

record contributions. In short, Reform's second stage was characterized by a rebirth of particularism manifested in a pride in Jewish peoplehood. Belonging to the Jewish people enhanced one's personal ethnic identity.

At the same time, Jews participated actively in universal causes of social action. North American Jewish youth joined the Civil Rights Movement at home and protested against the war in Indo-China. Many of the same activists, aroused by the *mitzvah* to redeem captives, organized campaigns to free their fellow Jews in the Soviet Union, and later in Ethiopia. Jews were now comfortable enough in their own skin to take the universal ideal of freedom and advocate it for their own people.

In the religious sphere, Jewish ethnicity sparked a trend "back to tradition." *The Jewish Catalog*, which taught its readers how to tie their own *tzitzit* and write a scroll for a home-made *mezuzah*, became a bestseller. Both children and adults were receiving a higher quality Jewish education because of the increasing professionalism of the field. As congregants became more ritually sophisticated, many Reform synagogues included more Hebrew in services.

It felt good to be Jewish—and to share one's Jewish pride with others.

Stage Three: Innovation and Interfaith

By the 1980s, Jews were interacting confidently as equals with their non-Jewish friends, while at the same time spending more time and energy in Jewish pursuits. In this and other ways, Reform's third stage manifested a complementary interplay between both universalism and particularism, like two weights swaying on a scale and eventually finding equilibrium.

On the universalist side of the scale, Reform congregations sought to share common principles with their neighbors by becoming increasingly active in interfaith dialogue. Jewish and Christian clergy exchanged pulpits and congregants arranged visits to each other's houses of worship. People of many faiths worked side by side in soup

kitchens and food banks, and supported aid projects overseas. The feminist revolution brought more women onto the *bimah* as rabbis and cantors, and as lay leaders around the temple board table.

On the particularist side, Reform Jews brought fresh creativity to ritual. Recognizing the growing diversity of their membership, they widened the circle of belonging by introducing new lifecycle events, including *brit* (covenantal naming) ceremonies for newborn girls, rituals for adopting children, and *Mi Shebeirach* blessings for healing. As new definitions of family developed, Reform synagogues opened their arms to single parents as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Jews. To accommodate those who were not born Jewish or had not been educated in Jewish tradition, experimental prayer-books in the 1980s added transliteration to the Hebrew liturgy.

To address the increasing number of Reform Jews who married outside the faith, in the late 1970s the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now Union for Reform Judaism) launched an ambitious and successful Outreach program. Interfaith families were welcomed to join Reform congregations and non-Jewish spouses were encouraged to consider taking courses on conversion. If the female partner decided not to choose Judaism, the 1983 CCAR resolution on Patrilineal Descent acknowledged Jewish identity through the father when the child was Judaically educated and identified as a Jew.

Musically, cantorial solos were gradually replaced with new songs everyone could sing, many of them infused with a distinctly North American motif. Debbie Friedman's "Not By Might" became an anthem for youth, and songs by the Kol B'Seder duo Cantor Jeff Klepper and Rabbi Daniel Freeland such as "Shalom Rav" spread to synagogues and camps throughout the continent. This new music strengthened the sense of belonging to the Reform Movement: worshiping at your temple or far away from home, you could sing the same melodies.

As services became more accessible, congregants began to explore inner, spiritual quests. More time was

devoted to silent prayer. New services incorporated Eastern meditation techniques; others focused upon text study as a form of prayer. In this third stage, Judaism not only clothed Reform Jews with a distinct ethnic identity; it also became more personally meaningful for many.

By the 1990s, the Reform Movement was becoming increasingly aware that the trend toward individualism posed a threat to the institution of the synagogue. Many young Jews seemed to be saying: "My religion teaches values that are essentially no different from those held by the majority of my fellow citizens; and if the most important of those values is to live an ethical life, then why do I need the rest of the baggage? Why be different? Wouldn't it be easier to assimilate? This would give me a much wider choice for a future marriage partner. Besides, now that Judaism can be an individual choice as well as a communal one, I can still express my ethnic Jewish identity without it becoming a barrier in my relationships. By choosing Judaism for myself—and which aspects of it I wish to practice—while at the same time allowing my partner to make his or her own choices, I can have it all!"

Stage Four: A Paradoxical State

Reform Jews are in a paradoxical state today. On the one hand, most of the barriers that kept us from "fitting in" and "being like everyone else" have come down; on the other, our ancestral roots still nourish us and we want to preserve our differences. Our sense of belonging is becoming simultaneously wider and narrower.

Our expression of universalism now embraces the entire world, for global culture has become increasingly homogenized: people from Toronto to Tokyo drink Coca Cola, listen to the same musicians, wear identical brand-name clothes, and engage in instant technology-driven communication.

At the same time, our understanding of particularism has shrunk from peoplehood to self. Two hundred years ago, one's personal identity was essentially defined through one or two primary