

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 Nidrei* 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 *UPB-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 *UPB-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 When his book came out in 1892, it was withdrawn because of objections by the radical Einhornians.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 *UPB-2* came out, and that stood the test of time. So *UPB-2*, which came out second chronologically was actually the first uniform liturgy of the Movement. Then in 1894, a new *UPB-1* came out, and that became the standard.

No *Kol Nidrei* was included in *UPB-2*. Instead, a hymn sung to the melody of *Kol Nidrei* 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 Knesset Israel in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania), they had their own prayer book, which they felt was more in line with

Machzor: the prayer book for the High Holy Days.

What do you think were the reasons for the opposition to *Kol Nidrei* and the shofar for the early Reformers?

Does your synagogue observe one or two days of Rosh HaShanah? What is the reason for that practice?

The Union Prayer Book, volume 2 (*UPB-2*) was the first High Holy Day prayer book (*machzor*) published by the CCAR.

The Union Prayer Book, volume 1 (*UPB-1*) was published in 1895, after having been recalled from publication in 1892 for being too centrist. This was the first prayer book published by the CCAR and was meant to be suitable for all American Jews.

The early Reformers were able to reach a compromise regarding *Kol Nidrei*. Does this sound like a workable or satisfying compromise? Why or why not?

The goal of creating a unified prayer book was clearly important to the early American