

3. The Bill of Rights—the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution—includes, in the First Amendment, the “religion clauses”: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Analysis note: that although there are occasional tensions between “establishment” and “free exercise,” the two clauses are not in competition but complement and reinforce one another.
4. Stephen Steinberg, “Reform Judaism: The Origin and Evolution of a ‘Church Movement,’” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (fall 1965): 122–29.
5. Michael M. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 226; and see chapter 6 *passim*.
6. Judah Magnes’s experiment in the early twentieth century with a New York *Ke-hilla*, and the earlier unfortunate experience of Rabbi Jacob Joseph’s chief rabbinare in New York, are examples in this regard.

4

Miss Daisy’s Planet: The Strange World of Reform Judaism in the United States, 1870–1930

Yaakov Ariel

In one of the scenes in the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*, the heroine, speaking with contempt about her daughter-in-law, remarks, “Trying to make friends with Episcopallians! They don’t even recognize you when they see you on the street!” Daisy, an elderly woman whose childhood and youth took place in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and her young adulthood and middle age in the early decades of the twentieth, was a member of Atlanta’s Reform Temple. Unlike her daughter-in-law, she was fully aware of the social boundaries in which she lived. In her personal appearance, her aesthetic tastes, and her manners, as well as in her education and professional training, there was little to distinguish her from many other educated, upper-middle-class, white Southern women of her time. Her Jewishness, however, expressed itself in more than weekly synagogue attendance, where she is seen singing *Ein keLoheinu* (“There Is None Like Our God”), a concluding hymn of the Shabbat service.

Except for the black chauffeur who became her friend, Daisy’s social life revolved exclusively around middle-class Jews like herself, and her life in the community was completely separate from her non-Jewish, white surroundings. The fictitious Daisy demonstrates in a surprisingly faithful manner the social realities of the Reform community in turn-of-the-century America. The author and scriptwriter had a good grasp of the cultural atmosphere of American Reform Judaism, which was marked by a striking paradox: a strong adaptation to the surrounding culture that went hand in hand with social separateness and tribal loyalties.

Historians as well as laypeople have portrayed the Reform movement in the United States at that time in stereotypical terms borrowed from the Jewish Eastern European view of the German Jewish elite, its culture, and its

values, with little attempt to examine the actual realities of Reform life. They have perceived the Reform movement during that period as having divorced itself from the national and ethnic components of Judaism. Looking at the Reform movement through the prism of official creeds composed by the rabbinical elite, such as the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, or through the resentful eyes of the Eastern European immigrants who came to America during that period, they often have conceived of a picture of Reform Judaism radically different from the one they might have drawn had they looked at the social and cultural life of the movement.

Giving expression to the stereotypical image of the Reform movement of the period, Naomi Cohen, a historian of American Judaism writes, "Reform acknowledged its debt to the Enlightenment by insisting, first, that reason had to temper faith and religious behavior, and second, that universalism transcended ethnic and parochial national creeds."¹ Ironically, the Eastern European Orthodox view of Reform Judaism persisted, even among American-born secular Jews, just as it made its way into Zionist and Israeli images of the movement.²

Some historians have studied the Reform movement apart from this popular mythology, but usually they have paid particular attention to the theological standing of the rabbinical leadership, in particular to its thinking and achievements, and, at times, to institutional history.³ Few studies have pointed to the astonishing gap between the declared Reform ideals, as expressed, for example, in the Pittsburgh Platform, and the atmosphere that prevailed among the rank and file of the movement.⁴ Examining its social and cultural life can offer a better understanding of the nature of Reform Judaism at the turn of the century, as well as point to some of the mechanisms of Jewish existence as a separate group within the larger American society.

THE REALITIES OF REFORM LIFE

In actuality, the realities of Reform life were radically different from the movement's official theological doctrines. The Reform movement held a character almost diametrically opposed to its universalistic aspirations. As an ethnically oriented, parochial, and tribal group, Reform Jews were concerned with Jewish matters on local, national, and international levels, and were strongly involved with their non-Reform Jewish brethren. A look at Reform-sponsored journals, both local and national, reveals the paradox of Reform life during the period.

Members of Reform Jewish congregations were part of the American middle class in their economic standing, material needs, and consumer inclinations. Reform journals of the period were packed with advertisements intended for a community keeping up with the comforts and fashions of

middle-class urban America. Journals such as *Emanu-El*, *The American Israelite*, or *The Reform Advocate* carried hundreds of advertisements, ranging from women's clothing and piano lessons to vacation resorts, in each issue. Some of the ads were placed by businesses owned by Jews, their names implying at times an appeal to potential Jewish customers. Some establishments, including bakeries and delicatessens, were less subtle in emphasizing their Jewish character, adding, for example, the word "kosher" in Hebrew—an effort that stands in contrast to the Reform reputation in matters of dietary laws.⁵ Such signs were not intended for the minority of those keeping kosher in the Reform camp but for the majority of the readers for whom the Hebrew signified familiar ethnic food.

Although the commercial advertisements usually were not distinctly Jewish, many ads and columns in Reform journals pointed to a large network of activities and services that manifested both a strong sense of Jewish identity and an intense commitment of Reform Jews to their tribe. They testify to a strong drive to build a close-knit Jewish environment wherever there were enough Jewish families to band together and form a community. Large and medium-sized communities—at times even small ones—operated a series of institutions and organizations intended to meet the cultural, medical, and charitable needs of a distinctive ethnic group. In larger communities, middle-class Jews provided their less fortunate brethren with a series of welfare services, ranging from hospitals, orphanages, and old-age homes to classes in citizenship and sewing for newly arrived immigrants. German Jewish immigrants built this extensive communal network, much of which was established in the same years that the Reform movement in America crystallized.

These institutions served, with some changes, as the infrastructure of Jewish community life in America throughout the period and after. They provided much-needed services to the significantly larger group of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arriving during that time. As often happens when members of one social class serve as benefactors for another social class in that group, the immigrant community was far from grateful. Their reaction embodied resentment of their more educated, affluent, and acculturated brethren, who were concerned over their poorer brethren's needs but did not see themselves on the same par with them. At the same time, they were envious of and wished to reach the social status and economic comfort of the more privileged class. Eastern European Jews had consequently built an image of the German Jewish elite that was both flattering and demeaning—a reflection of their ambivalent feelings towards their more privileged brethren.

The scope of communal institutions and services offered was remarkable, even by today's standards. For example, according to the community's journal in the early twentieth century, there were eight thousand Jews in Louisville, Kentucky. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century and the

beginning of the twentieth century, the community established a network of institutions that covered almost all conceivable aspects of communal needs, ranging from the absorption of newly arrived immigrants to cultural and educational activities intended for all groups within the Jewish community.⁶ The neighboring Jewish community in Cincinnati, Ohio, provided an even broader range of social services. It included a Jewish general hospital and such progressive social programs as Elder Brother/Elder Sister, which dealt with the rise of adolescent crime in the immigrant neighborhoods and provided care for neglected and delinquent children.⁷ Especially in larger communities, such as New York or Philadelphia, Reform temples served as centers for many of the communal charitable activities.⁸

Such Jewish welfare services displayed the social differentiation that existed between Jews and their non-Jewish environment, typical for a time in which each religious-ethnic community in the United States provided its own people with services for which society at large was not yet willing to take responsibility. Such an extensive infrastructure of communal services also reflected an era in which the majority of American Jews were immigrants who had not yet made it into the comfortable middle class. It also demonstrated a strong sense of social responsibility on the part of the Reform elite toward fellow Jews. Although the benefactors and providers of these community services largely came from the well-established German Jewish middle class associated with the Reform movement, most of its beneficiaries were East European immigrants. For the Reform elite, the charity provided them a means to reach their less-privileged brethren and to work toward the absorption of the immigrant community into middle-class Jewish America, as well as providing them with a sense of purpose.⁹ At times, it even helped to advance them professionally, providing prestigious jobs. For instance, although the patients in Jewish hospitals mostly came from the immigrant class, the doctors came from the well-to-do German Jewish community. Within the network of Jewish communal services, Jews could become directors of hospitals, heads of departments, or hold other responsible positions.

REFORM ACTIVISM

The Reform involvement with Jewish causes, however, went further than the medical, educational, and communal services provided by the social elite for their less-fortunate brethren. Reform activists stood at the forefront of the Jewish ethnic and religious causes as they saw them. Reform leaders were particularly active, for example, in the struggle against Christian missionary activity, which, during the period, concentrated its efforts on the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.¹⁰ They saw Christian evangelism not so much as a threat to Jewish survival but as an insult to Judaism and an indication of

strong elements in American Christianity that refused to accept Judaism as a legitimate religion capable of offering its adherents moral guidance and spiritual depth. It signified the continuation of the old-time Christian hostility toward Judaism and Jews. As long as such attitudes remained prevalent, their own security and prosperity in American society was at risk.

Such missionary activity irritated Reform Jews, who almost never encountered missionaries themselves, more than it did the immigrant community at which it was directed. To the horror of the more-affluent German Jews, many immigrants willingly took advantage of the different medical, educational, and charitable services the missions offered, suggesting the unmet needs of the immigrants and the insufficiency of the services provided to the Jewish poor and, hence, serving as an additional incentive for the Jewish elite to enlarge the scope of their involvement with the immigrant community.¹¹

Reform Jews were also deeply concerned over the fate of Jews worldwide. They attempted to influence American foreign policy and to have the American government intercede in favor of persecuted Jews.¹² Reform journals regularly reported on developments among Jewish communities around the globe, with special attention to cases of discrimination, harassment, and brutality. They reported such incidents as anti-Semitic speeches at the Reichstag, and blood libels in Hungary and Russia.¹³ The intensity of the movement's interest in the fate of fellow Jews contrasted sharply with its image of denying the ethnic component of Judaism. These were not reports on "coreligionists," simply relating the situation of Jews in other parts of the world, but were reports on issues deeply related to the readers' senses of self-identity and common destiny. These reports were on the readers' own tribe.

Similarly, in contrast to the movement's popular image, Reform temples emphasized their tribal uniqueness even in their architecture. In cities such as New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Bloomington, Indiana, the temples' architecture featured a Moorish-Byzantine style that came to designate the "oriental" nature of Judaism and its Mediterranean heritage and to distinguish Jewish houses of worship from Christian ones, thus serving as a striking demonstration of religious and ethnic pride.¹⁴

ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION: REFORM OPPOSITION TO ZIONISM

With Reform houses of worship calling out the ethnic background of their congregants, and Reform's strong commitment to Jewish well-being in America and elsewhere, it would be difficult to understand the stereotypes that have developed around the movement without paying attention to a major component of the legend—Reform opposition to Zionism. This common misconception helped to reinforce the stereotypical approach to Reform Judaism

and to build the myth of the movement's non-Jewish character. According to this notion, the masses of immigrants from Eastern Europe were wholeheartedly Zionist, whereas the Reform Jews were antagonistic to Zionism and its goals.¹⁵ Yet membership in the various Zionist groups in late-nineteenth-century America was limited to a few dozen in the late 1880s to early 1890s, and to a few hundred in the late 1890s, the number rising to a few thousand by World War I.

Although the Reform position on Zionism as a whole was certainly not that of enthusiastic support, it was far from the stereotypical image of an anti-Zionist movement. Despite the movement's theoretical standing as expressed in the Pittsburgh Platform, Reform laymen and rabbis played a central role in both pre-Herzlian Zionist groups and in the fledgling movement that developed in the United States in response to Herzl's call.¹⁶ The head of Shavei Zion and Hovevei Zion in the late 1880s and early 1890s in New York was the German-born lawyer Adam Rozenberg, a member and leader of Temple Emanuel in New York.¹⁷ Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal, founder and rabbi of Temple Sinai, the first Reform congregation in Chicago, was an early Zionist leader in that city.¹⁸ Other rabbis, such as Richard Gottleib of Temple Emanuel in New York, were also active Zionists.¹⁹ Fellow rabbis by no means ostracized Zionist rabbis. They advocated their cause openly and loudly. Some of them, such as Bernhard Felsenthal, held positions of power and prestige within the movement.

The attitudes of declared non-Zionist Reform leaders, such as Isaac Mayer Wise, Emil G. Hirsch, or Kaufmann Kohler, were more ambivalent than the popular myth suggests. Many Reform rabbis expressed less-than-enthusiastic opinions on the declared Zionist agenda, including the idea of the Jews leaving the Diaspora for Palestine, but their attitude toward the actual settlement of Jews in the land of Israel and even the building of a Jewish home there were positive. Kohler's views in this regard are particularly revealing because he played a leading role in the small gathering of rabbis that came out with the Pittsburgh Platform in 1885. The fifth clause of the platform read:

We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approach of the realization of Israel's great Messianic Hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the administration of the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish State.²⁰

In contrast to the words of the platform, however, Kohler did consider the Jews to be a people.²¹ In his view, the Jews were a nation of priests with a special mission—to spread the word of God among the peoples of the earth.

He rejected the Zionist ideal, which denied the special mission of Israel among the nations, but approved of Jewish immigration to the land of Israel from countries in which Jews were harassed, as well as the building of an economic and cultural center in Palestine. He welcomed the Balfour Declaration enthusiastically.²² Apparently, the universalist ideals presented in the Pittsburgh Platform went beyond those expressed elsewhere by its architects. Similarly, the platform did not represent the opinions of most of the movement's followers. For decades, Zionism remained a topic of lively discussion in rabbinical gatherings and on the pages of the movement's periodicals.

Turn-of-the-century Reform periodicals now read as particularly tribal. Members of Reform congregations in the past had read other newspapers besides their communal journals, yet their pages suggest that the non-Jewish world existed only in relationship to the Jews. Such social causes as the civil rights movement, feminism, and gay liberation had not yet come about, and publications such as the *American Israelite* or the *Reform Advocate* were more narrowly focused than Jewish publications of the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, such as *Commentary* or *Tikkun*. In their style and interest, turn-of-the-century Reform journals resemble early-twenty-first-century ultra-Orthodox Jewish publications, which, on the whole, do not concern themselves with universal themes. Both the early-twentieth-century Reform publications and the early-twenty-first-century ultra-Orthodox ones share the tendency to question whether the different developments at home and abroad are good or bad for the Jews.

SOCIAL INTERACTION: THE ULTIMATE PARADOX

The paradox of Reform life manifested itself most of all in the realm of social interaction. Outside their professional or commercial lives, these supposedly assimilated Jews interacted almost exclusively with fellow Jews. The place of ethnicity in American society helped to reinforce such a reality. Jews often encountered unwillingness on the part of the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant middle class to accept them as friends, neighbors, or members of student fraternities or social clubs.²³ In the North more than in the South, cities were divided into ethnic neighborhoods, helping to reinforce Jewish identity just as in the latter decades of the twentieth century the disappearance of ethnic urban neighborhoods worked against it. Assimilation into the Protestant social elite meant conversion—an option that few chose. This is not surprising, considering the social separateness of Jews and the extensive network of social and communal organizations and activities sponsored by the Jewish community. Conversion meant much more than merely choosing a new faith; it meant moving from one community to another.

On this issue too, the popular myth has worked to obscure historical realities. Unlike in Europe, it was not a social trend among the American German Jewish elite to convert to Christianity in order to remove "the last barriers" and enter professions and positions closed to them as Jews.²⁴ Contrary to the Eastern European Jewish myth, this elite demonstrated a high degree of commitment to their Jewish identity. Moreover, socially they had much to lose and little to gain by converting. By the late nineteenth century, the Reform Jewish community in the United States was economically comfortable, enjoying much prestige within its own Jewish milieu, where they became something of "the Jewish WASPs," an envied and resented social elite. By the early decades of the twentieth century, members of this segment of American Judaism made it into some of the highest positions in the nation, including Supreme Court justices, ambassadors, governors, and secretary of the treasury.

Turning one's back on one's roots and ethnic and religious affiliation during the period under discussion was more typical of members of the Jewish lower classes than of members of the elite. It was also often the fate of Jews living outside Jewish communities. Those who stayed behind in small towns where there were no Jewish communities, for example, were divorced from the extensive social network Jewish communities offered. Such Jews often searched for social contacts and personal relationships outside the fold.²⁵ Matters were different for members of Reform congregations living in the heart of the close-knit middle-class Jewish community. As a rule, they saw little merit, socially or spiritually, in what Christianity had to offer.

Christian missionaries knew what Eastern European Jews were unaware of: that it was a waste of time and resources to evangelize Reform Jews. Instead, missionaries directed their attention to the immigrant community. In their writings, missionaries complained bitterly about the lack of interest and response to hearing the Christian message among Reform Jews.²⁶ They hated this segment of the Jewish community, among other reasons because it was living proof that Jews could make it in the United States without embracing Christianity and that Judaism as a religion and culture could accommodate itself to American middle-class norms and values, hence challenging the Protestant aspiration to see America as a Christian nation.

The rate of intermarriage during this period was also low. The Jewish taboo on intermarriage held relatively firm well into the 1960s, when it began weakening among non-Orthodox Jews of all backgrounds. By the end of the nineteenth century, the children and grandchildren of Jewish immigrants from Germany did "intermarry" with ascending second-generation Eastern European Jews. By the 1920s and 1930s, such marriages became the norm, with the social barriers between the German Jews and Eastern European Jews gradually crumbling down.

Contrary to the stereotype of the movement, Reform congregations were not homogeneous in their ethnic-geographical background. By the turn of

the century second-generation Eastern European Jews joined the movement in increasing numbers. By the end of the period, they constituted the majority of the membership as well as the majority of its rabbinical students. Joining Reform congregations signified upward social mobility through professional and economic accomplishments. Reform culture offered an environment that promoted a strong sense of Jewish identity and commitment but with a lifestyle that differed little from that of the American Protestant elite.

Sons and daughters of Reform Jews did join other religious groups, but the dynamics of such choices were very different than the choices of those who wished to make professional and economic gains by joining the Protestant Christian community. The appeal of joining some new religious groups resembled that of new religious movements for children of the comfortable Jewish middle classes in the later decades of the twentieth century, but the choices were different, with groups speaking in the name of science and reason holding the greatest appeal at the turn of the twentieth century. Children of Reform Jews established the Society of Ethical Culture.²⁷ Second- and third-generation German Jews, as well as children of Eastern European Jews who made it to the middle classes, found Christian Science attractive. Others perceived the Unitarian church as more consistent with a rational, enlightened approach to religion.²⁸

Perhaps nowhere else did the paradox of Reform life at the turn of the century manifest itself more than in the Jewish country clubs that well-to-do members of Reform congregations established during the period. These clubs were part of urban American middle-class life, and the second and third generations of German Jews (and later on, Eastern European Jews as well) wanted to join to take advantage of the atmosphere and facilities of these symbols of American leisure and success. Yet Jews were restricted from Anglo-Saxon clubs and had to create their own. Like the cars they drove and the pianos they played, the clubs were not necessarily "Jewish." Their activities initiated those of their non-Jewish counterparts, but they reinforced the social separateness of their membership, one paradoxically eager to embrace the Protestant American way of life.

In her autobiography, *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, Mary McCarthy recalls accompanying her widowed great-aunt, a member of a Reform congregation in Seattle, Washington, to her club. She was taken aback by what appeared to her a radically parochial, tribal atmosphere. She remarked that the members acted as if there were no non-Jews in the world. McCarthy's affluent and privileged great-aunt was not the embodiment of traditional Jewish culture, yet she interacted exclusively with Jews.²⁹ The sharp and witty renegade Catholic author also describes the Reform cuisine of the period, which included traditional dishes for Jewish holidays and Saturday meals, side by side with *trief*, dishes that were, by the era's standards, sophisticated cooking.

13. For example, *Emanu-El* (November 22, 1895); *The American Israelite* (February 9, 1893).
14. See, for example, photographs of Temple Emanu-El (in its old location on 43rd Street) in Naomi Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation*. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), 220.
15. For example, Harold R. Greenstein, *Turning Point: Zionism and Reform Judaism* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 1-7.
16. Cf. Marnin Feinstein, *American Zionism, 1884-1905* (New York: Herzl Press, 1965).
17. Marnin Feinstein, *American Zionism*, 26-55, 80-93; Israel Klausner, "Adam Rosenberg: One of the Earliest American Zionists," in *Herzl Year Book* 1 (1958): 232-87; Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), 83-84, 86.
18. Cf. Anita Libman-Lebeson, "Zionism Comes to Chicago," in *Early History of Zionism in America*, ed. Isidore S. Meyer (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1958), 155-90; Emma Felsenthal, *Bernbard Felsenthal: Teacher in Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924).
19. Cf. Michael A. Meyer, "American Reform Judaism and Zionism: Early Efforts at Ideological Rapprochement," *Studies in Zionism* 7 (1983): 49-64; Alan Silverstein, *Alternatives to Assimilation*, 166-67.
20. *Year Book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* 45 (1935): 199.
21. Kaufmann Kohler, *Jewish Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 323-491.
22. See Yakov Ariel, "Kaufmann Kohler and His Attitude toward Zionism: A Re-examination," *American Jewish Archives* 43, no. 2 (fall/winter 1991): 207-24.
23. Cf. Henry Feingold, *Zion in America*, 142-47.
24. On the situation in Europe, see, for example, Gershon Scholem's memoirs, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988).
25. Cf. Leonard Rogoff, *Homelands: Southern Jewish Identity in Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001).
26. Arno C. Gaebelstein, *The Conflict of the Ages* (New York: Our Hope, 1933), 147.
27. Cf. Benny Kraut, *From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Evolution of Felix Adler* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979).
28. Cf. Benny Kraut, "The Ambivalent Relations of American Reform Judaism with Unitarianism in the Last Third of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (winter 1986): 55-68.
29. Mary McCarthy, *Memoirs of a Catholic Girlhood* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1957), 175.
30. Cf. Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*.

5

The Theologian of the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform: Kaufmann Kohler's Vision of Progressive Judaism

Robert F. Southard

There are compelling reasons to reexamine Kaufmann Kohler's ideas and practices, but it is easy to miss those reasons at first. Kohler's ideas seem not to have aged well. His triumphalist pronouncements about the progressive character of Reform—and its special suitability to life in dynamic, democratic American life—suggest an annoying complacency about the movement and the nation. More damning still, Kohler's easy confidence in an unstoppable and beneficent evolution seems morally unfashionable in this post-*Shoah* age. Nor is his confidence in human progress the only difficulty. Readers grown accustomed to gender-neutral language may excuse Kohler's consistent use of the masculine universal as merely the language of a benighted age, but his sometimes cloying descriptions of domesticity, and his exhortation to an audience of "dear girls," are harder to read with equanimity. (His corresponding use of "dear boys" for male rabbinical candidates saves him from seeming misogynist, but makes him seem stuffy and patronizing).

Kohler's theology also suggests untimeliness. As congregational rabbi at major temples in Detroit (Beth El, 1869-1871), Chicago (Sinai, 1871-1879), and New York (Beth-El, 1879-1903); as leader of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis); as the leading author of the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform of American Reform; as president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati from 1903 until his death in 1926; and as an organizing editor of, and heavy contributor to, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Kohler was a forceful and formative exponent of classical Reform (as opposed to the neo-Reform that sought to supplant it).¹ As Kohler himself proclaimed, however, one age's worship differs from another's. Judged by this standard, the fashion he helped set is now increasingly in disfavor: the introductions of deliberately traditional practices into Reform observance evidently call into question the changes