, and weddings – and still looking for a faith tradition that would suit me. I read about Buddhism, Hinduism, the B’Hai’s, and even Unitarianism. But I kept drifting back to my childhood memories of our Jewish cousins.

When I moved to Boston for grad school one of my best friends was Jewish and really began to introduce me to traditions and practices. Then I met my husband. As it became clear that we were “beshert” and that Judaism was a part of what defined him as the incredible man he is, it was finally my opportunity to take the path that had been in front of me all along. Getting married 30+ years ago even in a Reform temple, required my conversion. I studied. We studied. David was my ‘tour guide’ to cultural Judaism. His mother began my education about the Shabbat meal – the lighting and blessing of the Sabbath candles, and a meal that brought us all around the table to be grateful for the week behind us and for each other.

After we married, it was meaningful and important for me to attend Friday night services. The prayers, the music, the peace and rest of sitting in the sanctuary – it was as necessary as breathing. We belonged to a largish suburban temple. The Rabbi was interesting, scholarly, and even provocative at times. We were ‘regulars’, but were never active beyond weekly

attendance on Friday night and all of the holidays...for 20 years. Along the way, I studied with two other women and a tutor to become a Bat Mitzvah.

Ten years ago we moved into the city. It never occurred to us that there wasn't a Reform temple downtown...but there wasn't. We continued to belong to our suburban synagogue and commute out to on Friday

***“My intimacy with Judaism has increased a thousand-fold – because it is okay for me to be who I am. The Union Prayer Book has made Judaism accessible in a way it had never been.”***

nights. This was not ideal. Then one day, we saw the sign on the door of an Episcopal church for what is now Central Reform Temple. This looked like something that might be for us – a temple in a church. And so we went. It was like nothing I had ever experienced in my Jewish practice. Yes, the prayers were familiar, but more in English, and their meaning more accessible, and there was music – lots of music (3 musicians in this little temple). It was a congregation of about 30 adults - warm and friendly and open and genuine - that made no apologies about its inclusiveness, especially for LGBT and interfaith couples, its adult orientation, and its joy about sharing a home with an equally progressive Episcopal Church community.

This was our introduction to what we now understand as Classical Reform. And we were finally home. There was no more sitting anonymously in the midst of the Friday-night congregation. There just weren't that many of us that made it possible to 'hide'. Now, everyone who knows me knows I happily take my place in the front row... every week! Something deep and spiritual and joyous and collective happened in this congregation. Because we were small, everyone had a role, a place, a name. If you missed a service, people reached out. We got involved – real involved. A couple of years in, I became the temple President. How could this be? What did I know about temple governance? Do I even know enough about Judaism and what it means to be a Jew? Wouldn't people think I'm an imposter? But the Rabbi insisted that I was going to be successful in this role.

My intimacy with Judaism has increased a thousand-fold – because it is okay for me to be who I am. The *Union Prayer Book* has made Judaism accessible in a way it had never been. I can lead prayers with confidence and be accepted as a leader. My deepest spiritual sense had finally been introduced to the possibility that this Jew by choice was really a Jew in the eyes of this Classical Reform community. And the music, always the music - it was the beginning of my spiritual search; it was the thread that would draw me from Christianity to Judaism, from spectator to participant to temple leader; and It brought me home to my own spiritual place that, for me, had always been 'beshert' – meant to be.

If you would like to receive your *Reform Advocate* by email only,  
please contact us at [info@renewreform.org](mailto:info@renewreform.org), or  
call us at 617-247-4700



A Special Report on  
**BY DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT**

An Exhibit of Jewish Contributions to American Culture  
 from the Nation's Founding to the Civil War

by Professor Frederick Roden  
 Department of English, University of Connecticut

Princeton expanded the original manuscript exhibition to include extensive visual materials and early printed books. "By Dawn's Early Light" opens with two striking paintings by two Charleston natives: Solomon Nunes Carvalho (1815-1897) and Theodore Sidney Moise (1808-1885). The first (1838) depicts the interior of the elegant 1794 synagogue building of Kahal Kaddish Beth Elohim (KKBE "Holy Congregation House of God," established in 1749), rendered from memory after its destruction by fire. The second (1840) is a portrait of Penina Moise (1797-1880), showing fire in the distance over her right shoulder, memorializing the destruction of her beloved KKBE. Today the temple stands as a vibrant Reform congregation. In 1824, members there launched the first, unsuccessful attempt to modernize the traditional liturgy.

This exhibition contains an 1825 manuscript prayerbook and 1830 printed one from that first American "Reformed Society of Israelites," as they called themselves, as well as a copy of their 1825 constitution. But even if Penina did not embrace early reforms, she nevertheless claimed her voice as a Jewish laywoman, composing 60 of the 74 songs found in KKBE's 1842 hymnal. Penina wrote a total of 190 hymns, 13 of which appeared in the 1932 *Union Hymnal*. One might say that early American Jews were indeed guided by the "pillar of fire" to "Dawn's Early Light" to make a new Judaism. By coincidence, I met at the exhibition the great-grandson of the painter Carvalho, who was visiting from Great Britain. While the Carvalho descendants married out, today the pride in their ancestor has led family members to take a new interest in their Jewish heritage, as so many intermarried families and their children (and grandchildren) do today.

The exhibition does include some works by Jews who embraced Christianity: including the first Hebrew grammar book published in America (1735), by



*US Armed Forces Chaplain's Memorial Window  
 Hebrew Union College Chapel, Cincinnati, Ohio*

Judah Monis (1683-1764). An Italian Jew, he converted to Christianity in 1722 in order to become the first college instructor of Hebrew in America, as Harvard required his religious profession. This exhibit contains libretti by Mozart's librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749-1838), who founded the Italian Department at Columbia and was the first born-Jew (and Catholic!) to join the faculty. But it also displays a handwritten address in Hebrew written by Gershom Mendes Seixas (1745-1816), the first American-born "minister" at New York's Congregation Shearith Israel. The talk was delivered by Columbia graduate Sampson Simson at the college's commencement in 1800. Speaking of converts, lest we think conversion to Judaism is a late phenomenon, in the exhibition we find an 1853 volume of poems by Rebekah Hyneman (1816-1865), who converted when she married a Jewish merchant.

Portraits anchor an exhibit of this kind, as they tell a particular story of Jewish life in America. We have a painting of U.S. Navy Commodore Uriah Levy (1792-1862), who bought Jefferson's Monticello. The exhibition also contains a letter (May 28, 1818) from Thomas Jefferson to diplomat and man of letters Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851), denouncing anti-Semitism. We see a copy of Noah's 1837 speech that Native Americans were descendants of the "Lost Tribes of Israel." Besides many family and incidental works, there are paintings by Carvalho of Abraham Lincoln and by Moise of Henry Clay. Carvalho literally followed the growth of the new nation. He accompanied John

Fremont (1813-1890) on his fifth westward expedition (1853-1854); a stunning painting of the Grand River (Colorado River) is among the results. Fremont and Brigham Young (1801-1877) sat for Carvalho, but he also painted Chief Wakara (1808-1855), as he accompanied Young to a peace council with Native Americans. The exhibition contains a copy of Reform founder I.M. Wise's (1819-1900) 1877 essay "The Wandering Jew;" and these early American Jews did indeed wander! Jacob De Cordova's (1808-1868) first 1851 map of the state of Texas includes Kaufman County, named for a member of the Texas House of Representatives.

Progressive religious history also looms large with a stunning 1928 marble bust of Reform Rabbi David Einhorn (1809-1879) by Enrico Glicenstein (1870-1912). We find a copy of Rabbi Isaac Leeser's 1853-1854 translation of the Bible. Leeser became a prominent preacher at Philadelphia's Congregation Mikve Israel when Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) asked him to deliver sermons. She was the most important Jewish woman leader in this period, and the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's heroine in *Ivanhoe*. Thomas Sully's (1783-1872) 1831 beautiful painting of Gratz is here, along with an amazing letter to her Christian sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz, mentioning the opening of her Hebrew Sunday School (December 16, 1838). Gratz expressed the wish that she and Maria might coordinate Bible readings and exchange meditations on texts. This letter reminds us



Rebecca Gratz, (1781-1869)  
Portrait by Thomas Sully

that interfaith exchanges, like interfaith families, are an historic part of our American Jewish experience. While the exhibition contains a copy of Elijah Holzman's 1865 *Sefer Emek Refaim*, "The Valley of the Dead," which mocked Reform Judaism, the objects here overwhelmingly testify to both inter, and intra-religious cooperation, including many works from the nascent American Jewish Publications Society.

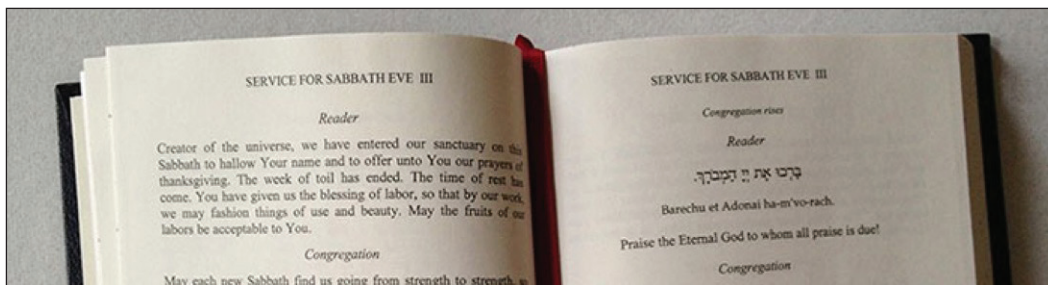
"By Dawn's Early Light" showcases countless religious works concerning the burgeoning of Judaism in a new land, such as early prayerbooks, but we also find scientific and medical writing, journalism, and examples of every literary form. There are few religious objects, with the exception of Zalmon Bostwick's (1811-1852) Torah finials, the only known pair made in the antebellum U.S., and Myer Myers' (1723-1795) New York ones, still owned by Shearith Israel. Upon exiting the exhibition at Princeton, we see Charles Peale Polk's (1767-1822) life-sized portrait of George Washington, reminding the viewer of the monumental role Jews played in the history of America. Although no exhibition can be exhaustive, this one surely tells the story of a new Judaism and a new nation whose mutual development was shaped yad b'yad, hand in hand. In the 21st century, may we American Jews remember this extraordinary history, especially its innovative and adaptive strategies, as we reinvent Classical Reform Judaism for a new age.



## *Interfaith Families and Jewish Life Survey*

Sponsored by the Society for Classical Reform Judaism,  
in collaboration with an academic research group at Spalding University

### **HOW DOES THE AMOUNT OF HEBREW IN A WORSHIP SERVICE AFFECT HOW WELCOME YOU FEEL IN A CONGREGATION?**



**Your participation in this survey will help answer this question.**

Your responses will guide our efforts in creating more  
welcoming and inclusive congregations and communities.

**PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY NOW!**

It will take you less than 10 minutes to complete.

[Click here](#) to go directly to the survey,

or copy this link into your browser: <https://www.questionpro.com/t/ACCpqZTFhb>

***Read more*** about the background for this study...

A Pew Research Center study reports that in the last 15 years, more than half of Jews married people from other traditions; and overall, little more than 10 percent of all American Jews understand the Hebrew they can read. If you have attended services in different congregations, you know that no two congregations are alike. Some include more Hebrew than English in their services, while others more English than Hebrew. Policies and practices meant to create inclusive and welcoming communities vary greatly. There appears to be little understanding about which practices are most effective or how our different worship styles impact those in attendance.

Currently, the amount of Hebrew in a service, as well as the policies affecting interfaith families, are the subject of great debate, but little consensus. In an effort to gather data to guide these conversations, we are asking for your help. Thank You!





The Society for Classical Reform Judaism advocates for the progressive spiritual values and worship traditions of our Reform heritage as creative resources for contemporary Jewish life.

We understand Judaism to be foremost a religious commitment rather than an ethnic identity.

We promote opportunities for meaningful and accessible worship, primarily in the language of our own time and place.

We demonstrate our religious commitment in ethical action inspired by the Biblical Prophets.

We affirm the American experience and its ideals as central to our Jewish identity.

We extend a warm welcome and unconditional support for interfaith families and all spiritual seekers.

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