Introduction: 
Historical Overview

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I’m told I have five minutes to cover this topic so I will try to be as judicious as possible.

What I want to concentrate primarily on is the history of the machzor within the CCAR, but I have to, of course, acknowledge that before there was a CCAR, there was a machzor and there was a whole tradition of Reform liturgies for the High Holy Days that had already molded the way that Reform Judaism was experiencing the High Holy Days before the Conference was formed in 1889. Many of the basic decisions had been made already by the Movement in terms of defining itself at the point where it became a national body here in the United States. So, for example, already in Germany and England and other places, the decision had been made not to recite Kol Nidre and not to sound the shofar. Questions such as the Musaf service on Yom Kippur proved to be much more complicated. The tradition of dropping the second day of Rosh HaShanah seemed stronger in England than in other places.

Here in the United States, before there was a LJPB-2, there were all types of prayer books that handled different parts of the liturgy in different ways. The Conference met for the first time in 1889, and immediately there was a question of a uniform liturgy. A plan of prayer was put forward by a committee in 1891 for the first UJPB-1, and to everyone’s surprise, someone, Rabbi Moses, had already written a prayer book. Apparently, nobody was happy about it. When his book came out in 1892, it was withdrawn because of objections by the radical Einhornians. The following year the committee’s UJPB-2 came out, and that stood the test of time. So UJPB-2, which came out second chronologically was actually the first uniform liturgy of the Movement. Then in 1894, a new UJPB-1 came out, and that became the standard.

No Kol Nidre was included in UJPB-2. Instead, a hymn sung to the melody of Kol Nidre appeared at the beginning of the service. The book proved popular, and three hundred synagogues adopted it. One hundred thousand copies were distributed; however it was not universally accepted. In my own synagogue at KI (Reform Congregation Kneset Israel in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania), they had their own prayer book, which they felt was more in line with...