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Some Reflections on Reconstructionist Prayer

By Bob Gluck

If the earliest generations of rabbis could imagine their teachers dialoging across time and space, why cannot my own teachers and friends, several of whom are no longer alive, speak to one another?

Sitting around an imaginary table, having an imaginary conversation, are five people who have most strongly influenced my thinking about liturgy: Ira Eisenstein, Chaim Stern, Hershel Matt, Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Mordecai Kaplan.

While not all five of these teachers are Reconstructionists, their perspectives reflect useful elements of the dialogue about prayer that one finds in the Reconstructionist movement. The dynamic tension among these aspects of prayer can help unpack something of the meaning of this topic.

Perspectives on Prayer

We listen in on their "conversation:"

Ira: "We must always speak the truth. This is important and urgent. Liturgy must say what we really mean. Why treat liturgy differently than other forms of speech?"

Chaim: "But liturgy is inherently a different form of speech. It is not the normal way we talk. We should think of it as more akin to symbolic, evocative poetry."

Ira: "We must nevertheless mean what we say. Doing anything less is dishonest. When we recite poetry, we are usually not speaking in our own voice. Prayer isn't a poetry reading!"

Where Is The Problem?

Hershel: "Both of these concerns are misplaced. The traditional Hebrew texts have inherent evocative power. The problem is with us, not with the liturgy. We should craft our own poems, but not for prayer itself. Let's call them *kavanot* and use them as vehicles to connect us with the texts. They can help keep the liturgy vibrant and alive for our generation."

Chaim: "Hebrew is indeed the traditional language of Jewish prayer. But English is our own language. It is the one that most of us use to articulate the words we feel in our hearts. We need liturgy in both languages."

Bob Gluck teaches in the music department of the University of Albany. He offers this essay in memory of Rabbis Ira Eisenstein and Chaim Stern, *zikhronam livrakha,* and with thanks to the Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah.

IRA: "I agree, but the words of the traditional liturgy cannot express the deepest concerns and needs of contemporary people. We should perpetuate the traditional Hebrew texts, but think of their recital as a remembrance of the past. We should create new prayers in English, expressive of our own voices."

ZALMAN: "Our generation indeed speaks its own language and understands the world in new ways. But this has been true for every generation. The prayerbook itself has an inner potency and can speak to every generation, if only we learn how to understand its language. The most important thing, after Hebrew fluency, is that we open our imagination and bring the prayers to life."

IRA: "The imagination is important. But imagination shouldn't replace intellect. Our intellectual integrity should never be sacrificed."

HERSHEL: "I agree about the importance of integrity, but prayer is not about intellect."

Kaplan stands up, interrupting the dialogue: "All of this is true, but is it not how we ourselves respond to our prayers — how we live our lives — that really matters most?"

The scene fades.

Why Do We Pray?

For Reconstructionists, prayer serves several purposes. Through structured Jewish language, it is a means of personal and collective expression, including thanks, joy, sadness and distress. Prayer is a vehicle by which we can cultivate discipline and reflection, awe, humility and a sense of connection with each other and beyond ourselves. It is a means to engage with, and to cultivate and transmit, our historical traditions as these are articulated in our inherited liturgical texts.

Prayer is also a symbolic reenactment, in word and gesture, of Jewish root metaphors, symbols, terms and history (e.g. the *Kiddush* refers to Shabbat as a symbol of the liberation from Egyptian bondage and of the creation of the world). Together, these form an interlocking yet complex set of functions.

It is difficult to generalize about prayer services in Reconstructionist congregations and ḥavurot. Having visited many Reconstructionist affiliates, let me venture a few observations. Reconstructionist groups tend toward collective singing and chanting, as opposed to the antiphonal English responsive readings commonly found in Reform settings. Services typically lean toward Hebrew texts, balanced with poems, readings and commentaries, recited by either individuals, the whole group or subgroups within the congregation. Musical styles vary, but often one can find the traditional *nusaḥ* at the core, supplemented with a mixture of contemporary popular or folk melodies, as well as the cantorial melodies of the past generation from Conservative and Reform settings.

Text and Context

There is often a strong value placed

upon contextualizing prayers in a manner that helps congregants feel more personally connected with the texts. This is achieved through supplemental readings and brief introductions by the prayer leader. Services thus often alternate between prayer texts flowing one to the next, and brief chanting interrupted with interspersed commentary. It is common to find extended periods of silence (the *Amidah* and/or other meditative periods) or individual prayer that typify more traditional settings.

Reconstructionist services vary in their degree of formality and participation. A distinctive quality in many Reconstructionist congregations and havurot is the desire to create personal interchange and feelings of connection. While traditional prayer gatherings and conventional liberal synagogues both seek to build a spirit of community, Reconstructionism is distinctive in seeing prayer as something that takes place among people as well as between people and God. This is optimally achieved in personal, intimate and interactive settings. Reconstructionist prayer reflects values of community, participation, engagement, flexibility, contemporary relevance and a balance of tradition and innovation.[1]

Differences and Similarities

Despite this cluster of common characteristics, our movement's services often share much in common with prayer in other liberal movements. Although we use denominational liturgy, we pray from the same basic order of prayer (*matbeah shel tefillah*). We sing many shared melodies, and our services are structured in a manner similar to those of other congregations.

Many Reform congregations have moved closer to the traditional liturgical model used by Reconstructionists. Some Conservative congregations share the value Reconstructionists place on personal meaning. In all three movements, there is an increasing interest in participatory singing over the more frontal cantorial/chanting model.

Notwithstanding these similarities, Reconstructionism claims to be theologically distinct. It is curious, then, that this distinct theology does not always appear to be reflected in our prayer formulations and language.

Conventional and Innovative

The Reconstructionist prayerbook series *Kol Haneshamah* is crafted in a manner that is simultaneously conventional and innovative. Innovations include the variety of perspectives reflected in the prayers, readings, and commentaries; the integration of visual images; the depth and breadth of commentary and *kavanot*; and the introduction of alternative prayer formulations. The Hebrew, even with its emendations (some dating to Mordecai Kaplan) remains relatively close to the traditional text. The poetic English translation is relatively conventional.

A primary role of a prayerbook is

to reflect current practice. Otherwise, why would people accept it as their text for prayer? A critique of Reconstructionist prayer might most appropriately begin with our own prayer practice. What then should be the role of our prayerbook in leading the way toward new directions in prayer? What should ideally be the theological stance modeled within its pages? Should it be more identifiably Reconstructionist in ideological and theological terms?

During Yom Kippur 2001/5762, I facilitated a conversation about prayer at the Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah. It was a thought-provoking, dynamic and lengthy dialogue in which members expressed their feelings about the function and meaning of prayer and their preferences regarding liturgy. Following that dialogue, several Havurah members continued this discussion with me via e-mail. What was most striking about people's comments was the diversity of experience people had during the very same services, in part reflecting a marked difference in attitudes regarding the liturgical text.

Differing Perspectives

One member wrote:

> [Prayer] is not a dialogue with God . . . [but] maybe a form of an internal dialogue, articulating difficulties, working through resolutions . . . [and] an integral form of practicing and acting the traditional way Jews live . . . for it to be meaningful (or comforting, or uniting us to our history) I feel that it has to sound and feel the same as the way I heard it first . . . [although] for me, the words are secondary . . .[2]

This member, who is fluent in Hebrew, theologically Reconstructionist and not conventionally religious in practice, articulates one perspective expressed during the conversation — that is, the preference for traditional liturgy as a means of connecting with the Jewish past and with which a meditative setting can be created for inward reflective experience. In this view, the inherited quality and familiarity of the text are important, but not its literal meaning.

A second group of respondents shares the meditative goal, but describes the core value of services as a consequence of collective singing. In this view, the specific choice of liturgy is not crucial or necessarily relevant. What is important is the sense of connection created when people raise their voices together to create sonic magic — and thus a feeling of uplift and inspiration.

A third opinion holds that the language of liturgy is of crucial importance. Many holding this view feel that their concern should translate into the use of new liturgies whose language and theology more closely reflects the values held by the group. Some holding this view prefer Marcia Falk's liturgical writings. (This perspective will be discussed later in this essay.)

What most Havurah members shared was a love of singing and an appreciation of a meditative, reflective environment during services. But whether or not the literal meanings of the liturgical text are important was a point of substantial (and friendly) difference of opinion. The sharpest disagreement existed about whether new liturgies should replace traditional texts with which members are ethically or intellectually uncomfortable. In short, to what degree should our liturgy reflect our contemporary Jewish beliefs?

The Language of Prayer

Language is not only our primary mode of communication with others, but the way in which we conceptualize reality as we experience and interpret it. Language also thereby helps us develop our unique identities. There are certainly distinct modes of language: discursive, narrative, poetic, commanding. Each has its own rules and functions. Aspects of each of these modes can be found in the unique language we call prayer.

Prayer texts do not utilize language in the same way as normal discourse. Liturgy uses words in a symbolic and highly formalized manner. The goal is not to communicate information, but to tap emotions and bring to life deeply resonant images. This is one reason why some people find the traditional liturgy comforting and a helpful ground for personal reflection.

But language nonetheless does reflect our self-understanding. It articulates the root metaphors of our culture. Traditional liturgical imagery evokes a hierarchical world in which human life is substantially controlled by forces outside of ourselves. While it is true that we are not fully in control of our destinies, the tremendous powers that human beings now hold must be addressed (or avoided at our peril). Our internal experience of the universe and God needs to be voiced. The disjuncture between our self-understanding and traditional liturgical language is part of the reason why some people feel so troubled by and uncomfortable with those texts.

Revising the Liturgy

Human dignity and respect are core values that must be reflected in our liturgical language. Exclusively male images of God are inherently problematic and, if one allows for the ascription of gender to divinity, diminishing of the personhood of women.

Reconstructionist prayerbooks revise the inherited liturgy in at least three ways. These include: balancing the naming of biblical forefathers with foremothers; emending several central texts to address Reconstructionism's rejection of the concept of the divine election of the Jewish people; and suggesting several blessing formulas (and, for the *Yamim Noraim,* liturgical formulas such as *Avinu Malkeinu*) as alternatives to the opening phrases of traditional prayers.

Alternate blessing formulas appear within *Kol Haneshamah* during the morning blessings.[3]

With the exception of these suggestions, a conventional vertical, male image of God is retained in the Hebrew. Divine names in the English translation draw from a rich and varied pool of divine descriptives that reflect ways by which people may experience God.

The Meaning of Miracles

Another theological question that has been visited and revisited by Reconstructionist prayerbooks is whether God, in the form of a supernatural person, intervenes within history, not only choosing a people, but dividing the seas and resurrecting the dead. As a movement, we have gone through at least two phases in how we treat metaphors that address how the universe functions. For example, Mordecai Kaplan, who held that some metaphors are too much in tension with our beliefs to be reinterpreted, removed "at the parting of the sea before Moses" from the liturgy.

Two generations later, Arthur Green held that a liturgical text such as this should best be read non-literally and understood as a poetic way of articulating universal ideas, and thus restored in the liturgy.[4] *Kol Haneshamah* follows Green's approach and restores "at the parting of the sea before Moses."

Developments such as these, regardless of which approach is currently viewed as normative in our movement, need not end the discussion. Rather, Kaplan and Green's understandings can both be correct. While a choice "may" be needed in determining a normative text for the movement's prayerbooks (an assertion with which I am not sure that I agree), the tension between these two positions remains alive and, I would argue, essential to what it means to be a Reconstructionist.

Imagery of God

More generally, any consideration of prayer and Reconstructionism must more fully address the dilemma that the traditional liturgy is crafted in a language out of synch with the naturalism of Reconstructionism. The traditional liturgy is articulated in the form of statements, yearnings, and requests of a divine "Person" who hears and responds to prayer.

Reconstructionists tend to be religious naturalists who speak of God as immanent rather than external to the universe, as a force rather than a personality, and one that is reflected in the actions, thoughts, and forward motion of human beings, as well as in the growth and flourishing of nature. Such a God has no "personhood," cannot "listen" to our prayers and "responds" only through our actions.

Reconstructionist theology celebrates the Power that animates life, providing the impetus for creativity, goodness, courage and caring, but identifies no divine person as the sub-

ject of prayer. Why not, then, reinterpret the liturgy to represent this theology? Might Reconstructionist prayer best be crafted in a manner different from the traditional liturgy? Among those who directly and creatively address these questions are Ira Eisenstein and Marcia Falk.

Alternative Approaches

Eisenstein suggested crafting new prayers that directly reflect our feelings, hopes and needs — but are not spoken to a "Thou." He refers to this approach as "passionate reflection." Eisenstein wrote:

> I suggest that traditional Jewish values become the central theme of passionate reflection: appreciation of the marvels and the mysteries of the universe, dedication to the ideas of human perfectibility, individual and social concern for the downtrodden and the strangers as well as a sense of gratitude for whatever well-being one enjoys.
>
> Passionate reflection should revive one's resolution to strive for ethical heights, to resist evil, to engender love and respect for fellow persons — and, finally, to rekindle love of and loyalty to the Jewish people, to Torah in its broadest and deepest sense.[5]

Eisenstein would continue to have us chant the traditional liturgy, but in the spirit of quoting our ancestors. The latter he refers to as davening:

> Davening should be understood as quoting the words of our forebears, with the clear purpose of establishing our links with the past. Such a distinction would render unnecessary most efforts to revise traditional prayers in order to eliminate their gender bias or other alienating content. The prayers of our ancestors become our davening, enabling worshipers to commune with ancestors and understand the world and values that they accepted. Our prayers must be our own, couched in our idiom, emerging out of our sense of the world.[6]

Meaning and Metaphor

Eisenstein suggested that the choice to struggle with the traditional text, while of historical value, will not net a fruitful prayer experience for Reconstructionists. The views described earlier of Hershel Matt, Arthur Green and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi differ from Eisenstein's stance. The more conventional view would involve reexamining the liturgy, often via reinterpretation (when you read "x," interpret it as if it means "y") and supplementing (adding poems, songs, and readings). These are both ways by which Jews have reconstructed the liturgical text in the past, to give it contemporary relevance, and these tend to be the approach followed by commentaries within the *Kol Haneshamah* prayerbooks.

My conversations with members of the Ottawa Reconstructionist Havurah, however, showed much agreement with Eisenstein's contention that the literal words of the inherited text are of questionable relevance in the act of prayer. Many of those who ignore the literal text differ with Eisenstein's conclusion that the inherited liturgy should not be the central text for inward prayer. In fact, many specifically wished to continue its use. Eisenstein, however, never suggested that we dispense with the inherited liturgy. Quite the contrary. He argued for retaining the text, but placing it in a context where it is recited as a valued historical document.

New Formulations

Poet Marcia Falk goes further than Eisenstein and revisions the core forms of liturgical expression. Falk places human experience within the context of the natural world, situating God, often unnamed, within nature.[7] She replaces the traditional blessing formula ("Blessed are You who . . .") with new formulations that focus on our experience as human beings and as Jews.

God is found within those experiences and is referred to often as "wellspring of life" or "source of life." These descriptions of the divine refer to God in feminine language, responding not only to the distinctly male language of the inherited liturgy, but to the inherently gendered nature of Hebrew. The opening phrase of Falk's blessing formula is listed as one of the alternatives to the traditional text in *Kol Haneshamah*.[8] Her poetic interpretation of the *Amidah* was included as an alternate text in the preliminary edition of *Kol Haneshamah* for *Kabbalat Shabbat*.[9] It does not appear in subsequent, final editions, in part owing to the difficulty many people experienced using such a lengthy liturgical segment.

Liturgical Consistency

Rebecca Alpert describes Marcia Falk's work as a liturgical realization of Mordecai Kaplan's theological views that were never translated fully into his own prayerbooks:

> To Kaplan, Jewish life was vested wholly in community. Falk's rendering of blessings in the first person plural, and in the active rather than the passive voice, is a perfect way to explicate Kaplan's theological focus on the Jewish people as the center of Jewish life. Replacing "you are blessed" with "let us bless" captures that magnificently.[10]

Alpert suggests that Kaplan stopped far short of translating his theology and beliefs into the liturgy. This is not surprising, granted the hostility that greeted Kaplan's radical-for-the-time innovation and his loyalty to the traditional liturgy. Alpert observes:

> The reaction to Kaplan's small innovations, his desire to influ-

> ence American Jews to follow his philosophy and his basically traditional bent kept him from going any further. To say that further changes would have been inconceivable at the time is also a fair statement.[11]

Alpert raises an important question: Why did more radical liturgical reconstruction not take place subsequent to the prayerbooks of the 1940s? Certainly, the answer is in part historical. Kaplan's personal goals for Reconstructionism remained focused on the broader Jewish people rather than on developing texts or institutions for a specifically Reconstructionist constituency. Such a constituency only began to exist substantially once the Reconstructionist movement developed a sense of gravity as a movement in the post-Kaplan 1980s. That was when the first home-grown Reconstructionist rabbis began to mature as leaders, and when the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot (now the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation) began to focus on movement building. Completing a prayerbook that could serve as the liturgical center of gravity for a budding movement substantial enough to require such a center took nearly a decade.

Creating Liturgy for a Movement

The task of crafting a prayerbook for an entire movement requires a tremendous balancing act. Writing and editing liturgy for individual local communities is already an often contested affair. Certainly, it is simpler for an individual to craft a liturgy that stretches bounds of convention than for the representatives of a diverse movement to do the same on behalf of its members. As Rachel Adler and Falk point out, many or most people tend toward liturgical conservatism. Adler cites the work of Clifford Geertz and Riv-Ellen Prell to observe:

> By means of communal prayer, Jews rehearse and authenticate their formulations of Jewish identity and sustain and refashion religious meanings. Meanwhile, distinctive identities and meanings are constantly endangered by the homogenization of American culture. If communal prayer is how the precarious Jewish identity of American Jews is transmitted and authenticated, then it is not surprising that what prayer should be and how it should be performed would matter so urgently to people.[12]

Falk's work occasioned heated debate about the authenticity of radical liturgical revisioning. Some criticized Falk's elimination of all traditional names of God from the text. Eisenstein comments: "This omission represents a total separation from the tradition, and raises the question: What makes these blessings *Jewish*?"[13] But he concludes that because Falk's language is distinctly Jewish, and her

prayers will be prayed by Jews, Falk's language will come to be accepted as authentic Jewish prayer.

Needing an "Other" for Prayer

Eisenstein also keenly articulates another key concern raised by Falk's work: "how does one speak of God if one does not speak to God?"[14] This question cuts to the core nature of prayer, and what prayer might mean for Reconstructionists. Adler, discussing Falk's liturgy, questions whether prayer is possible lacking the address of a divine "other." She writes:

> . . . the otherness of God is compellingly real and infinitely precious. Eradicating otherness, breaking down all boundaries between self and other, self and God, God and world simultaneously eradicates relatedness . . . God's Otherness, God's difference from us, is what makes possible relationship and exchange . . . Only if there is an Other can there be mirroring and reciprocity."[15]

Certainly, the image of God as "other" can profoundly capture our experience of moments when our own powers fail us or are too limited to address what befalls us. One thinks of moments of cataclysm, terror and loss. God found and addressed within the natural order does not offer a metaphor that is as easily immediate and familiar as a model that parallels the child's experience of parents or the aloneness we know when facing the terror of a threat beyond the self.

Some consider prayer without "otherness" to be too comfortable and easy. I wonder, though, whether this preference for images of "otherness" is more a problem of reaching for what is familiar and well practiced than an acknowledgment of a particular image of divine reality.

Re-imaging God

Is there any reason why we cannot see ourselves as standing in relationship with elements of the natural order that are distinct from us yet related to us? Such images can be both comforting and utterly terrifying, just as our images of the divine "Other." Falk and Eisenstein remind us that disease and loss are indeed aspects of the natural order. Green might add that our experiences of separation between self and "other" are limitations of human perception. In this view, the dichotomy is false: Both perspectives are aspects of the oneness of all things.[16]

Jewish culture, even with its value of community, reserves as central images of the person (usually male) who stands alone facing a friendly or hostile "other." Consider Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jacob, Isaiah. Are there not compelling reasons to embrace other collaborative models for how we can function in the midst of moments of power and danger? If we can locate them and strive for their poetic power, can we not revision our litur-

gies in their light? Certainly, as Reconstructionists, we tend to focus on the human response — caring, strength, resilience — to moments of crisis. If this reflects a more immanent understanding of God, should it not be reflected in our liturgy as well?

Reconstructionists should reject Adler's challenge. Accepting Adler's premise denies the legitimacy of our core Reconstructionist theological views. Reconstructionists affirm as religious truth that God is experienced within nature. This is not mere theory, but the way by which many of us interpret our experience of life. If we find God embedded within the natural order and expressed through human conduct, we are, as religious people, impelled to affirm that experience through the utterance we call prayer.

Eisenstein pointed out that we are not the first people to pray in this manner. He noted that there is a long historical precedence, in Buddhism and elsewhere, for the idea that prayer does not require address of an "other." If Kaplan is correct in asserting that the central goal of religious belief and expression is raising the level of how we conduct our lives (and I believe that he is right), then it is appropriate that prayers should reflect the values upon which such behavior should be grounded.

Need For New Texts

One finds among Reconstructionists diverse experiences of prayer. For many, the resonance of the traditional Hebrew offers a sense of home, of a ground upon which reflection can most easily take place. For others, Eisenstein's attitude that "we should say what we mean and mean what we say," including gender language and metaphor, points to the need for new texts.

In this respect, intellectual honesty and the use of metaphors that reflect our real lives are essential. And there are those who simultaneously resonate with more than one of these views. Certainly, there is no one approach to liturgy that would fully satisfy all Reconstructionists. The *Kol Haneshamah* series seeks to address a cross section of religious needs and concerns. There is no reason why we need to be limited to any single approach toward services. Just as prayer language is symbolic and dream-like, so can its use be inconsistent and flexible. Ultimately, each Reconstructionist community must shape its own services, using *Kol Haneshamah* or other resources that speak to its members.

The downside of a printed prayerbook is that it freezes the text. Fortunately, *Kol Haneshamah* reads more like an anthology than a script. Unfortunately, its Hebrew prayer formulations are generally quite conventional (with a few options suggested and a few textual emendations made). The English translations are poetic yet relatively literal, and the book is most easily used in a continuous narrrative manner.

Plural Paradigms

Nonetheless, with the addition of material not included within *Kol*

Haneshamah, it is possible to join a Falk-style English text with a traditional Hebrew text, a suggestion made previously by Richard Hirsh,[17] or a Hebrew Falk-style text to something else. I have long used English texts by Chaim Stern[18] in conjunction with traditional Hebrew texts. All can fit within the same shared liturgical space, but such moves require initiative beyond following the texts in the pages of the prayerbook.

The creation of a single volume was geared to streamlining the often cumbersome task of using multiple texts. The variety of material found within the texts, commentaries and readings of *Kol Haneshamah* is rich and varied. Nonetheless, one may wish to utilize this prayerbook in ways that require outside material. The use of "passionate reflection" in the form of silence, readings or verbalized comment, can also offer a welcome addition. Flexibility, of course, requires creativity — which requires learning and willingness to experiment.

I once crafted a series of liturgical texts that interwove passionate reflections among traditional liturgical narrative. It read like this: "We reflect upon the value of 'x,' and how it influences our life choices . . . As in the words of the ancient rabbis . . . " I would then quote the traditional prayer text, followed by either silence or a new poetic text that addresses the theme in a personal manner, through the lens of a Reconstructionist theological perspective. Exploration along the lines of this model may prove fruitful for some.

The Next Stage

We are the fortunate beneficiaries of the *Kol Haneshamah* prayerbook series. Our gratitude goes to editor David Teutsch, the commentators, and the Prayerbook Commission for their impressive work. The conclusion of such a series, however, should not mark the close of liturgical debate in the movement. Rather, it should mark the opening of a new phase.

At the top of my wish list for future Reconstructionist liturgies are two items. These include the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices, not just within the commentaries and *kavanot*, but more expansively within the prayer texts themselves; and a series of running prayer translations or versions that reflect Reconstructionist theology, in addition to a close translation.

May our experience of prayer include an awareness about what prayer means to us as Reconstructionists. May our struggles to integrate our past and present be joyful and far-reaching. And may both our experimentation — and our comfort in the familiar — lead us to new experiences that shed light on how we can pray.

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1. Robert Gluck, "How Is Our Movement Different?: Living Out Our Ideals," *Reconstructionism Today*, Spring 1994.

2. Private correspondence with Yoram Lapid, October 2001.

3. David Teutsch, editor, *Kol Hanesha-*

mah: Shabbat Vehagim (Wyncote: Reconstructionist Press, 1994), 143.
4. Arthur Green, Commentary to *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim,* 79.
5. Ira Eisenstein, "Prayer as 'Passionate Reflection'," *Reconstructionism Today,* Winter 1994/95.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Marcia Falk, *The Book of Blessings,* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 419-422.
8. *Kol Haneshamah, Shabbat Vehagim,* 143. *"Nevareh et ayn hahayim."* The phrase that follows, *"ruah ha'olam,"* is not by Falk, and restores the grammatical construction of the traditional Hebrew blessing formula.
9. David Teutsch, editor, *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Eve* (Wyncote: Reconstructionist Press, 1993), 150-178.
10. Rebecca Alpert, "The Poet As Liturgist," *The Reconstructionist,* 62:1, Spring-Fall 1997.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism,* Boston: Beacon Books, 1998, 76.
13. Ira Eisenstein, "Symposium on *The Book of Blessings* by Marcia Falk," *The Reconstructionist,* 62:1, Spring-Fall 1997 (emphasis added).
14. *Ibid.*
15. Adler, *op.cit.*, 91 - 92.
16. Arthur Green, *Seek My Face, Speak My Name* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1992).
17. Richard Hirsh, "Spirituality and the Language of Prayer", *The Reconstructionist* 59, Spring 1994, 21.
18. Rabbi Chaim Stern, *z"l,* served as editor of the Reform movement's *Gates of Prayer* series and numerous other liturgies, many of which were not published by the Reform movement.