

A critique of the *Shabbath* service of the *Union Prayer Book* can concern itself with two distinct questions. One is how well the service carries out the principles upon which the *Union Prayer Book* is based; the other is whether the Prayerbook and its principles are consistent and coherent with Reform Judaism.<sup>1</sup> The first kind of critique may be called internal, since it is criticism from within the work itself; the second is external, coming from the totality outside of which the book is part. In considering the question of revision of the *Union Prayer Book*, which of these two critiques carries the day is of substantive importance. If the decision is that the prayerbook is based upon sound Reform principles, then revision is a matter of minor changes based upon internal criticism, a phrase here and there, a responsive reading more or less. However, if the prayerbook fails to meet the external critique, then the nature of the change required will be a fundamental one; it will not be a question of revising language and formulas alone, but of creating a work that carries through a service that is based upon different principles. The thesis developed here is that the *Shabbath* service of the *Union Prayer Book* does not meet its external criticism, and that verbal revision alone, consequently, will not suffice to produce an adequate book of service for the Reform movement.<sup>2</sup>

Since, in my opinion, the primary criticism of the *Union Prayer Book* is that it is at the least incoherent and possibly inconsistent with Reform Judaism, it is necessary to clarify the nature of Reform Judaism as it relates to the *Shabbath* service. What does Reform Judaism require of a book of *Shabbath* service? The outstanding and essential characteristic of Reform Judaism is that it is a polydoxy, an open or liberal religion allowing for theological pluralism. Reform Jews can and do subscribe to different meanings of the term God as well as to diverse concepts of the essential religious act or act of salvation that the different meanings of God entail. It is self-evident that the *Shabbath* service should reflect and represent this free essence of Reform if it is to be a common book of service, the Reform Jewish book of service. The Reform service clearly should strive to serve the religious needs and interests of all who are Reform Jews. The *Union Prayer Book* does not

---

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between consistent and coherent as employed here is this: that which is coherent with a totality of things will enjoy a higher degree of integration with that totality than that which is only consistent. Thus while a totalitarian political party can be consistent with a democratic society, it is, nonetheless, incoherent with such a society.

<sup>2</sup> The term service is used advisedly. A "book of service" is broader in meaning than a "prayerbook." The former expresses and includes religious activity that is not necessarily conversation-prayer, the sense that prayer commonly has, and which, for argument's sake, it will have in this paper. For many, however, prayer does not have the connotation of conversation-prayer.

serve the common need. Its concepts and language literally and unequivocally represent only one of the possible Reform Jewish theological positions. The question now enters whether the *Union Prayer Book* is inconsistent or incoherent with the Reform Jewish movement. Our answer is dependent upon the aura and implications of the *Union Prayer Book* rather than upon its contents themselves. It is clear that inasmuch as the *Union Prayer Book* does represent one of several possible Reform theological positions that in itself it is consistent with Reform Judaism. To the degree, however, that it presents this position as the only Reform position it is inconsistent with the free essence of Reform Judaism. In other words, the *Union Prayer Book* is inconsistent with Reform Judaism if its concepts and principles are set forth as the dogma, creed, and orthodoxy of Reform Judaism. On the other hand, the *Union Prayer Book* is incoherent with Reform Judaism when it exists as the sole and common Reform Jewish service. Occupying this lofty station, it commands for itself and the theological position it represents all possible expressions of Reform Jewish service. This is particularly so since the absolute and unequivocal language of the *Union Prayer Book* suggests little depth or mystery, and consequently, leaves scant room for interpretation and private meaning. A great burden, therefore, is placed upon those Reform Jews who do not agree with its literal significance, and many are estranged and alienated from the divine service.

To illustrate the diversity that exists within Reform Judaism, let us examine briefly the theological and soteriological principles that underlie the service of the *Union Prayer Book* and compares these principles with those of three other Jewish positions. To emphasize that the *Union Prayer Book* does not allow expression to positions that are properly Reform Jewish,—even by a narrow standard, let alone a polydoxy,—the positions selected are those of three Jews whose views are respected and even honored in the Reform Jewish movement. Furthermore, to indicate that the *Union Prayer Book* service does not adequately reflect the full theological spectrum of the historical Jewish continuum, as well as contemporary views, the positions chosen come respectively from the Biblical period, the Middle Ages, and the present age. These three positions are those of Amos, Maimonides, and Martin Buber.

The theology underlying the *Union Prayer Book* may be characterized as a form of theistic absolutism which may be termed conversation theism.<sup>3</sup> (This qualification is important since not every theism, not even every theistic absolutism, is a conversation theism.) Anthropomorphism and anthropopathism give competent knowledge of the Godhead; positive attributes are unqualifiedly and properly affirmed of God. Accordingly, we know that God is a person, the absolute creator

<sup>3</sup>This occurs on almost every page, e.g., "With a father's tender care Thou rememberest me every day and every hour"; *U.P.B.* p. 35.

of the universe, omnipotent, omniscient (conscious of the world as well as Himself), and all-merciful.<sup>4</sup> We know, too, that He relates directly to the individual, that He exercises complete providence over every person and thing,<sup>5</sup> and that He reveals His will with certainty and clarity in a perfect revelation, the Torah.<sup>6</sup> God arbitrarily has elected the Jews to be His chosen people, and He has charged them with the mission of informing all men that theistic absolutism as depicted in the *Union Prayer Book* is the only true concept of God.<sup>7</sup> Since God is "the Father of all men,"<sup>8</sup> all men are brothers, and should live together in harmony.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the Messianic Age will be realized, willed by God as the inevitable end of history.<sup>10</sup> God has established an unconditional and irrevocable covenant with the Jews: they are His people and He exercises over them forever a special providence. This covenant holds forever no matter what the Jews may do.<sup>11</sup> Man himself has no worth of his own;<sup>12</sup> his rational capacity is of no value;<sup>13</sup> his power is meaningless.<sup>14</sup> God receives, is directly influenced by, and responds to the prayers of men much as a human person receives, is influenced by, and responds to conversation.<sup>15</sup> Prayer is direct conversation with God. Such conversation is not only possible, but is the primary means of salvation.<sup>16</sup> This distinguishes conversation theism from other concepts of theism, as the concept that man may engage in direct conversation with the Deity, and that such conversation brings special favor in this world and immortal expectation for the next.<sup>17</sup>

Amos' concept of God is also a theism, but it is not a conversation theism, and, for all practical purposes, not a theistic absolutism.<sup>18</sup> Positive attributes may be affirmed of God; God's nature and ways as they relate to man and history are known to the prophet, but what is known to the prophet is not that which is

<sup>4</sup> "Infinite as is Thy power, even so is Thy love"; *ibid.*, p. 12, *et. al.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18; *et. al.*

<sup>6</sup> "The law (תורה) of the Lord is perfect . . ."; *ibid.*, p. 149. Also, "This is the Torah, the pillar of right and truth"; *ibid.*, p. 94; *et. al.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 71.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71f.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42 and 44.

<sup>12</sup> "All goodness and truth are thine"; *Ibid.*, p. 29. Also, cf. p. 101.

<sup>13</sup> "... lean not upon thine own understanding"; *ibid.*, p. 53. Also, n. 10, *supra*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101, *et. al.*

<sup>15</sup> This is the premise of practically every page.

<sup>16</sup> This, too, is implied throughout.

<sup>17</sup> E.g., the third reading, p. 73; but also implied throughout.

<sup>18</sup> I will discontinue references at this point except for special instances. It was necessary to annotate precisely the references to the *Union Prayer Book* since it was the primary subject of inquiry.

depicted in conversation theism. God, according to Amos, does not extend providence to the individual; the national society is the unit of providence. Unlike the providence of theistic absolutism, there is no individual retribution only collective responsibility. The just man living in the unjust society must undergo the fate of his society. The righteous individual, therefore, may suffer destruction for the sins of others. Neither is God all-merciful. He has made a covenant with Israel, but this covenant is neither unconditional nor irrevocable. Israel can break this covenant and lose irretrievably the divine favor. The terms of the covenant are that the Jews as a community practice social justice and common humanity toward one another or lose irretrievably God's favor. This loss entails the destruction of the people as an organic national community and perhaps their extinction. Israel has no mission to preach to the world of the nature and truth of God; her task is to establish justice within her own gates. The chosen character of Israel is that she had made a special covenant with Deity promising morality for the collective divine providence. The same moral law, however, holds true for other peoples, and the same covenant can be made with other peoples. There is no intrinsic merit to the Jewish people assuring eternal survival nor is there eternal survival for the individual, since there is no immortality. Amos does not subscribe to conversation theism; prayer is not the essential religious act, or, apparently, a religious act at all. Although God enters into conversation with the prophet, prayer is neither asked for as religious duty nor responded to as having fulfilled a religious obligation. What God requires of man is moral social conduct; this is the act that influences the Godhead. It is possible that sacrifices are included in the essential act, but however this may be, it is clear that social justice is the *sine qua non* of salvation,—social justice that has to come within the limited time stipulated by the God finite in mercy. As the prophet says, "I hate, I spurn your feasts/ I take no pleasure in your festal gatherings . . . /Take away from me the noise of your songs/ And to the melody of your lyres I will not listen/ But let justice roll down like waters/ And righteousness like a perennial stream . . . / So I will carry you into exile beyond Damascus/ Says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts."<sup>19</sup>

Maimonides' theology, as presented in the *Moreh Nebukhim*,<sup>20</sup> is not a theistic absolutism if by theistic absolutism is meant a God who does all that is ascribed to him in conversation theism. Unlike conversation theism and Amos' theology, Maimonides claims that positive attributes cannot be affirmed of God. Aside from the fact that His existence cannot be denied, nothing is known of God except what He is not. God is thus absolutely transcendent; negative attributes provide the only precise way of speaking about Him. Leaving aside precise formulation for the moment, there are certain general things about God that may be said. God

<sup>19</sup> Amos 5:21, 23, 24, 27.

<sup>20</sup> The *Moreh Nebukhim* is Maimonides' basic work. It is the key to his other writings.

cannot do the impossible, and interfering with the established laws of nature or of reason is included in the impossible.<sup>21</sup> Thus there is no supernatural providence exercised. Neither is there individual providence for the world, mankind, or the Jews. Only select members of the human species achieve providence. This providence comes through their own act; by realizing their intellects to an extraordinary degree, they come to the knowledge that gives them mastery over natural causation and frees them from its inexorable consequences. Persons who do not reach this state of intellectual perfection, even though they may follow the rituals and ceremonies of Pharisaic Judaism, including prayer, do not come under the aegis of providence.<sup>22</sup> Neither the notion of the Jews as a chosen people nor the concept of mission plays a role in Maimonides' religious philosophy. Providence comes to the Jews as it would to anyone else, with the realization of intellectual being. It is this same act of intellectual realization that is the essential religious act for Maimonides. There is no relation possible between God and man;<sup>23</sup> salvation comes only through personal realization. Whatever there is of immortality comes about in the same manner. Since there is no God-man relation, conversation-prayer is impossible and exists only as phantasy. As Friedlander remarks, "According to Maimonides it is not by sacrifices or prayers that we truly approach God."<sup>24</sup> Conversation theism is not only untrue for Maimonides, it can be akin to idolatry. Maimonides' opposition to prayer and conversation are explicitly expressed. After apologizing for the language of the traditional prayerbook, and explaining that it was written for the masses but is not to be taken literally, Maimonides writes:

We cannot approve of what those foolish persons do who are extravagant in praise, fluent and prolix in the prayers they compose, and in the hymns they make in the desire to approach the Creator. They describe God in attributes which would be an offence if applied to a human being; for those persons have no knowledge of these great and important principles, which are not accessible to the ordinary intelligence of man. Treating the Creator as a familiar object, they describe Him and speak of Him in any expressions they think proper; they eloquently continue to praise Him in that manner, and believe that they can thereby influence Him and produce an effect on Him. If they find some phrase suited to their object in the words of the Prophets they are still more inclined to consider that they are free to make use of such texts—which should at least be explained—to employ them in their literal sense, to derive new expressions from them, to form from them numerous variations, and to found whole compositions on them. This license is

<sup>21</sup> III, 15.

<sup>22</sup> III, 17, 18.

<sup>23</sup> I, 52.

<sup>24</sup> *Moreh Nebukhim*, I, 52.

<sup>24</sup> M. Friedlander, *Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 294, n. 1.

frequently met with in the compositions of the singers, preachers, and others who imagine themselves to be able to compose a poem. Such authors write things which partly are real heresy, partly contain such folly and absurdity that they naturally cause those who hear them to laugh, but also to feel grieved at the thought that such things can be uttered in reference to God . . . You must consider it, and think thus: If slander and libel is a great sin, how much greater is the sin of those who speak with looseness of tongue in reference to God, and describe Him by attributes which are far below Him; and I declare that they not only commit an ordinary sin, but unconsciously at least incur the guilt of profanity and blasphemy. This applies both to the multitude that listens to such prayers, and to the foolish man that recites them. Men, however, who understand the fault of such composition, and, nevertheless, recite them, may be classed, according to my opinion, among those to whom the following words are applied: "And the children of Israel used words that were not right against the Lord their God" (2 Kings 17:9); and "utter error against the Lord" (Isa. 32:6). If you are of those who regard the honour of their Creator, do not listen in any way to them, much less utter what they say, and still less compose such prayers, knowing how great is the offence of one who hurls aspersions against the Supreme Being.<sup>25</sup>

In an earlier passage, Maimonides summarizes his position thusly:

The most apt phrase concerning this subject is the dictum occurring in the Psalms, Silence is praise to Thee, which interpreted signifies: silence with regard to You is praise. This is a most perfectly put phrase regarding this matter. For of whatever we say intending to magnify and exalt, on the one hand we find that it can have some application to Him, may He be exalted, and on the other we perceive in it some deficiency. Accordingly, silence and limiting oneself to the apprehensions of the intellects are more appropriate—just as the perfect ones have enjoined when they said: Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. (Ps. 4:5).<sup>26</sup>

While it would appear upon superficial acquaintance with the language of Martin Buber's theology that he is a conversation theist, this is not the case. Indeed, he is not a theist at all, but a panentheist whose God contains as well as transcends the universe.<sup>27</sup> Buber is in close agreement with Maimonides that God is not an object of knowledge; He does not, in fact, exist for us as an

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 218f.

<sup>26</sup> S. Pines, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, pp. 139f.

<sup>27</sup> That Buber takes his system to be comparable to that of Spinoza indicates even pantheistic sympathies, M. Buber, *I and Thou*, 1958 [2nd ed.], p. 135.

object at all. Unlike Maimonides, however, Buber believes man can enter into a direction relation with God. This comes about either through an I—Thou relation with some particular Thou or with that which is met as the eternal Thou. He writes:

Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou. Through this mediation of the Thou of all beings, fulfilment and non-fulfilment, of relations comes to them: the inborn Thou is realised in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become It.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the difficulty present in talking about the God that “cannot become It,” there are certain things that God clearly does not do. God does not exercise providence over man in any theistic sense of the term. He does not interrupt the natural order, and consequently, man is dependent upon the natural causation of the world of I—It and his own resources. There is no immortality. Neither does God reveal himself explicitly to man: the supposed literal revelations are the words of men who are reacting to and expressing an I—Thou happening. Yet the fact that there is an eternal Thou does have essential significance for man. The quality of person<sup>29</sup> as an attribute of God is the reason man can enter into an I—Thou relation, and through this relation or meeting realize authentic existence, “I become through my relation to the Thou; as I became I, I say Thou. All real living is meeting.”<sup>30</sup> The I—Thou relation is the essential religious act, the act of salvation. Is the I—Thou relation prayer in the conversation sense of the term, or, in fact, in any sense of the term? The answer must be no. For one thing, the eternal Thou who is addressed is either powerless to answer the petitions of prayer or beyond them. Moreover, prayers, at least in part, are verbal and addressed to an object of conversation. The I—Thou relation, (since it can take place with a tree,<sup>31</sup>) is not at all a verbal relation between two consciousness, but an existential relation in which there is a “flowing” of “being” and the penetration of an “I” that makes it full. Prayer, then, as theistically understood, is meaningless for Buber. Only if the words of prayer, no matter how heartfelt, are accompanied by an I—Thou relation is there any value to the experience, but then, it is not necessary to have the words of prayer at all, for it is the I—Thou happening alone that makes the words valuable. The superfluity of the prayer of conversation theism for Buber is clearly seen in the following passage:

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75f.

<sup>29</sup> I.e., “Thouness.”

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Many men wish to reject the word God as a legitimate usage, because it is so misused. It is indeed the most heavily laden of all the words used by men. For that very reason it is the most imperishable and most indispensable. What does all mistaken talk about God's being and works (though there has been, and can be, no other talk about these) matter in comparison with the one truth that all men who have addressed God had God Himself in mind? For he who speaks the word God and really has Thou in mind (whatever the illusion by which he is held), addresses the true Thou of his life, which cannot be limited by another Thou, and to which he stands in a relation that gathers up and includes all others. But when he, too, who abhors the name, and believes himself to be godless, gives his whole being to addressing the Thou of his life, as a Thou that cannot be limited by another, he addresses God.<sup>32</sup>

Generalizing the four positions enumerated above, we find they represent four major classes of religious systems: Those in which the divine is open to prayer, and prayer, at least in part, constitutes the essential act of religion; those in which the divine is unmoved by prayer, and the essential religious act is moral social action; those in which the divine is not open to prayer, and the essential religious act is the realization of personal being; those in which the divine is not open to prayer, and the essential religious act is some mode of non-verbal existential relation. (In addition, there are, of course, the eclectic systems that combine elements from the various positions.) These systems not only represent important theological themes of the Jewish continuum, but, in substantial measure also represent the basic positions taken in Reform Judaism today. Yet, for three of these four systems, the *Shabbath* service of the *Union Prayer Book* is inappropriate. Based on a narrow conversation theism expressed in rigidly univocal terms, its thoughts and words are largely inconsistent with other Reform theologies. Moreover, even though this paper is not intended to be a critique of the merits of the theological position expressed in the *Union Prayer Book*, but rather an effort to show that the latter is not competent for Reform Judaism, still some observations concerning the incoherence of several of its notions with general as well as Reform experience may be in order. For one thing, the denigration of human reason in the prayerbook of a movement founded on Biblical science is contradictory and almost frivolous. Moreover, who in the present age cannot help but stand in awe of man's rational and scientific achievements! Furthermore, in a movement founded on study that demonstrates the human and fallible origins of the Bible, and the primitive nature of large portions of its content, how can it be said the Torah is perfect? How can the Scriptural "commandments" be spoken of as if it is institutionally accepted that they were explicitly and in fact revealed, when it is clear that in Reform

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75f.

Judaism no certainty exists as to the origin of the "commandments," and each Reform Jew decides personally and arbitrarily what the "commandments" are to be? Finally, the unqualified optimistic emphasis upon an all-powerful, all-merciful providence carrying through an unconditional, irrevocable Messianic covenant with Israel strikes a hallow sound in the generation of the holocaust, with its steadily diminishing Jewry, and ever increasing nuclear capability.

The question now before us is a difficult one: Is it possible to create a *Shabbath* service, and a book of *Shabbath* service, that will meet the demands of both the Jewish continuum and Reform Judaism for diverse theological expression? If the answer to this question is that it is not possible, that more than one book of service will be required, we need not retreat from this step. There is no reason alternative books of service or elements from two books of service should not be employed to enrich and vary the *Shabbath* experience. More than one congregation has already created for itself alternative services to those of the *Union Prayer Book*. However, before we answer this question in the negative, I believe that every effort should be made to produce a common book of service that will have the capacity to serve all Reform Jews. Where congregations prefer their privately created services, such a common service would coexist as an acceptable alternative. The benefits of a common book of service are evident: it serves as a unifying symbol pointing to shared goals and a single community; it serves the congregation whose own members are too divided in their theological views to agree on an individual service; and above all, there is concrete ethical instruction as well as moral discipline in employing a book whose very existence implies the mutual affirmation of one another's authenticity and being despite diverse theological commitments.

In approaching a common book of service, I believe the following general requirements, inferred from the foregoing analysis should be borne in mind.

- 1) The book of service cannot be a prayerbook alone. Since there are those Reform Jews who take the word God to refer to that which is either beyond prayer or otherwise not open to personal address, the book of service must lend itself to other meanings than that of divine conversation.

- 2) The book of service, accordingly, must be written in consciously equivocal language allowing private interpretation and meaning. This requirement was often satisfied in the past by the fact that the worshipper did not understand the Hebrew he was reading, which enabled him to accommodate the public verbalization to his private religious needs. The Kol Nidre provides a classic example of this.

- 3) The book of service obviously will demand personal creative activity on the part of the one who uses it. Thus in a polydox religious community, the temple service has at the same time a private and public dimension. It is a private experience conditioned by a public setting.

- 4) The book of service should be understood as not necessarily constituting in whole or in part the essential religious act of every Reform Jewish system. For

those who are conversation theists, the book of service may well constitute such an act; for others the service will not be, but rather point to or evoke, the essential religious act.

5) The book of service is not to be taken as a statement of the necessary beliefs or dogmas of Reform Judaism. To identify a liberal religion with any of its services is to confuse an ocean with one of its waves.

One further point remains to be considered in connection with the *Shabbath* service of the *Union Prayer Book*; this is the *Shabbath* itself. Not only should the Prayerbook become a Common Book of Service, but it seems to me that the concept of the *Shabbath* in Reform Judaism should be rethought as well. The nature of the *Shabbath*, as it is presented in the *Union Prayer Book*, is inappropriate to a polydoxy. It is intimately, if not intrinsically, related to conversation theism, so that if the latter is rejected there is little meaning left to the former. The *Shabbath* in the *Union Prayer Book* is essentially a "day," a temporal and physical occasion, whose special significance is revealed to us in explicit "commandments," in obedience to which certain kinds of activities are to be pursued or avoided. I will omit the objections that can be brought against this concept of the *Shabbath*, both those implicit in our own earlier remarks and others, and simply describe the concept of *Shabbath* to which I subscribe, which, I propose, is a more appropriate concept for the Reform Jewish community. This concept may be termed the "Shabbath as a state of being." It involves the following analysis.

The meanings of the following terms are to be distinguished: symbol, vehicle symbol, and symboland.

A symbol is that which refers or points to some state or thing.

A vehicle symbol not only refers or points to some state or thing; it is a vehicle or direct means of realizing the state or producing the thing as well.

A symboland is the state or thing pointed to; or the state or thing realized or produced.

Applying this classification to the term *Shabbath*, we find that it can be analysed into three distinct elements: the *Shabbath* as symbol; the *Shabbath* as vehicle symbol, and the *Shabbath* as symboland.

The *Shabbath* as symbol, as it appears in the literature and liturgy of the Jewish continuum, refers indiscriminately both to the *Shabbath* as vehicle symbol and the *Shabbath* as a state of being. I take the former to be a means of realizing the latter, which is the essence of the *Shabbath*.

The *Shabbath* as vehicle symbol can refer to a "day"; a sacrificial, prayer or ritual procedure; or to any number of similar things organized into a complex; as is the case, e.g., in Pharisaism.

The *Shabbath* as symboland refers to the essence of the *Shabbath*, a state of being that may be characterized as a state of intrinsically meaningful personal being.

Phenomenologically this state is experienced as “full” being; the state in which the self cannot ask as though it does not know—“Why do I exist?”; Why being, why not nothingness?”—since the state of the self at the moment of the question is itself the reason and the answer.

This analysis of the *Shabbath* provides us with the framework for a polydox *Shabbath* service. We can assume that no matter the theology to which an individual Reform Jew subscribes, he will desire, and the essential religious act of his theology as an act of salvation will entail, plenary being—the state of *Shabbath* being. Hence we have here a common goal aspired to by all members of the Reform community, and a meaning of Shabbath that can be universally accepted. The problem of a common vehicle symbolism is that the vehicle symbol reflects or constitutes the essential religious act of a theology, and when theologies differ their essential religious acts differ as well. This problem is resolved by the five requirements laid down earlier for a polydox service, particularly by the point that the service must be written equivocally so that private meaning can be poured into its words and language. For some the service will constitute a relation with the infinite; for others, an occasion for ethical commitment; still others will engage in acts of self-realization; and others will find in it ultimate existential relation. All will find the beginning realization of plenary being in the concrete, public, and mutual affirmation of their integrity and existence.

Perhaps it should be pointed out in conclusion that I do not believe that the larger problem of the loss of meaning of the *Shabbath* in our time has been resolved with the resolution of the theoretical difficulties of the *Shabbath* service. This paper has not been directed to that problem. Yet I feel that with the concept of *Shabbath* as a state of being a step has been taken in the proper direction. It is important to understand that it is not the essence of the *Shabbath* that has lost value, but a particular vehicle that has for many become an impotent symbol for realizing this essence. It is not Reform Judaism that is rejected when temples are empty on a Friday night, nor the *Shabbath* as a state of being, but a particular vehicle symbolism. Conversation theism rituals, “seventh-days” that do not fit real-life calendars, and other traditional vehicle symbols, no longer serve for many to realize the state of *Shabbath* being. Let us not despair at the impotence of the old; we require all our energies to create the new, to meet the challenge of discovering potent symbols and effective modes of *Shabbath* realization for our times and future times. A new age is upon us, and we must think in as radically different terms as its radical novelty requires; only in this way will we have the forms prepared to receive its force in an orderly and productive manner.