



New Members Institute

United Synagogue Youth

Tzafon Region צפון

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שַׁבַּת וַיִּגַּשׁ

At

Congregation Agudat Achim

Schenectady, New York

Discussion Leader's Guide

To: NMI Study Session Leaders

This resource booklet contains the source materials for the NMI study sessions and suggestions for their use. All material for you will be printed in this type face. Everything else is contained in the USYers "Study Source Book." Each selection is numbered by session and item as it is in the Study Source Book. The pagination will be different because of the added comments.

There is far more material than can be handled in the sessions. This was done in order to give you and your group some options. You will know what you handle best and you will get the feel of what the group handles well. Adapt as you need. **You will need to read through all the selections and the comments to plan your options.**

Overall Goals for the Study Sessions

The NMI study sessions are not classrooms. We want USYers to learn by interaction with the material, with each other, and with you. We want them to be excited by challenging their ideas, their feelings, and each other. **We want to get them talking!**

Most USYers who do not have a day school education see the *siddur* as a source of rituals whose recitation and chanting they have to master. We want them to leave NMI with the view that the *Siddur* is a book whose images, ideas, and metaphors can make a difference to them. They may disagree with them or be disturbed by them, but they will have to deal with them.

We want you to use the *Siddur* itself as a source. Have your USYers take them from the seats in the sanctuary for each session and put them back after each session. This will help relate the sanctuary experience with what they are studying. It is best to choose a section of the sanctuary from which to take the books. Then, they will know where to return them.

Dear Friends:

This NMI Study Source Book which we have assembled is only a collection of words until you use it. Through discussions and exercises you will decide whether or not any of these words have meaning for you, and what those meanings are.

The theme of the NMI study sessions is "Images of God." The first session helps us understand what the words in the *Siddur* mean or do not mean when they are applied to God. The second session works backward. If we are created in God's image then how we see ourselves will tell us a lot about how we see God. The third session challenges us to review the special relationship with God which we have as part of the Jewish people.

Some sources in each session are from the *Siddur* because that is the book which Jews use the most. It is only one of many books which we read in any week. The other sources may

give some perspective on the *Siddur's* words.

We hope that these sessions will help you see the *Siddur* as a personal challenge every time you open it, as well as the source of the prayers which we enjoy singing at services.

בְּרַכָּה,

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USY Study Session Chair

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Parent Study Session Advisor

Session 1 Images of God

Many teens are embarrassed to talk about God. It seems so charismatic or fundamentalist. They also see metaphors and images about God in the *Siddur* to which they do not relate.

We start with the הַשְׁחֵמָה as something they know **and as a place to encounter God**. It is the testimony of experience of the full impact of God, in so far as humans can experience it.

Selection 1 is a recasting of the English of the הַשְׁחֵמָה in a way which emphasizes the mystery and the weirdness of the encounter. You might see if USYers pick up any of this in *Sim Shalom's* translation. The הַשְׁחֵמָה is built around the encounters of two prophets, Isaiah (selection 2) and Ezekiel (selection 3)

If you do not have time go from the הַשְׁחֵמָה directly to Ezekiel's encounter (selection 3)
For some Jewish mystics the language here is code for the secret structure of the universe. **For most people this passage is an example of the limitations of language.** The fact and the power of the encounter with the Infinite are clear. The details are difficult to accept. What fails here is the ability of finite human language to describe the infinite God.

The Neil Gillman selections, especially selection 4, address the issue of limited language. Because all language fails when it tries to describe or deal with God, the Rabbis were very careful in their choice of language in the *Siddur*. The *Siddur* is a weaving together and adaptation of Biblical words and phrases based on the assumption that if God said the word or inspired the phrase it was OK to use it to deal with God. In individual prayer each person could use whatever terms he or she wanted.

Some Exercises

- Free association: God is . . .
- I want God to be This can lead to an understanding that prayer reflects our expectations more than it reflects the reality of God.

- ☛ You might ask your USYers if they accept Ezekiel's description of God.
- ☛ Ask them if they think something took place.
- ☛ Ask them if they have been in situations where they could not describe how they felt.
- ☛ Selection 7, מוֹדִים: This בְּרָכָה contains many of the standard adjectives applied to God. You can ask the group for others which they remember. Find out which ones they find uncomfortable or objectionable and ask them to explain why.

The following is from a poem written by an Israeli soldier who died in the Yom Kippur war of 1973. It is addressed to God:

I beseech Thee: turn up the volume of Your transmitter.
 Here, I
 Do not hear, do not know, if
 You have once more stuck an iron flower in the buttonhole
 of Your aerial. You are so gentle. Why
 Are You so benign. Why are You always
 So polite. **How do you read me? over.**
Over. I hear you brokenly, as if
 You are wounded, You
 In the surrounded valley

by Avi Hazak

1. *Mystical images and fire angels*

The Kedushah Siddur Sim Shalom, page 432 (The following is an alternative translation which gives a greater sense of the mystery and strangeness of the encounters between God and the prophets.)

We grant the awe of You and proclaim You holy like the secret speech of the fire angels who make Your name holy in the Holiest heaven, as it is written in Your prophets. "Each one called to the other, saying,

Holy Holy Holy is the Eternal of Hosts the whole world is filled with His
 Glory.(Isaiah 6:4)"

His Glory fills the universe. When His ministering angels ask each other, "Where is the essence of His Glory?" They respond with the verse which begins with בְּרִיךְ.

"Blessed is the glory of the Eternal from His Place."(Ezekiel 3:12)

From that Place He responds in mercy to the people which proclaim His name One, every single day as they recite the שְׁמַע in love, saying.

"Hear O Israel the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One." (Deuteronomy 6: 4)

He is our God, He is our Father, He is our King, He is our Savior. He, in mercy will declare before all that lives, the phrase which proclaims Him your God.

"I am the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:2 - The Ten Commandments)

It is written in Your holy words

The Eternal will reign forever Your God O Zion throughout every generation hallelujah.[*i.e.* Praise the Eternal!] (Psalm 146:10)

throughout every generation we will praise Your greatness, and we will proclaim Your holiness throughout eternity. Praise for You will never leave our mouths, for You are a great and holy King. Praised are You, Eternal, the Holy God.

2. **The source of Holy Holy Holy קדוש קדוש קדוש Isaiah's vision**

בְּשַׁנַּת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲזַיָּהוּ, וַאֲרָאָה אֶת־עַדְנֵי יֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא רָם וְנִשְׂא, וְשׁוּלְיוֹ מִלְאִים אֶת־הַהִיכָל: שָׂרְפִים עֹמְדִים מִמַּעַל לוֹ, שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים לְאֶחָד: בְּשָׂתַיִם יִכְסֶה פָּנָיו וּבְשָׂתַיִם יִכְסֶת רַגְלָיו וּבְשָׂתַיִם יַעֲוֹפֶף: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמַר: קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ ה' צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ: וַיַּעֲוֶה סְמוֹת הַסְּפָאִים מִקּוֹל הַקּוֹרָה וְהַבִּיט וּמָלֵא עֵשׂוֹן: וְאָמַר: אוֹיְלֵי כִי־נִדְמִיתִי! כִּי אִישׁ טָמֵא־שִׁפְתָאִים אָנֹכִי וּבִתּוֹךְ עִם טָמֵא שִׁפְתַיִם אָנֹכִי יֹשֵׁב, כִּי אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ ה' צְבָאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינַי: וַיַּעַף אֱלֹהֵי לְאֶבֶד מִן הַשָּׂרְפִים, וּבִדְוֹ רִצְפָה, בְּמִלְקַחַיִם לָקַח מֵעַל הַמִּצִּיבָן: וַיִּגַע עַל־פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר: הִנֵּה נִגַע זֶה עַל־שִׁפְתַי וְסָר עֹנֶךָ וְחִטָּאתְךָ תִכָּפֵר:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple. Fire angels stood in attendance on Him. Each of them had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his legs, and with two he would fly. And one would call to the other:

"Holy, holy, holy!

The Lord of Hosts

The whole earth is filled with His glory.

The door posts would shake at the sound as each one called and the Temple kept filling with smoke. I cried

Woe is me; I am lost!

For I am a person of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips.

Yet, my own eyes have beheld the King, Lord of Hosts."

Then one of the fire angels flew to me a burning coal which he took from the altar with a pair of tongs. He touch it to my lips and said, "As this touched your lips your transgression has turned away and your sin has been atoned." (Isaiah 6:1-7)

3. **The source for "Blessed is the Glory "..... בְּרוּךְ כְבוֹד ה' Ezekial's Vision.**

וַיְהִי בַשְּׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּרַב־עֵי, בַּסַּחֲמָשָׁה לַחֹדֶשׁ, וְאָנִי בְּתוֹךְ־הַגּוֹלָה עַל נְהַר כְּבָר, נִפְתָּחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וַאֲרָא מַרְאֵה מַרְאֹת אֱלֹהִים: . . . וַאֲרָא וְהִנֵּה רוּחַ סַעֲרָה בָּאָה מִן־הַצָּפוֹן, עָנָן גָּדוֹל וְאֵשׁ מִתְלַקַּחַת וְנִגְהָ לּוֹ סָבִיב, וּמִתּוֹכָהּ כָּעֵין הַחֶשְׁמֶל מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ: וּמִתּוֹכָהּ דְמוּת אַרְבַּע חַיּוֹת, וְזֶה מַרְאֵיהֶן: דְמוּת אָדָם לְהִנָּה: וְאַרְבַּעַת פָּנִים לְאַחַד, וְאַרְבַּע כַּנְפִים לְאַחַת לָהֶם: וְרַגְלֵיהֶן סָרְגָל יִשְׂרָה, וְכַף רַגְלֵיהֶם כְּכַף רַגַל עֵגֶל, וְנֹצְצִים כָּעֵין נְחֹשֶׁת קָלָל: וַיְדִי אָדָם מִתַּחַת כַּנְפֵיהֶם, לֹא־יָדָבוּ בְּלִכְתָּן, אִישׁ אֶל־עֵבֶר פָּנָיו יֵלְכוּ: וְדְמוּת פְּנֵיהֶם פְּנֵי אָדָם וּפְנֵי אַרְיֵה אֶל־הַמִּין לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן, וּפְנֵי־שׁוֹר מִהַשְּׂמֹאֵל לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן, וּפְנֵי נֶשֶׁר לְאַרְבַּעַתָּן: וּפְנֵיהֶם פְּרָדוֹת מְלַמְעָלָה, לְאִישׁ שְׂתֵמִים חוֹבְרוֹת אִישׁ, וּשְׂתֵמִים מְכֻסּוֹת אֵת גּוֹיֵתֵיהֶנָּה: וְאִישׁ אֶל עֵבֶר פָּנָיו יֵלְכוּ, אֶל אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה־שָׂמָּה הַרוּחַ לְלַכֵּת יֵלְכוּ לֹא יִשְׁבוּ בְּלִכְתָּן:

וַתִּשְׁאַנֵּי רוּחַ וְאָשְׁמַע אַחֲרַי קוֹל רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל: בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד ה' מִמְּקוֹמוֹ: וְקוֹל כַּנְפֵי הַחַיּוֹת מִשְׁקוֹת אִשָּׁה אֶל אַחֹתָהּ, וְקוֹל הָאוֹפְסִימִים לְעִמְתָּן, וְקוֹל רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל:

In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, when I was in the community of exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens opened up and I saw visions of God. . . . I looked and lo, a stormy wind came sweeping out of the north—a huge cloud and flashing fire, surrounded by a radiance, and in the center of it, in the center of the fire a gleam as of amber. In the center of it were also the figures of four creatures. And this was their appearance:

They had the figures of human beings. However, each had four faces and each of them had four wings, the legs of each were [fused into] a single rigid leg, and the feet of each were like a single calf's hoof, and their sparkle was like the luster of burnished bronze. They had human hands below their wings. The four of them had their faces and their wings on their four sides. Each one's wings touched those of the other. They did not turn when they moved; each could move in the direction of any of its faces.

Each of them had a human face [at the front]; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right; each of the four had the face of an ox on the left; and each of the four had the face of an eagle [at the back]. Such were their faces. As for their wings, they were separated: above, each had two touching those of the others, while the other two covered its body. And each could move in the direction of any of its faces; they went wherever the spirit impelled them to go without turning when they moved. (Ezekiel 1:1-12)

Then a spirit carried me away, and behind me I heard a great roaring sound: "Blessed is the Presence of the Eternal in His place" with the sound of the wings of the creatures beating against one another, and the sound of the wheels besides them—a great roaring sound. (Ezekiel 3:12-13)

SOME QUOTES FROM PROFESSOR NEIL GILLMAN'S BOOK *SACRED FRAGMENTS*

4. ***God transcends human perception except metaphorically***

“How can human beings think or speak of a reality that transcends the limits of human perception? The Bible cautions us against making graven or sculpted images of God. The issue, however, is not sculpted images but conceptual images...The solution to the dilemma is the recognition that all of our human thinking and speaking about God uses our familiar human experience in a metaphorical way.” (Gillman 4)

5. ***Bible illustrates metaphorical image of God***

“Traditionalists among us would agree that some of the more blatant physical descriptions of God in the Bible are clearly metaphorical; God does not literally have a ‘right hand’ with which to shatter Israel’s enemies (Exodus 15:6).” (Gillman 5)

6. ***Metaphorical vs. literal images of God***

“Above all, many traditionalists would insist that the biblical claim that God ‘spoke’ to the biblical community, or to Moses, and that His words are recorded in the Torah is literally true... In fact, they would insist that the fact that God did speak is precisely what makes him God. To deny that God could speak if He wanted to is to deny Him a power that even human beings have. It is, in effect, to deny the biblical God. Others among us--call us ‘modernists or liberals’--are far more thoroughgoing in our denial of literalism... If God speaks, it is only in a metaphorical sense. That God can be characterized only through metaphors is, for us, precisely what makes Him God.” (Gillman 5-6)

6. ***God as a symbol***

“God also has a ‘mighty hand’; He ‘speaks’ to Moses; He ‘listens’ to prayer; He ‘redeems’ from slavery; He ‘punishes’ and He ‘forgives.’ God becomes humanized.” (Gillman 82)

“Some of us will reject the entire notion that our images of God are symbols and retreat to a precritical literalism: God really speaks and really listens. Others will treat a broken symbol as a dead symbol: If God doesn’t really speak and listen, then who needs religion? But neither of these reactions is inevitable. A third possibility is not only to accept the inevitability of symbolism but even to revel in the power that genuinely living symbols can exercise.” (Gillman 83)

7. מוֹדִים *Siddur Sim Shalom*, the last paragraph on pages 436-7, a blessing of many adjectives. Are they meaningful?

Session II Images of Humans

Since humans were created in the image of God (Selections 1 and 2) how we see humans and their experiences has bearing on how we see God. Selection 2 would seem to be in contrast to Selection 1. They provide a choice as to how we will see the relationship between the male and female aspects of humanity and God.

The Talmudic passages (Selections 4-7) address a particular issue which is important in the Conservative Movement —the issue of women's participation in public religious leadership. The passages raise the questions of consistency and updating of social roles. **Do women still function in society as they did in Talmudic times?** If they do not, how then should they function?

The Orthodox rebbitzens whom I have quoted (Selections 8 & 9) are not representative. They do point out that there are people who are committed to being Orthodox who do not feel that their spirituality is served by the movement.

Ask the USYers to think back to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah services and the rush they had from leading the service. Is this feeling something which should be restricted to a certain gender? Are there other ways to get it? By restricting it to a certain gender do we restrict our view of God?

Selections 10 & 11 address the validity of including female experience by using two versions of the *אבות*. Selection 11, with which the Reform movement is experimenting includes some sense of women's encounter with deity. Certainly Sarah and Rebecca directly encountered God. The question of changing the text is one from session one. Since the *אבות* is based on biblical quotes and the reform additions are not, should this make a difference? How far will we rewrite the *Siddur*?

One way of addressing the masculine and feminine aspect of God is to use Selection 12 as an exercise. Have someone read the passage aloud changing the masculine imagery to feminine. What difference does it make in how you see God? What differences do "King" and "Queen" evoke?

1. *In the image of God*

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצַלְם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ, זָכָר וּמְקַבְּהָ בָרָא אוֹתָם
Then God created the human in His image; in the very image of God did He create him, male and female did He create them. (Genesis 1:27)

2. *A different take*

ויפל הי אלהים תרדמה על-האדם וישן, ויקח אחת מצלעותיו אשר לקח מן האדם לאשה, ויבאה אל-האדם: ואימר האדם, זאת הפעם נצם מעצמי ובשר מבשרי לזאת יקרא אשה כי מאיש לקחה זאת:

Then the Eternal cast a deep trance over the man and he slept. Then He took one of his ribs- which He had taken from the man- for a woman. Then he brought her to the man. The man said, "This time! Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. She was called "woman" (*ee-shah*) since she was taken from the man (*eesh*)

3. **Is God male?**

"Today, many feminists have questioned the masculine quality of traditional Jewish symbols for God, and are trying to create a more feminine, or at least gender-neutral language to characterize God. After all, if we can not know God, how can we know that God is male?" (Gillman 83)

What Does it Mean to Be Male or Female ?

4. **Women are exempt**

משנה: כל מצות הבן על האב - אנשים חייבין ונשים פטורות. וכל מצות האב על הבן - אהד אנשים ואהד נשים חייבין. וכל מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא אנשים חייבין ונשים פטורות. וכל מצות עשה שלא הזמן גרמא - אהד האנשים ואהד הנשים חייבין. וכל מצות לא תעשה, בין שהזמן גרמא ובין שלא הזמן גרמא - אהד האנשים ואהד הנשים חייבין, חוץ מ"בל תקיף" ו"בל תשחית" ו"בל תטמא למתים" (מסכת קדושין כ"ט).

MISHNAH: For all *mitzvot* which a parent has towards a son, men are obligated and women are exempt. For all *mitzvot* which a child has towards the parent women and men are equally obligated. For all positive (things you have to do) time-bound *mitzvot* men are obligated and women are exempt. For all positive *mitzvot* which are not time-bound men and women are equally obligated. For all negative (things you should not do) *mitzvot* men and women are equally obligated whether or not they are time-bound with the exception of shaving prohibitions and the prohibition against ritual defilement by touching a corpse. (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Kiddushin* 29a)

5. **Would you explain that please?**

"כל מצות שהזמן גרמא וכו'" תנו רבנן איזוהי מצות שהזמן גרמא - סוכה, ולולב, שופר וציצית, והתפילין. ואיזוהי מצות שלא הזמן גרמא - מזוזה, מעקה, אבידה, ושלוח הקן. וכלל הוא הרי מצה, שמחה, הקהל, דמצות עשה שהזמן גרמא - ונשים חייבות! ותו: וחרו תלמוד תורה, פריה ורביה, ופדיון הבן, דלאו מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא הוא - ונשים פטורות! אמר רבי יוחנן: אין למדין מן הפללות, ואפילו במקום שנאמר בו "חוץ". (מסכת קדושין ל"ד).

"All positive time-bound commandments &etc." (see above) The Rabbis taught

which is a time-bound commandment? [dwelling in a] *sukkah*, [shaking the] *lulav*, [hearing the] *shofar*, *tzitzit*, and *tefillin*. Which are not time-bound commandments? *Mezuzah*, [building a]railing, [returning] lost property and sending [the mother bird away from her] nest [when you take her eggs or her young]. Can you make a general rule [about positive time bound commandments?] since [the eating of] *matzah* [on *Pesach*] *Simcha* (observance of the pilgrimage festivals) "gathering together" [for the sabbatical Torah reading] are positive, time-bound mitzvot for which women are obligated? Not only that but the study of Torah, being fruitful and multiplying, and redemption of the first born son are positive *mitzvot* which are not time bound and women are exempt from them?! Rabbi Yohanan said, "We don't accept such a general rule as precedent even when it includes specific exceptions."

6. **Women leading services: rule one**

חַרֵּשׁ שׁוֹטָה וְקֶטָן אֵין מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הַרְבֵּים יְדֵי חוֹבְתָן. וְזֶה הַכֹּלֵל כֹּל שְׂאִינוּ מְחַיֵּב בְּדָבָר אֵינוּ מוֹצִיא אֶת הַרְבֵּים יְדֵי חוֹבְתָן. (מְשֻׁנָּה רֵאשׁ הַשְּׁנֵי ג' ח')

A deaf person, a fool, or a minor may not be agents by which others fulfill their (*mitzvot*) obligations. This is the general rule: Anyone who himself is not obligated may not be the agent by which others fulfill their obligations. (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 3:8)

7. **Women leading services: rule two**

נָשִׁים, וְעֶבְדִים וְקֶטָנִים פְּטוּרִין מִקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּמִן הַתְּפִלִּין, וְחַיְבִין בַּתְּפִלָּה וּבְמִזְוָה וּבְבִרְכַּת הַמֶּזֶן. (מְשֻׁנָּה בְּרַכּוֹת ג' ג')

Women, slaves, and minors are exempt from (the *mitzvot* of) reading the *Shema*, and from, *tefillin*. They are obligated for (the *mitzvot* of) *tefillah*, *mezuzah*, and blessing after meals. (Mishnah, Berachot, 3:3)

8. **One Orthodox Rebbetzin's view of the situation,**

Since most of the *mitzvot* not restricted by time are negative, and since women, children and slaves are responsible to fulfill all negative *mitzvot*, including the negative time-bound *mitzvot*, it follows that for members of this category, the characteristic posture of their Judaism is negation rather than affirmation. They must not, for example, eat non-kosher food, violate the Shabbat, eat chametz on Pesach, fail to fast on fast days, steal, murder, or commit adultery. That women, children, and slaves have limited credibility in Jewish law is demonstrated by the fact that their testimony is inadmissible in a Jewish court. The minyan - the basic unit of the Jewish community - excludes them, implying that the community is presumed to be the Jewish males to whom they are adjuncts. Torah study is incumbent upon them only insofar as it relates to "their" *mitzvot*. Whether women are even permitted to study further is debated.

All of the individuals in this tri-partite category I have termed peripheral Jews. Children, if male, are full Jews in potentio. Male Canaanite slaves, if freed become full Jews, responsible for all the *mitzvot* and able to count in a minyan. Even as slaves, they have the brit mila, the covenant of circumcision, that central Jewish symbol from which women are anatomically excluded. It is true that in Jewish law women are slightly more respected than slaves, but that advantage is outweighed by the fact that only women can never grow up, or be freed, or otherwise leave the category. (Rachel Adler, "The Jew who Wasn't There," *The Jewish Woman: An Anthology* p. 78)

9. ***Another Orthodox Rebbetzin's view of the situation***

In light of these working principles of Halakhah, one must ask some pointed questions: Does halakhic stratification of the sexes explicitly serve a theological purpose, that is, relatedness to God? For example, is inequity in divorce law or exclusion from court testimony or insufficiency to be counted for a quorum of some ultimate value in Judaism? Is there any way that the release of women from the obligation to study Torah, or praying at the prescribed times, can be understood in the sense of kedushah, holiness, a "setting aside"? We are offered no reasons for observing kashrut, yet we clearly understand it as an act of holiness, a special calling, a symbol of the unique relationship between God and the Jewish people. Is that how we must understand the stratification of male and female in Jewish ritual? Must we say that God's eternal plan for the sexes was a hierarchy, one dominant and one subordinate sex as law and ritual define us? Could it be that God, who loves all of His creatures, prefers and esteems the devotion of one whole class more than the other? Or can we say perhaps that the inequity is reflective of an undisputed socioreligious stance of ancient times? (Blu Greenberg, *On Women & Judaism* p. 45)

10. ***God of whom? Our present version***

Siddur Sim Shalom, pp 430-431 "Praised are You . . . Shield of Abraham" בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה . . . מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם

11. ***God of whom? An alternative version***

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה אֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה וְאֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹ, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר כִּסְדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאִמּוֹת, וְיִמְבִּיא גְּאֻלָּה לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה. מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיאֵע וּמִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם.

Praised be our God, the God of our fathers and our mothers: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebekah, God of Leah and God of Rachel; great mighty, and awesome, God supreme. Ruler of all the living. Your ways are ways of love. You remember the faithfulness of our ancestors, and in love bring redemption to their children's children for the sake of Your name. You are our

Sovereign and our Help, our Redeemer and our Shield. We praise You, Eternal One, Shield of Abraham, Protector of Sarah. (Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays, A Gender Sensitive Prayerbook, pp 22-23)

12. ***How masculine is God?***

Siddur Sim Shalom, second paragraph pp 350-351

Session III Images of Jews

God's relationship with the Jewish People is certainly one of our issues in dealing with images of God. The *Siddur* quotations (Selections 1 & 2) speak about our "chosenness." A theme which you might want to develop later in the discussion is that these passages seem to imply that chosenness has conditions. Classic Jewish theology holds that exile and the difficulties we have experienced come about because we have not lived up to our chosenness. The reason that is not much discussed is that such a theology gets pushed to the point of the absurd in discussing the Holocaust. What could possibly have merited it?

Selection 3 by Edmond Fleg speaks about Jewish pride

In contrast to our sense of chosenness and our pride is the section dealing with how others have seen us. Selections 1-4 are all from the 19th century. Selection 5 is from last year.

The final selection (Selection 6) is about the commonality of human experience in terms of both differences and similarities. It should have had its own section.

There are a number of options for discussion:

1. Explore the contrast between how others see us and how we see ourselves.
If the negative selections are false, how true are the positive selections?
2. Are there differences between the negative selections?
Do they have the same or different complaints?
Can any of them be justified or explained?
Have the identities of the anti-semites changed?
3. Do you think that the differences between how we see ourselves and how others see us give us any insights in dealing with other groups; *e.g.* African Americans, Latinos, Serbs?

Plan to use the last 10-15 minutes of this session to find out if your USYers see the *Siddur* any differently than they did at the beginning of the NMI. We would like to them to see the *Siddur* as a book which can provoke them into dialogue with it.

Most of us carry an internal *Siddur* filled with half formed thoughts, instant pleas, conflicting urges and inchoate questions. The dialogue between the *Siddur* we hold in our hands and the *Siddur* we have in our heads is what can make *Tefilah*-תפילה interesting and rewarding.

1. ***How the Siddur sees us, part 1***
Siddur Sim Shalom, pp 370-371 "You have chosen us . . . אַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ יְיָ"
2. ***How the Siddur sees us, part 2***
Siddur Sim Shalom, the Torah blessing, pp 400-401
3. ***How we see ourselves***
Siddur Sim Shalom, page 814

SOME QUOTES FROM THOSE WHO DO NOT SHARE OUR VIEWS

1. ***From The American Jew: An Exposé pp 218-9 [Telemachus T. Timayenis]***

"The Jew must go!" . . . Let them go with all their ill-gotten gain, and let us forget that it was ill gotten - but let them go. . . We want no parasites among us; we will not have them; our social health demands that we purge ourselves of them. The Jew must go. Let the nation assert itself to this effect, not passionately, not bitterly, not vindictively; but from Maine to Louisiana, from New York to the Golden Horn, let the American people rise as one man, and assert in deep tones of calm, unwavering resolve, "We want no parasitic race among us: THE JEW MUST GO!"

2. ***From Israel Among the Nations p. 118 Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu***

Their physical strength, their muscular power, has diminished in each generation; their blood has become poorer, their stature smaller, their shoulders and chests narrower. Many Jews of the large Jewries have an emaciated, pallid look. Many of them show signs of racial decline and degeneracy. . . . The Jew is, moreover, often misshapen; few races have so many men who are deformed, disabled, or hunch-backed, so many who are blind, deaf mutes, or congenital idiots. The reason for this lies not only in their early marriages and their marriages between near relations, but also, and above all, in their age-long confinement, their lack of exercise, or pure air and wholesome nourishment

3. ***From The Liturgical Year, pp 154, 450, by Dom Prosper Guéranger, Abbot of Solesmes and Superior General of the Benedictines of the Congregation of France***

For eighteen centuries, Israel has been without prince or leader. . . After all these long ages of suffering and humiliation, the justice of the Father is not appeased. . . The very sight of the chastisement inflicted on the murderers proclaims to the world that they were deicides [sic]. Their crime was an unparalleled one; its punishment is to be so too; it is to last to the end of time. . . The mark of Parricide here fastens on this ungrateful and sacrilegious people: Cain-like, they shall wander fugitives on the earth. Eighteen hundred years have passed since then: slavery, misery and contempt have

been their portion: but the mark is still upon them.

4 ***From La Civiltà Cattolica, (a semi-official journal of the Vatican) March 4, 1882, p. 613***

Every practising Hebrew worthy of that name is obliged even now, in conscience to use in food, in drink, in circumcision, and in various other rites of his religious and civil life the fresh or dried blood of a Christian child, under pain of infringing his laws and passing among his acquaintances for a bad Hebrew. How all this is still true and faithfully observed in the present century, we shall see, God willing, with all the evidence, in the next installment of our correspondence. [March 4, 1882, p. 613.]

5. ***From an incident last year (adapted from an article by Nat Hentoff January 24, 1994)***

The recent appearance of the Nation of Islam's Khalid Abdul Muhammad at Kean College in New Jersey has resonated far beyond that state school and in 12,000 students. Yet some dimensions of his lecture I have a tape of it - remain unexplored. Muhammad is a national spokesman for Minister Louis Farrakhan. His leader, over the past year, has tried in his own speeches to dilute some of his evident distaste for Jews especially now that he is part of a "covenant" with the NAACP, the Congressional Black Caucus and Jesse Jackson.

Khalid Muhammad, on the other hand, has not restrained his contempt for Jews at all. The Nation of Islam, however, is a tightly run organization, as it was during the reign of Elijah Muhammad. (The dissident Malcolm X found that out.) But, as Farrakhan strives for broader acceptance, here is his spokesman, Khalid Muhammad at Kean College: "Everybody always talks about Hitler eliminating 6 million Jews. But don't nobody ever ask, 'What did they do to Hitler?'... In Germany, they usurped, the way they do everywhere they go.... My leader tried to reason with you (Jews). But you disrespected him. And then you lied to him. And so now you have to face us, and we will eat your behind alive."

Muhammad is a frequent spellbinder before mainly black students at colleges. Since Muhammad continues on the circuit without being reprimanded by his leader, Minister Farrakhan has become the somewhat more respectable messenger. Meanwhile, his lieutenant reassures black college students that the Nation of Islam's old-time religion has lost none of its fire and brimstone. At Kean College, for instance, Muhammad implicitly approved propagandist Steve Cokely's charge that Jewish doctors injected the AIDS virus into black babies. "Brother Cokely is 100 percent right!" Khalid Muhammad is an equal opportunity bigot. At Kean, he also heaped scorn on gays and lesbians, Arabs, women, Catholics and whites not otherwise enumerated. He referred to "the old no-good Pope you know that cracker.... Somebody need to raise that dress up and see what's really under there." Just right for Jesse Jackson's "common ground" politics

6 ***Adapted from a midrash***

How far beyond compare to kings of flesh and blood is the King of Kings. When a king of flesh and blood wishes to have his likeness circulated on his realm he goes to his mint where his portrait is etched by an engraver and then cast into coins of the realm. Each coin is exactly like the other.

Not so the King of Kings. When the Eternal One desired to circulate His image in His realm he created human kind as it is written "Then God created the human in His image; in the very image of God did He create him." (Genesis 1:27) Each of God's "coins" is different, yet each is the image and likeness of their Creator.