Pragmatism versus the Talmudic Process in Reform Judaism: The Minyan as Case Study?

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Introduction

The minyan, the required quorum of ten adult Jews needed for public prayer, has constituted a core component of Jewish life throughout the millennia. In the context of communal worship, the minyan represents a microcosm of the entirety of the Jewish people, whose primary spiritual experiences are public and communal. The notion of the minyan has become so identified with Jewish life that the idea of nine Jews looking for a tenth, or one lone Jew looking for nine others, occupies a central place in the Jewish imagination. The minyan is the structure that changes the status of individual Jews into a community; it serves as the basis for the formation of a congregation.[1]

American Reform Judaism has had a complex relationship with the requirement of a minyan. In contrast to its approach to so many other facets of traditional Jewish law, the Reform Movement never abolished the concept of a minyan. It has remained part of the vocabulary of Reform Jewish life and is referenced in numerous responsa and guides to practice. Despite this, however, on the ground, American Reform deemphasized its centrality and allowed the notion of minyan to become increasingly irrelevant in the Reform synagogue and in the minds of American Reform Jews.

In many ways the minyan is illustrative of a tension running through American Reform between what might be termed a "Talmudic approach" on the one hand and a "pragmatic approach"

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to the needs of the hour on the other.[2] The "Talmudic approach" to American Reform looks to classic Jewish texts—often, but not exclusively, to the Talmud—for guidance. There is an assumption of authority in those texts, even as their authority relies on their ability to be persuasive when applied to a particular case.[3] The pragmatic approach to Reform grants far greater authority to sociological realities than to a genuine encounter and dialogue with classic texts. It assumes that a liberal approach to Jewish life by definition means that there is almost total freedom and few barriers to making any decision deemed to be needed in our specific time and place. The tension between these two approaches is most obvious in cases such as this one where there is nothing morally objectionable about a traditional standard that would warrant a rejection on that basis (provided that the minyan is redefined to include women). Formally abolishing the requirement of a minyan would certainly be seen as the rejection of a well-established norm. Yet, the legal basis for the minyan is supported by texts that require a commitment to certain hermeneutical principles established by the ancient Rabbis. Such principles may not be immediately persuasive to those not engaged with Jewish law. Moreover, those principles may be understood to be irrelevant in light of the sociological reality of dwindling synagogue attendance that would argue for being content with those who are present at services, regardless of their number. Thus, the minyan provides an excellent case for highlighting these two very different approaches within American Reform.

The first part of this article will present an overview of the major Rabbinic sources for the notion of the minyan. The second part will present the Reform Movement's Talmudic approach toward the minyan as reflected in Reform responsa and early Reform liturgy. The third part of this paper will demonstrate the movement's pragmatic approach to minyan. The final section will attempt to analyze what is at stake in the tension between these two approaches and what may be lost when Reform practice is determined by pragmatism rather than a Talmudic or Rabbinic process.

Part I: Overview of Rabbinic Sources

Traditional Sources: The Mishnah

The two earliest references to the minyan are found in the Mishnah. One provides biblical support for the requirement of ten. The other specifies those parts of the prayer service that require a minyan. Both sources assume the prior existence of the notion of the minyan as ten men.

> From where do we learn that the "assembly" is ten? It is written (Numbers 14:27) "until when, the wicked assembly." This excludes Joshua and Caleb.[4]

While not establishing the requirement, the Mishnah is interested in finding a supportive basis for it that is from the Torah. In this instance, the *asmachta* provided from the Torah is rooted in the story of the spies sent out by Moses to scout out the land of Israel. When ten of them return discouraged and seemingly of insufficient faith, they are referred to as "the wicked assembly [*edah*]." Elsewhere in the Mishnah (*M'gillah* 4:3) more specific elucidation of which prayers require a minyan is set forth:

> The introduction to the Shema is not repeated, nor does one pass before the Ark, nor do [the priests] lift their hands, nor is the Torah read [publicly], nor the Haftarah read from the Prophets, nor are halts made at funerals, nor is the blessing for mourners said, nor the comfort for mourners, nor the blessing of the bridegrooms, nor is the name of God mentioned in the invitation to say Grace after Meals, except in the presence of ten.

Traditional Sources: The Gemara

The Gemara provides a fuller interpretive discussion relying on a hermeneutic approach that might be seen as alienating to many moderns. While the verse from Numbers 14:27 quoted in the mishnah above remains pivotal, it is expanded on through a doubling of the hermeneutical principle of *g'zerah shavah*. Why was it necessary to further expand on the scriptural basis of Numbers 14:27 as presented in the quoted mishnah passage? That mishnah, while defining "assembly," is not linked to the notion of prayer to which the concept of minyan is primarily applied.

In the Gemara,[5] a minyan for prayer is presented as the extension of the command, "I will be sanctified among the children of Israel" (Lev. 22:32), about which the Gemara states, "Every act of sanctification requires not less than ten." The word "among" (*b'toch*) is connected to another Torah verse (Num. 16:21) that uses the same word, "Separate yourselves from among (*b'toch*) this congregation (*edah*). The word "congregation" (*edah*) is then connected to the original verse of Numbers 14:27. The logic of this double *g'zerah shavah* is as follows:

1. God is sanctified *among* the Children of Israel.
2. The word "among" occurs alongside the word "congregation."
3. "Congregation" means ten.
4. Therefore, God is sanctified among ten.

Traditional Sources: Midrash

Positive associations of the number ten emerge, however, in midrashic comments on the ten good people for whose sake God agreed not to destroy Sodom, and in the idea that, had Noah's family numbered ten rather than eight, the Flood might have been prevented.[6]

In the aggadic imagination, the notion of ten men for a minyan is further developed. "Rabbi Yochanan says: Whenever the Holy One, blessed be He, comes into a synagogue and does not find ten, He instantly becomes angry. As it says, 'Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there no answer?' (Isaiah 50:2)"[7]

Part II: Reform and the Minyan: The Talmudic Approach

Reform Jews were the first in Jewish life to include women in the count of a minyan. At the Frankfort Rabbinical Conference of 1845, Rabbi Samuel Adler offered a resolution that declared that the woman "has the same obligation as man to participate from youth up in the instruction in Judaism and in the public services, and that the custom not to include women in the number of individuals necessary for the conducting of a public service is only custom, and has no religious basis."[8]

A year later as Reform was taking root across the ocean, Isaac Mayer Wise, when appointed rabbi of Congregation Beth-El in Albany, New York, in 1846 is said to have counted women in the minyan, one of the reforms he introduced along with family mixed pews, sermons in the vernacular, a mixed choir, and confirmation, that resulted in his forced departure. In Wise's 1872 prayer book, *Minhag America* (the American Rite), there is a specific mention of the requirement for a minyan for the public service. Written in parentheses at the beginning of the service[9] are the words, "Ten adults, males or females, to be a Minyan."[10]

There have been four responsa from the American Reform Movement on the requirement for a minyan over the past seventy-five years. The first, written by Jacob Mann in 1936, addressed the need for a minyan for a small congregation that seemingly had never before held services on Friday night (presumably only on Saturday morning), and inquired about whether the service could be held with fewer than ten persons present. Mann cites the practice among Jews in *Eretz Yisrael*, as cited in *Masechet Sof'rim* 10:8, which allowed for six or seven people. He concluded, "While every attempt should be made to have a full *Minyan*, the importance of regular services in the Temple is such as to conduct them even when there are fewer than ten people present in accordance with the above-mentioned old Palestinian custom." He does not explicitly change the minimum requirement to six or seven, but rather seems to apply the disagreement between the custom of Jews in ancient Israel and the prevailing custom of Jewry at large to argue that the number of people required is subject to dispute and is therefore not fixed at *any* particular number.

The second responsum specifically dealing with the requirement of a minyan was written by Solomon B. Freehof in 1963. The question posed to him was whether an elderly or sick person could recite *Kaddish* for a parent or close relative at home without a minyan. Freehof notes that the observance of *yahrzeit* is "one of the justifiable motives which urges people to come to public worship. It would surely not be for the good of Judaism if we weakened this motivation and allowed the spread of the custom of saying Kaddish on the *yahrzeit* at home." However, searching for a way to accommodate exceptional cases of the infirmed or aged, he finds a justification for it in the commentary of the Magen Avraham to the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 69, end of paragraph 4) that he interprets as allowing for the recitation of *Kaddish D'Rabanan* with only two or three students present.[11] He recommends, therefore, that homebound individuals who cannot come to the synagogue should study "a chapter of the Bible" and recite *Kaddish D'Rabanan*. He goes on to say that "we need not be quite so strict about it" and that the form of the Mourner's *Kaddish* used in Reform congregations is closer to the *Kaddish D'Rabanan* than the conventional form used in other *nuschaot*.

The third treatment of the issue is a responsum by the Reform Responsa Committee of the CCAR chaired by Walter Jacob. Like their predecessors, the Responsa Committee sees the minyan as desirable but not "an absolute requirement." While noting a variety of leniencies with regard to the requirement of ten mentioned in Talmudic and later halachic sources, including counting a small child holding a *Chumash* as the tenth, he does assert that "most communities should simply make a more vigorous effort and assemble the necessary minyan, if it is at all possible, for a service whether public or private."

Mark Washofsky and the Responsa Committee, writing the most recent responsum on this issue in 1991, note that the three previous Reform responsa were permissive: "With lessening worship attendance in general, even in places where adequate numbers of worshippers can be found, attention to the time-honored practice of requiring a quorum is rarely an issue. Yet there are good reasons why this practice deserves our continued attention and respect, with the proviso, of course, than any Reform minyan would count women as equal partners."

The 1991 responsum urges the Reform Practices Committee and the Liturgy Committee of the CCAR to create alternative prayers for those who are unable to be a part of a proper minyan or for situations in the synagogue where a minyan is not present.[12] Washofsky concludes the responsum by stating that "We heartily endorse…the abiding value of a minyan in our liturgical structure, and we urge the inquiring congregation to devise ways and means to maintain and enhance this ancient Jewish institution."

There is a perceptible shift toward a greater emphasis on the meaning of minyan in following the trajectory of these four responsa. Mann suggests that there were divergent views on the numbers required for a minyan and sees the specific count as somewhat arbitrary. Freehof notes the sociological benefits inherent in public worship and provides exceptions for special cases. Jacob argues for the standard of the minyan while refusing to make it an absolute requirement. Washofsky affirms as strongly as possible the maintenance of the minyan as a standard.

While the four responsa above are the sole responsa specifically addressing the requirement of ten for worship services containing *d'varim sh'bik'dushah*, there are several other responsa that deal with more specific instances involving a minyan. A 1977 responsum raises the question of whether a minyan is required for a wedding ceremony, and a 1990 responsum asks the same question with regard to a *b'rit milah*. Both responsa express that these ideally be done in the presence of a minyan, but also uphold their validity when it is done without a minyan.

There are several other noteworthy responsa that brush up against the issue of the minyan. In a 1981 responsum on a thirteen-year-old maintaining an independent synagogue membership after his parents have dropped theirs, the *t'shuvah* draws upon the notion of counting toward a minyan at the age of majority, although it doesn't regard counting in a minyan as a valid criteria for adult membership in a contemporary congregation. In a 1991 responsum on a synagogue's deliberations about whether to cap its membership in order to remain small, the idea of God being best approached in a synagogue with a minyan is cited as evidence that "the large community was considered the ambiance in which God was best approached." A 1993 responsum on the participation of non-Jews in synagogue services explains that a minyan "is thus a mini-recreation of the entire people of Israel. When a minyan is present, God is present." It goes on to assert that a minyan "defines a Jewish community in a spiritual sense."

All of these responsa demonstrate the ways in which the notion of minyan has been very much alive in the legal development of Reform Judaism. Most significantly, these responsa are all embracing, albeit in different ways, of a Talmudic approach to Reform Judaism. They all extensively engage with Rabbinic sources as a repository of guidance and authority in shaping a contemporary position.

Part III: Reform and the Minyan—A Pragmatic Approach

While Isaac Mayer Wise's printed instructions in his 1872 *Minhag America* (cited above) designated the requirement of a minyan at a certain point in the service, this reference is unique to American Reform prayer books and does not appear in the subsequent prayer books of the Reform Movement, neither the *Union Prayer Book*, *Gates of Prayer*, nor *Mishkan T'filah*. The lack of specific references to minyan in the prayer book reflects a de facto evolution within American Reform from the inclusion of women in the minyan to not requiring a minyan at all.

The *Rabbi's Manual*, the primary guide for rabbis conducting life-cycle ceremonies, published in 1982, does not indicate that a minyan is required for weddings, *b'rit milah*, or at the cemetery for the recitation of *Kaddish*.

The recently published *Mishkan T'filah*, the new Reform prayer book for weekdays, Shabbat, and festivals, contains no notes or instructions for situations when a minyan is not present or alternatives to be recited.[13] The adapted version of *Mishkan T'filah for the House of Mourning* goes even further in explicitly negating the requirement for a minyan for the recitation of *Kaddish*. "It is preferable to recite the *Kaddish* in the presence of a minyan, a quorum of ten more people beyond the age of bar/bat mitzvah. In the absence of a minyan, you may say the *Kaddish* anyway—even alone, if it gives you comfort."[14]

Aside from the Reform Movement's prayer books, the various platforms of the movement from 1976 and 1999 reference public worship alongside private prayer with no specific theological articulation of the distinct significance of prayer that takes place among a minyan. Nor is there an expressed hierarchy that privileges communal prayer over private prayer.[15]

The results of a preliminary survey[16] of Reform congregational rabbis conducted in the fall of 2010 showed that approximately half of all Reform synagogues read the Torah and recite all the prayers that traditionally require a minyan even when a minyan is not present.[17] These rabbis do not see themselves as contradicting the principles of Reform Judaism. The survey showed that a majority of Reform rabbis understand the position of Reform Judaism regarding the traditional requirements of a minyan to be that, while every attempt should be made to have a minyan, a minyan is not a requirement, per se, for anything at all.

Part IV: Talmud versus Pragmatism

What is gained, therefore, by upholding a Talmudic process over a solely pragmatic one? With regard to the minyan, a Talmudic approach is closely aligned with three vital ideas: the importance of community, the place of peoplehood, and the need for standards. In contrast, a pragmatic approach to Reform is closely aligned with Jews who "consider personal autonomy the cornerstone of their religion."[18]

Autonomy versus Community

The minyan as a concept requires more than a willingness to occasionally forgo one's prerogative as an individual in light of the community's needs. The notion of a minyan requires some essentialist understanding of what it means to stand together as a community in divine service. The requirement of a minyan, like a host of other issues that arise in the context of building Reform communities, raises the question of whether there are times when the value of community overrides the value of the individual right to choose. Requiring a minyan, for example, in the presence of an individual who desires to say *Kaddish*, would be to assert that the community has an obligation to enhance the religious life of its individual members. It would recontextualize the notions of choice and obligation by creating a situation where individuals are asked or even required to forgo their individualism—whether driven by issues of convenience, of belief, or for any other reason—in favor of the collective. In his 1991 responsum cited above, Washofsky writes, "We may not overlook the needs of the community which, when properly met, benefit all its members. Public worship belongs to these categories of Jewish life, and withholding certain individual prerogatives for the benefit of all has always been the context of Jewish prayer."

The notion of minyan does more than privilege communal responsibility and obligation. It asserts that there is a theological significance to group prayer. While public prayer could theoretically be regarded as simply many individual selves gathering together,[19] the minyan posits the creation of a new existential entity that changes the efficacy and very nature of prayer.

As noted above, the platforms of the Reform Movement make no qualitative distinction between public and private prayer. Only Washofsky in his 1991 responsum provides a Reform basis for there being a different nature to communal prayer:

> If the needs of the individual can be satisfied without others, what then is the difference between public and private worship? Whether six, seven or ten constitute the required forum is not the heart of the issue; rather it is the question whether there is an abiding value in the obligation of Jews to join others in worship . . . The *tzibbor* is indeed the proper context of certain liturgical rubrics.

Privileging communal prayer in a Jewish context requires an understanding of what the Rabbis termed *d'varim sh'bik'dushah* (words that are sacred). This term applies to those parts of the service requiring a minyan, including the *Bar'chu*, the *K'dushah* of the *Amidah*, and the *Kaddish*. The concept itself suggests that there is a power to the words of prayer beyond what they mean for us as individual persons engaged in prayer. The concept equally suggests that the words themselves can only be experienced fully or effectively in the context of a congregation of ten. What is the meaning of *d'varim sh'bik'dushah*, and what significance can be read into a refusal to designate certain prayers as such and to distinguish them from others? Jonathan Sacks writes, "There is space in Judaism for private meditation—the personal plea. But when we pray publicly, we do so as members of a people who have served, spoken to, and wrestled with God for longer and in more varied circumstances than any other in history. We use the words of those who came before us to make our prayers articulate and to join them to the prayers of others throughout the world and throughout the centuries."[20]

Washofsky's appeal to the wisdom of the requirement for a minyan is expressed as well in his work *Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice*. In this book Washofsky emphasizes the ways in which the minyan reinforces the notion that prayer services are modeled after the ancient service in the Temple, which were public.

> The Temple was preeminently a public domain, where the daily and festival offerings were performed in the name of all Israel and where the Jews worshiped God not only as a collection of individuals but as *Israel*, a single and unique people. In a similar way, the Rabbis ordained that the 'Temple-like' aspects of our own prayer service, those that involve the sanctification of God's Name, be recited only in the presence of a congregation. Likewise, just as Moses and Ezra expounded the Torah in the presence of all Israel, the reading of the Torah should take place in a public setting.[21]

Autonomy and Peoplehood

If the value of community is in tension with the individual's right to choose, how much greater is the inherent tension that lies between the individual and a religio-national identity that represents the broadest expression of community. The symbolism of the minyan has been explained by Adin Steinsaltz as representing a microcosm of *Knesset Yisrael* (the entirety of the Jewish people):

> It's not just that the main prayers are recited publicly, among the "community" (*edah*) of at least ten, but rather that each individual community prays like one part of the larger unity of the people of Israel in its completeness.[22]

The minyan relies heavily on a sense of peoplehood that clearly delineates between "insiders" and "outsiders," a hard and fast identity at odds with the contemporary notions of hybridity and self-constructed identity. One manifestation of the tension between autonomy and Jewish peoplehood that gets projected onto the concept of minyan is the role of the non-Jew in the synagogue.

For more than three decades, the American Reform Movement has reached out to interfaith families to draw them closer to Jewish life. The Reform Movement has helped its congregations to be welcoming to interfaith families, removing the stigma of having intermarried, and interfaith couples have responded by deepening their involvement in synagogue life. But increasingly, questions about the role of non-Jews in the synagogue have arisen. Who may become a member? Who can be a board member? What role can a non-Jewish parent have at their child's bar or bat mitzvah? More broadly, congregations and the movement have attempted to define what is and is not appropriate in terms of synagogue rituals for non-Jewish involvement. May a non-Jew lead prayers, light candles, recite *Kiddush*, or open the Ark?[23] With the exception of one responsum, however, the discussion in the literature of a role for non-Jews in synagogue ritual never considers the questions of whether a non-Jew can count in a minyan. It is synagogue membership that is the primary concern, but not its more classic corollary. While the conspicuous lack of concern for the minyan underscores the practical irrelevance of the minyan among most Reform Jews, the issues that are considered point to a difficult and increasingly problematic aspect of differentiating Jews and non-Jews in the synagogue. Such difficult realities would certainly serve as an additional source of ambivalence for the notion of minyan in contemporary Reform synagogues, where it would be difficult, and perhaps uncomfortable, to distinguish between Jews and non-Jews in determining whether there is a quorum present. Yet, a failure to articulate boundaries has the effect of compromising the privileges and responsibilities inherent in belonging.

Autonomy and Standards

The relationship that an overwhelming majority of Reform congregations have with the notion of the minyan speaks to the larger issue of standards and requirements of any kind within American Reform. In the preliminary survey referenced above, 57 percent of Reform rabbis who responded characterized the official position of the Reform Movement to be "While every attempt should be made to have a minyan, a minyan is not required." This statement corresponds to the position taken by all of the Reform responsa on this issue prior to 1991.

Attitudes toward the minyan are therefore indicative of the notion of flexible standards within Reform Judaism. A critical question is whether the flexible standards are regarded as standards at all. If one's position is that every attempt should be made to fulfill a requirement, but that the requirement itself is not essential, what is the power or meaning of such standards? To be sure, there are flexible standards in traditional Judaism as well. There are many instances where something is permitted *b'diavad* (ex post facto) but is prohibited *l'chatchilah* (a priori). This is a way in which halachah can articulate an ideal but allow for realities that come up short against this ideal. However, the "flexible standards" of Reform, such as the minyan, are not comparable. In the approach of Reform's "flexible standard," the *b'diavad* position becomes in fact a *l'chatchilah* position. In juggling between personal autonomy and the true standards, perhaps this notion of the minyan as a "flexible standard" reflects the most authoritative position currently possible within American Reform.

The minyan is one area of many in our religious lives in which an overemphasis on personal choice eliminates the intensity of commitment, the feeling of boundedness, and the language of religious duty.

Conclusion

What happened to the minyan in American Reform Judaism? One accurate response might be "nothing and everything." While the minyan as a concept continued to be "on the books," a variety of factors in American Jewish life rendered it problematic at best, and irrelevant at worst. The familiar and normative nature of the minyan prevented it from being abolished officially. But solely paying lip-service to the minyan as some disembodied idea with no practical application underscores the tension between a Talmudic approach to Reform and a sociologically driven pragmatic approach.

The issues that render a Talmudic approach to minyan to be so problematic in a contemporary American context are also those issues that are at the heart of determining the core components of a future American Jewish life. If, as the preliminary survey suggests, half of the Reform rabbis surveyed think that the minyan deserves renewed attention in Reform Judaism,[24] then reevaluating the place of the minyan in Reform Judaism may be the first step in seriously addressing a renewed Talmudic or Rabbinic approach to these difficult issues in this new century.

Notes

1. The bulk of the research for this paper was conducted as part of the author's participation in the Shalom Hartman Institute's North American Scholar's Circle.
2. See Jack Wertheimer, "What Does Reform Stand For?" *Commentary* (June 2008), http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/what-does-reform-judaism-stand-for/.
3. See Mark Washofsky, *Teshuvot for the Nineties* (New York: CCAR Press, 1997), intro.
4. *Sanhedrin* 1:6.
5. *M'gillah* 23b.
6. *B'reishit Rabbah* 49:13. See Jeremy Schonfield, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006), 234, for analysis.
7. BT *B'rachot* 6b. I am grateful to our colleague Elaine Zecher from whom I learned this aggadah.
8. *Jewish Quarterly Review* 18, no. 2 (January 1906): 278–79.
9. The service begins with *Baruch She-Amar*, the beginning of the preliminary service of *P'sukei D'zimrah*. Note that the minyan here is applied broadly to the entire service and no specific prayers are designated as *d'varim sh'bik'dushah*.
10. *Minhag America* (Cincinnati: Bloch and Company,1872), 12.
11. Noteworthy here is Freehof's misreading of the Magen Avraham. The scenario of which Abraham Abele Gombiner (Magen

Avraham) writes in the commentary to which Freehof refers is that when two or three students engaged in study and are later joined by others constituting a minyan, even then (in the presence of this minyan) they may not say *Kaddish* because ten of them were not engaged in study. How Freehof arrives at this misreading is entirely unclear.

12. In this regard, it should be noted that Reform prayer books published after this 1991 responsum, most notably, *Mishkan T'filah,* did not incorporate the Responsa Committee's recommendation, and there is no evidence that its recommendations were considered at subsequent meetings.
13. As a matter of editorial policy, there are no directions in *Mishkan T'filah*, to allow each congregation to shape its own practice. However, it is worth noting that despite a recommendation from the Reform Responsa Committee in 1991 (see below), there were no prayers presented as alternatives for situations when a minyan is not present. Furthermore, *Mishkan T'filah* does contain explanatory notes, none of which make reference to the traditional requirement of a minyan or which designate particular prayers as *d'varim sh'bik'dushah*.
14. Hara E. Person and Elaine Zecher, eds., *Mishkan T'filah for the House of Mourning* (New York: CCAR Press, 2010), viii. Note that this specifically contradicts the recommendations of the 1991 Reform responsum discussed below and demonstrates the way the Reform Movement's own authorities on issues of Jewish law are not binding even with regard to the official publications of the movement.
15. The 1999 Statement of Principles of the CCAR references public prayer: "We respond to God daily: through public and private prayer, through study, and through the performance of other (mitzvot), sacred obligations—(*bein adam la Makom*), to God, and (*bein adam la-chaveiro*), to other human beings." The 1976 Centenary Perspective of Reform Judaism notes: "The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; lifelong study; *private prayer and public worship*; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence." (Emphasis added.)
16. Online survey conducted in the fall of 2010 with seventy-four Reform rabbis responding.
17. Only 34 percent of respondents do not recite *d'varim sh'bik'dushah* (prayers that require a minyan) if there is no minyan present;

49 percent refrain from reading Torah when there is no minyan present.

18. Michael A. Meyer and W. Gunther Plaut, *The Reform Judaism Reader: North American Documents* (New York: UAHC Press, 2001), 214.
19. Indeed, Cohen and Eisen, in their qualitative study of American Jews, *The Jew Within,* note the way in which religion is expressed as a private matter "even when practiced in a communal framework." Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within*: *Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 180.
20. Jonathan Sacks, *The Koren Siddur: American Edition* (Jerusalem: Koren, 2009), xviii.
21. Mark Washofsky, *Jewish Living*: *A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice* (New York: UAHC Press, 2001), 20.
22. Adin Steinsaltz, *HaSiddur v'Ha'Tefillah,* vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Yediot Achronot, 1994), 21 (Hebrew).
23. See *Defining the Role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue: A Resource for Congregations* (New York: UAHC Press, 2003).
24. When asked, "In your opinion, does the idea of minyan deserve renewed attention in Reform Judaism?," 52 percent responded affirmatively.