

7-16-2010

The Contextualization of Tikkun Olam in American Reform Judaism

Erin M. McClanahan

Georgia State University, erinn.go.braugh@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/rs_theses

Recommended Citation

McClanahan, Erin M., "The Contextualization of Tikkun Olam in American Reform Judaism" (2010). *Religious Studies Theses*. Paper 29.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Religious Studies at Digital Archive @ GSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Religious Studies Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Archive @ GSU. For more information, please contact digitalarchive@gsu.edu.

ABSTRACT

American Reform Judaism currently associates the Kabbalistic term, *tikkun olam*, with one of its core principles, social justice. This association is relatively new, dating roughly to the 1950s. The appropriation of a Kabbalistic term by American Reform Judaism is unusual given the historical animosity of American Reform Judaism toward the Kabbalah. The purpose of this thesis is to explain this appropriation by contextualizing the use of *tikkun olam* within American Reform Judaism. The method through which this will be accomplished is the analysis of official documents, journal articles and theological discussions found within the American Reform movement. The thesis concludes that American Reform Judaism chose to appropriate *tikkun olam* and associate it with social justice in order to locate social justice in a historically Jewish context. This reworking of the concept of social justice to place it within a specifically Jewish framework reflects the theological shift which occurs in reaction to the Holocaust, fears over Jewish assimilation and other social factors taking place during the 1940s and 1950s.

INDEX WORDS: American Reform Judaism, Kabbalah, *Tikkun Olam*, Tikkun, Social Justice, Emil Fackenheim, Eugene Borowitz, Isaac Luria, Holocaust, Assimilation.

THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF *TIKKUN OLAM* IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDASIM

By

Erin M. McClanahan

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

Copyright by
Erin M. McClanahan
2010

THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF *TIKKUN OLAM* IN AMERICAN REFORM JUDASIM

By

Erin M. McClanahan

Committee Chair: Kathryn McClymond

Committee: David Bell

Issac Weiner

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Science

Georgia State University

August 2010

DEDICATION

To Dr. Kathryn McClymond.

Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....viii

Section One: Introduction.....1

Section Two: A Brief history of *Tikkun Olam*.....4

Section Three: The structure of American Reform Judaism.....18

Section Four: Why ARJ Chose to Adopt the Term *Tikkun Olam*.....29

Bibliography.....42

“In its original context tikkun had to do with the repair of divinity, and was part of an eschatological vision of things which anticipated the end of history and nature as we know it. The tikkun to be achieved involved the dissolution of the material world in favor of a purely spiritual existence, similar to that which existed before intra-divine catastrophe and before human sin.” - Lawrence Fine

“Today’s tikkun olam has little or nothing to do with halakhic adjustments or mystical intentions. Rather, it summons us to Jewish ethical duty, most often of a universal cast—but in keeping with our intensified postmodern particularity; it legitimates this remnant of modernity by cloaking it in a classic Jewish term.” -Eugene Borowitz

The Contextualization of *Tikkun Olam* in American Reform Judaism

The Hebrew term *tikkun olam*, whose best translation is “repairing or mending the world,” is employed today by American Reform Judaism (ARJ) as synonymous with the concept and performance of social justice. According to official ARJ documents, and for the purposes of this paper, social justice is understood as the responsibility to eliminate the gap between the affluent and the poor by promoting environmental, economic and spiritual responsibility to one’s neighbor. Its use is not limited to American Reform Judaism but has been picked up and used by politicians such as Bill Clinton and religious scholars such as Cornel West.¹ The term itself dates back to the Jewish prayer *Aleynu*, which some scholars date to roughly the second century Common Era.² However, it was the sixteenth century Kabbalist mystic, Isaac Luria, who was responsible for creating the theology most popularly associated with *tikkun olam*. Luria’s theology does not reflect the way in which the term is currently employed by ARJ or the individuals who have since borrowed it from ARJ for their own uses. This leaves one to wonder

¹Jill Jacobs, "The History of ‘Tikkun Olam,’” *Zeek: A Jewish Journal of Thought and Culture* 1-2 (2007), <http://www.zeek.net/706tohu/>.

²Jacobs, “History of ‘Tikkun Olam,’” 2.

how, and more importantly, why, a sixteenth century mystical term became a popular byword for social justice to be employed by ARJ rabbis, politicians and religious scholars. What purpose could it serve for American Reform Judaism to adopt and adapt this term?

In this paper I argue that one reason behind the adoption of the term *tikkun olam* by American Reform Judaism was to provide a Jewish genealogy for one of the founding principles of ARJ, social justice. Social justice was one of the original eight seminal points enshrined in the 1855 Pittsburgh Platform, a document that helped to solidify the Reform movement in America. The term *tikkun olam*, however, was not introduced into a formal ARJ platform until 1997. I will demonstrate that one reason for the latter incorporation and association of *tikkun olam* with social justice was caused by a theological shift in ARJ which took place in the aftermath of the Holocaust. This theological shift resulted in American Reform Judaism repositioning itself towards a more centrist position, best indicated by the growing emphasis on the inclusion and importance of Jewish tradition. By adopting the term *tikkun olam* American Reform Judaism was able to place social justice within a historically Jewish context. This provided Jewish reasoning for the importance of social justice, rather than relying on Universalist philosophy, a philosophy which was no longer sufficient for the cause of American Reform Judaism.

The conversations taking place in relation to the concept of *tikkun olam* are many and varied, but those that are pertinent to this paper can be loosely grouped into two categories. The first category focuses on tracing the historical development of the concept of *tikkun olam*. Examples include Gershom Scholem's works, *Kabbalah* and *Trends in Jewish Mysticism* and Gilbert Rosenthal's "Tikkun ha-olam Metamorphosis of a concept." These conversations span

the range of Jewish denominations but do not consider *tikkun olam* specifically within the context of ARJ. The other category focuses specifically on how *tikkun olam* relates to ARJ theology, as presented in the works of Emil Fackenheim, Eugene Borowitz, innumerable rabbi responsa, and articles in the *Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*. While these conversations discuss the applications and purpose of *tikkun olam* within ARJ, they do not situate *tikkun olam* in its broader historical context nor do they substantially address the drastic reworking of the original concept. One minor exception to this claim is found in the latter work of Eugene Borowitz who does at one point acknowledge that *tikkun olam* has been appropriated and reinterpreted by ARJ. Borowitz fails, however, to expand upon this point before moving back into a discussion of the present day application of *tikkun olam* within ARJ. Neither of these conversations adequately addresses why *tikkun olam* was adapted by ARJ, and the extent to which it has been repurposed. This paper contributes to these conversations by linking historically focused conversations with the theological ones taking place within the American Reform movement in order to address the largely ignored question of why the term has become important within the ARJ movement.

The paper will be divided into three main sections, the first of which will lay out the historical development of the term *tikkun olam* by Isaac Luria and will conclude with an explanation of how the term is currently understood by ARJ. The second section will provide an overview of American Reform Judaism, its relation to Luria and the Kabbalah, and trace the intersection of *tikkun olam* with the idea of social justice. Finally, the third section will present evidence to support the hypothesis that *tikkun olam* was adopted in order to provide a Jewish

context for social justice. The paper will conclude by providing speculation as to the larger implications of the re-emergence of the term and possible avenues of future research.

A Brief History of *Tikkun Olam*

This first section will introduce the historical origins of the term *tikkun olam* focusing primarily on the popularization of the term by Isaac Luria in the sixteenth century. The purpose of highlighting this period in relation to the paper as a whole is to provide a point of comparison between how Luria used the term and how the term was (and is) later used by the American Reform movement. This comparison will demonstrate that ARJ did not adopt the term directly from Luria but rather took his term and used it for their own largely different purposes. For the purposes of this paper, I will only provide a cursory explanation of the intervening time between Luria and the development of ARJ, an explanation that will focus on the evolution and adaption of Isaac Luria's idea of *tikkun olam*. By the end of this section, the reader should clearly understand the historical development of the term up to the present day.

The Jews of Spain, once a thriving center for Jewish life and learning, were expelled in 1492. In the wake of this crisis one main question plagued the recently exiled Jewish community: why, in the face of continuing hostility and very real danger, should anyone continue to practice the Jewish tradition? One of the most famous and influential Jewish theologians to take up the challenge of addressing this problem was Isaac Luria (1534–1572), also known as Ha-Ari.

Isaac Luria was born in Jerusalem in 1534. His father died while he was still young, and Luria was raised by his wealthy uncle, Mordecai Francis. Thanks to Francis's wealth, Luria received a thorough Jewish education at which he excelled. In 1569, Luria moved to Ottoman Palestine, where he settled in Safed. Even before his arrival in Safed, Palestine was already

home to a rich tradition of mysticism. The most notable of the Safed Kabbalists was Rabbi Moses Cordovero (1522-1570), under whom Luria studied for a brief time.³ Cordovero, according to the renowned Jewish scholar Gershom Scholem, was “the main systematic theologian of the Kabbalah.”⁴ But due to “the magnetism of his personality and the profound impression he made on all, Isaac Luria was [even] greater than Cordovero.”⁵ Luria advanced Kabbalism by building on the ideas of men like Cordovero and other mystics already present in Safed, as well as incorporating the earlier ideas of the 13th century Spanish Kabbalists. The primary text of the Spanish Kabbalists was the *Sefer ha-Zohar*, or Book of Splendor, written by Moses ben Shem Tov De Leon between 1280 and 1286. Despite Luria’s incorporation of earlier work, however, the theology that he developed was in many ways radically different from previous versions of the Kabbalah. For instance, while Luria relied heavily on the *Zohar* as his starting point, his creation of *tikkun olam* and the cosmogony that surrounded it diverged significantly from the *Zoharic* version of creation. In addition to radically reworking Kabbalistic thought, Luria’s work also provided a way for Jews to understand their role in the order of creation as well as reasons for the continued observance of the Jewish tradition despite persecution.

Luria developed the concept of *tikkun olam* as one part of an extraordinarily intricate cosmogony, which he used to explain the upheaval in and ultimate purpose of the Jewish community. In “its original context,” notes scholar Lawrence Fine, “*tikkun* had to do with the

³ Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul Healer of the Cosmos* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 77.

⁴ Please see Scholem’s work, *Kabbalah* (New York: Meridian, 1974), 73-78 and 149-151 for an explanation of Cordovero’s philosophy.

⁵ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 73.

repair of divinity, and was part of an eschatological vision of things which anticipated the end of history and nature as we know it. The tikkun to be achieved involved the dissolution of the material world in favor of a purely spiritual existence, similar to that which existed before intradivine catastrophe and before human sin.”⁶ Luria envisioned the world as originally intended by God to be entirely spiritual; the physical world was an aberration, a mistake that God and Jews worked to rectify through the process of *tikkun olam*.

Before moving into a brief summary of Luria’s cosmogony, it is important to note that Luria never wrote anything down himself. What survives of his theology is what was recorded and passed along by his students. Because of this we have several variations of his creation story, each with slight differences. The version presented here is associated with his most important followers, Hayim Vital and Rabbi Joseph ibin Tabul.⁷ Again, it must be stressed that Luria’s work was extraordinary complex a much-simplified summary of Luria’s myth is as follows.⁸ Prior to creation, “the cosmos was entirely filled with the presence of God, imagined as limitless divine light.”⁹ This particular Kabbalistic understanding of the divine was denoted by the Hebrew term *ein-sof*, which can be translated as “Infinite” or “without end.” Through a process that Luria called *tsimtsum*, literally “contraction,” *ein-sof* withdrew part of itself, leaving room to create the cosmos, which was intended to be a creation of pure spirit. *Ein-sof* then emanated a ray of light back into this empty space in order to create the ten *sefirot*, or enumerations. The *sefirot* are “aspects of God’s very Self, intrinsic dimensions of divine being through which God

⁶ Lawrence Fine, "Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif in Contemporary Jewish Thought," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism : Intellect in Quest of Understanding--Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, Vol. 4, ed. Jacob Neusner, et al. (1989): 35-55.

⁷ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books 1946), 254.

⁸ For a more detailed description of Luria’s cosmogony please see Lawrence Fine’s work *Physician of the Soul* and Gilbert S. Rosenthal “Tikkun ha-Olam: The Metamorphosis of a Concept.” *Journal of Religion* Vol 85, Part 2, (2005): 214-240.

⁹ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 126.

continually manifests itself.”¹⁰ They are representative of different aspects of the divine with which humanity can interact.

Unfortunately, during this first emanation, the *sefirot*, or vessels, shattered when they were subjected to the force of *ein-sof*'s emanation. The shards “fell and became the basis for our world of material reality,” a physical world which was never the intention of *Ein-sof*.¹¹ *Ein-sof* recalled most of the divine light but some remained trapped, forming the physical world. “In the wake of the Breaking of the vessels divinity sought to mend itself through a complex set of processes known by the term *tiqqun* (mending, healing, restoration).”¹² Just to clarify, this version of *tikkun* is undertaken entirely by *ein-sof*, the purpose of which is to recall the light that has fallen and become trapped in the material world. The ultimate goal is to raise the material world back to the level of the spiritual. Again, as Luria understood it, the physical world was a deviation, an unintended consequence of the shattering of the Vessels; *tikkun olam* was the process by which that mistake was rectified, meaning that the physical world was eliminated through raising it back up to the level of the spiritual. Eventually *ein-sof* attempted the emanation process once again. Once more, it emanated a ray of light from within itself, “but now reconfigured in altogether new ways. Instead of emanating in the comparatively simple form of ten *sefirot*, divine light now reorganized itself into five major configurations or *parsufim* (literally, ‘faces’ or ‘countenances’), under which the *sefirot* were subsumed.”¹³ Because of the reorganization, this time the emanation process was successful.

¹⁰Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 126. See also Scholem, *Trends* 76-77.

¹¹ I am aware that the implications of this statement are that *ein-sof* made a mistake; this is indeed Luria's claim.

¹² Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 138.

¹³ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 139.

Luria claimed that all of these events took place before the creation of Adam and Eve. Thus, originally Adam and Eve were purely spiritual creations. With the sin of Adam, however, the healing that had been accomplished by the second emanation was undone. Once again, the *sefirot* were shattered and divine light was trapped in the physical world, Adam and Eve along with it. According to Luria, Adam's sin and the destruction that it caused meant that humans now "have an indispensable role to play in the completion of the work of cosmic mending."¹⁴ Specifically, it fell to humanity to attempt, through the process of *tikkun olam*, to repair the damage that Adam did. While *tikkun* was now the work of humans, the mending was still understood as spiritual in nature. It was now the job of humans to assist in the evolution of the physical world, in order to lift it back up to the level of the spiritual.

This repair took place in two stages. The first involved purifying one's soul, a process that was accomplished through the performance of *mitzvot*, or divine commandments as found in the Torah and explained in the Mishnah and Talmud. This process took place whenever a *mitzvot* (literally "commandment" and referred to the performance those acts which were commanded of the Jews by God) was properly performed. The second was dependent upon the first; those individuals who succeeded in purifying their souls were in a position to assist in raising the material world back to the spiritual world originally intended by *ein-sof*. This part of the process could only take place through the recitation of prayers specifically on the Sabbath.

Luria taught his followers that all Jews could and should participate in the process of *tikkun olam*; *tikkun* best translates as "restoration"¹⁵ or "mending" and *olam* as "the world." Luria claimed that each and every Sabbath represented "an opportunity to facilitate the processes

¹⁴ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 141.

¹⁵ Scholem, *Trends*, 233.

of *tiqqun*.” Through Sabbath prayers, those Jews with purified souls could work toward raising the material world back to its originally intended spiritual form. According to Luria, “the significance of observing all the mitzvot in one’s power has to do largely with the goal of perfecting the soul.”¹⁶ By performing *mitzvot* a man purified his soul. By purifying his soul he achieved a state that would “render oneself qualified to engage in the higher and broader levels of *tiqqun*,”¹⁷ that is, it would enable him, through reciting the prayers on the Sabbath, to raise the material world back to the level of the spiritual. In order to perfect one’s soul a man must “properly fulfill each of the mitzvot.”¹⁸ The ability to engage in higher levels of *tikkun* was limited to men. Women, by properly observing the *mitzvot*, could be reincarnated through a process that Luria called *gilglim*, (literal “cycle”) as men, who could then work towards the highest goal of *tikkun*.¹⁹

To properly fulfill a *mitzvot* meant that the action was undertaken with “intense enthusiasm and joy.” The term Luria used to describe this was *kavannah*, often translated as “intention.” For instance, there is a *mitzvot* found in Leviticus that prescribes the cutting of men’s side curls. When a man is about to undertake the process of cutting his hair, Luria argued “it [was] not enough for him simply to refrain from cutting his side curls, as prescribed in the Torah, rather, he must consciously reflect on the fact that he is doing so for the sake of pleasing his Creator, who instructed him to act this way. The same holds true for the performance of each

¹⁶ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 193.

¹⁷ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 187.

¹⁸ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 192.

¹⁹ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 192.

and every mitzvah; it must be accompanied by awareness of the pleasure that it provides God.”²⁰ It was the intention, or *kavannah*, of the act that was crucial; merely performing the *mitzvot* was not enough. Each *mitzvot* had to be performed with the appropriate conscious, joyful intent. In turn, the purer a man’s soul, the greater the power he would have to help raise the world through Sabbath prayer.

Theologically Luria referred to the concept of *tikkun olam* to explain why Jews should maintain the Jewish traditions even in the face of the Spanish Inquisition and the Expulsion. Luria taught that the Jewish traditions were necessary to correct Adam’s sin and elevate the physical world back to the spiritual. Practically speaking *tikkun olam* provided personal empowerment to Jews, many of whom felt powerless in the face of extensive hostility. Through everyday acts individual Jews could understand themselves as “healing the world” and personally helping to bring about an end to the violence they experienced.

Lurianic Kabbalah was taken up by both theologians and rabbis. During his life and after his death, Lurianic Kabbalah was transmitted by his students and eventually spread throughout Europe. His idea of *tikkun olam* permeated the writings and actions of many mystics, such as Rabbi Joseph Karo (1488–1575), Solomon Alkabetz (c. 1505–84) and Moses Alshekh (died after 1593). Karo used the concept of *tikkun olam* in both his introduction to Maimonides’s *Mishneh Torah*²¹ and in his personal mysticism. Fine asserts that Lurianic Kabbalah became the “national theology for Judaism for several generations.’ New mitzvot and festival practices were introduced as well as tikkunim in the hope that they might quicken the worshiper’s soul along its

²⁰ Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 193.

²¹ Gilbert S. Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-Olam: The Metamorphosis of a Concept,” *Journal of Religion* Vol 85, Part 2, (2005): 214-240.

[purification] and also hasten the redemption through the messiah.”²² Luria’s work was also highly influential for a host of sixteenth century theologians who adapted Luria’s work for their own purposes. Despite such adaptations, however, the core elements of Luria’s teachings were maintained, specifically the focus on raising the fallen sparks trapped in the material world through performance of *mitzvot*. The two most important sixteenth century theologians influenced by Lurianic Kabbalah were Rabbi Judah ben Bezalel Loew of Prague, popularly known as the Maharal (c. 1525–1609), and Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, better known as Shelah (c. 1560–1630). Both men incorporated *tikkun olam* into their own theologies. Shelah taught that there were three purposes of *tikkun olam*. The first two, “the repair of the flaws in the world from creation [and] the perfection of humans,” both perpetuate Luria’s own core teachings, focusing of the mending of the world. Shelah’s final purpose, “the repair of the primordial sin of Adam and *purging of the pollution injected by the serpent into Eve in Eden*,”²³ is an embellishment on ideas originally presented by Luria. Such embellishments became common as Luria’s ideas were adapted by other religious movements. Even with such augmentation, Shelah maintained the importance of repairing the damage from the shattering of the vessels was maintained.

In its next variation *tikkun olam* was integrated into the cause of Shabbatai Zevi (1626-1676). Zevi was a Jewish mystic from Smyrna, modern day Turkey. In 1648, at the age of twenty-two, he pronounced himself the long awaited Jewish messiah. He gained an impressive following, especially among Slavic and Middle Eastern Jews. Zevi himself was heavily influenced by Lurianic Kabbalah, especially the practical aspect, which focused on communing

²² Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 150-258.

²³ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-Olam,” 228. Emphasis is mine.

with God and performing miracles. “The prophet of the Shabbatai movement, Nathan of Gaza, expounded on the Lurianic ideas of the power of tikkun. But whereas Luria placed the challenge before all Israel, Nathan of Gaza taught that only the messiah could assume that task and extract holy sparks from the deepest recesses of the kelipah [shattered vessels].”²⁴ Again, the importance of gathering the sparks was maintained, but Nathan of Gaza limited the power to assist in that repair to the Messiah alone. Based on this teaching Zevi argued that because since it was his sole responsibility to liberate the trapped sparks he must perform not only the prescribed *mitzvot* but also to go outside the bounds of what was traditionally allowed within Judaism in order to raise all the sparks trapped in creation. For example, Zevi said that not only was he required to eat kosher foods but it was also necessary for him to eat non-kosher foods as well, in order to raise the sparks trapped within all foods. Zevi was eventually arrested by the Ottoman Sultan and put in prison. Shortly after his imprisonment he converted to Islam, shocking the majority of Jews with this dramatic demonstration that he was not the Messiah. Disappointment-fueled rage enveloped the Jewish community, and a whole host of rabbis, mystics and Kabbalists, both in the Middle East and in Europe, were accused of sympathizing with Zevi and his heresies. These accusations led to the persecutions and excommunications of many accused sympathizers. Even after the first wave of resentment had subsided, the Kabbalah, especially the concept of *tikkun olam* that Zevi had used to justify his heretical acts, remained suspect because of its ties to Zevi.²⁵

Scholem notes that because of these persecutions, many Kabbalists “renounced the more popular aspects of Lurianism and tried to lead the Kabbalah back from the market place to the

²⁴ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 229.

²⁵ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 229.

solitude of the mystic's semi-monastic cell.”²⁶ At this time, most Kabbalists pulled back from public engagement and focused on solitary practice. Another development that followed the Shabbatai Zevi crisis was the Hassidic movement. This movement engaged Russian and Polish Jewry, an area which had been heavily involved with the Shabbatai Zevi movement, and borrowed elements from Luria's Kabbalah, as well as some of the ideas put forth by Nathan of Gaza and Moses Hayyim Luzzatto. According to Scholem, “early Hasidism ‘neutralized’ the messianic concept in reaction to the Shabbatai Zevi fiasco, and replaced the idea of tikkun with *devekut* (cleaving to God, communion with the Deity) at the center of its theology.”²⁷ Hasidim claimed that humans were not to focus on the repair of the world as previously instructed by Luria; rather they were to focus on the elevation of their own souls.²⁸ The work of raising sparks was limited to the *tzaddikim*, holy men whose prayers and spiritual practices benefited Jewish people throughout the world. The *tzaddikim* implemented “special spiritual exercises ... to aid in the tikkun process. Prayers [as well as] Luria's nusah (liturgical pattern) [were] adopted; midnight prayer sessions, already employed by Luria's circle, [also] became popular.”²⁹ Luria's work was further augmented by the Hasidic master Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov (1745-1815) who theorized that “when the task of gathering the sparks nears completion, God will hasten the arrival of the final redemption by Himself collecting what remains of the holy sparks that went astray.”³⁰ The thread that unites these many different interpretations of Lurianic Kabbalah is the emphasis placed on the need to raise the sparks trapped in creation. The purpose

²⁶ Scholem, *Trends*, 328.

²⁷ Rosenthal, 2005, 229. See also Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 178-202.

²⁸ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 232.

²⁹ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 232.

³⁰ Howard Schwartz, “Social Action: Tikkun Olam: The Backstory.” *Reform Judaism Online*. (2009), <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1540>.

of liberating these sparks as previously noted is to dissolve the physical world by raising it back to the purely spiritual world. The perpetuation of this central aspect by all of these different interpretations of Lurianic Kabbalah is important because, as we shall see, it is not maintained by ARJ. The drastic difference between how the concept was originally used and how it is currently used by ARJ is one of the main impetuses for the question of why ARJ chose to adopt this term.

Hassidism never became a dominant movement in Judaism outside of the original Eastern European communities in which it first took root. Even in these communities the movement decayed “into a political instrument of reactionary forces”³¹ by the 1800s. With the decline of Hassidism, notes scholar Gilbert Rosenthal, the doctrine of *tikkun olam*, once so important, “disappeared almost entirely.”³² One of Lurianic Kabbalah’s few continuing contributions to mainstream Judaism was the liturgical changes made by Luria in the 1500s, such as the welcoming of the Sabbath bride during Friday night services. These came under attack, however, as reform-minded Jews in Germany such as Abraham Geiger (1810-874), Leopold Zunz (1794-1886) and Samuel Holdheim (1806-1960) strove to remove non-rational elements from the liturgy. By the early 1900s, few Jews outside of the yeshivot and few isolated Kabbalistic circles located in Safed were familiar with Luria’s teachings or theology, until the term *tikkun olam* reemerged in the middle of the twentieth century. I turn to that period now.

Now that we have some sense of what *tikkun olam* meant previously as popularized by Isaac Luria in the 1500s, we will look at how this term is currently understood by American Reform Judaism. By American Reform Judaism, both in this section specifically and throughout the paper, I am referring to the official position of American Reform Judaism as laid out by

³¹Scholem, *Trends*, 325.

³²Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 233. See also Jacobs, “History of ‘Tikkun Olam’,” 1-4.

official documents, and recognized theologians of the movement. I further divide American Reform Judaism into two segments: Classical Reform Judaism (1885 -1940) and Modern Reform Judaism (1940 – present). A major theological change occurred in ARJ during the 1940s. One of the largest contributing factors to this change was the Holocaust. This change played out in theological and liturgical alterations that took place during and after this crucial period in ARJ development. Please note that if I do not specify a particular segment of ARJ, it should be understood that the information provided pertains to American Reform Judaism as a whole. Finally, I recognize that it is extremely difficult to speak for all American Reform Jews, each of whom is a unique individual and interprets ARJ as she or he sees fit. For this reason, I have chosen to rely on official ARJ documents, publications and platforms in order to make my argument, as these documents represent the broad official position of the institution of American Reform Judaism.

Tikkun olam reemerged in the 1950 and 60s, at this time, the term became synonymous with the concept of social justice or action and remains so to this day.³³ This was a radical

³³ Fine, "Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif," 1. See also 65th General Assembly Union for Reform Judaism, "Adopted Resolution on Smart Growth," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, http://urj.org/about/union/governance/reso/?syspage=article&item_id=1991 (accessed June 10, 2010) and 116th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Resolution in Support of State, Provincial and Local Advocacy," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=israel&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010) and Eugene Borowitz, "A Jewish Theology of Social Action." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, (2008): 1-11. And Charles Kroloff, "Introduction." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, (2008): 1-2. and CCAR Board of Trustees, "CCAR Resolution on Arab Citizens of Israel," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=socialjustice&year=2001> (accessed June 10, 2010) and 102nd Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Domestic Agenda," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=agenda&year=1991> (accessed June 10, 2010) and 116th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Engagement with Israel," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=israel&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010) and 116th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Poverty in Israel," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=poverty&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010) and 109th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Resolution on Protecting and Restoring the Ecological Integrity of Headwaters Forest," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library,

departure from how the term was used in the past. As previously demonstrated even when other individuals or groups sought to use the Lurianic Kabbalah for their own purposes, they maintained the focus of retrieving the fallen sparks lost during the breaking of the vessels through the performance of *mitzvot*, the ultimate goal of which was to raise the physical world back to the level of the spiritual. In ARJ, however, this was not the case. Instead, *tikkun olam* was represented as a call to redeem the physical world in order to make the physical world a better place to live, *not* to raise the physical world back up to the spiritual. The focus and value of Isaac Luria's *tikkun olam* was raising the sparks trapped in creation in order to erase the physical world. In American Reform Judaism the focus and value of *tikkun olam* is the work of correcting the inequalities that exist in the physical world in order to make the physical world a better place. This should not be interpreted to mean that there is not a spiritual component to ARJ's understanding of the concept. The ultimate goal of *tikkun olam* has often been described in official rabbinic responsa as ushering in a messianic age of peace on earth. The focus of *tikkun olam*, however, remains on the material plane, and any benefits created by *tikkun olam* will be reaped in the physical world in which we live.

In its 1999 "Statement of Principles," The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), which is the formal decision making body of ARJ, stated that Reform Jews are "partners with God in *tikkun olam*, repairing the world." Because of this partnership, CCAR explained, Jews "are obligated to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor. Included in [this] obligation of *tikkun olam* is to protect the earth's natural resources; to redeem those in

<http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=forest&year=1998> (accessed June 10, 2010) and CCAR Board of Trustees, "Resolution on Social Justice in Israel," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=socialjustice&year=2001> (accessed June 10, 2010) and Rosenthal, "Tikkun Ha-olam," 1. and Jacobs, "The history of 'Tikkun olam,'" 1-4.

physical, economic, and spiritual bondage; and to welcome the stranger. In this regard, the Union has long advocated for providing programs for social progress.”³⁴ The 116th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Houston, TX dated March, 2005, documented some of the ways in which Reform Jews answer the call to participate in social justice, through personal charity, poetical action and “synagogue-based programs that provide direct help to needy persons: food, clothing, shelter, books, companionship, tutoring.”³⁵ While there are many ways in which to participate in social justice or *tikkun olam*, just as there are many ways in which to fight poverty, hunger and inequality, the main theme within ARJ remains the desire to assist those in need both here in America as well as abroad, especially in the State of Israel. Of course the concept of social justice is not static, but a fluid concept which has evolved over the years, from the moment that Jews first landed in the New World and needed to provide for their own poor to the present day and the importance of the global community.

By now, it should be obvious that ARJ’s understanding of *tikkun olam* as synonymous with social action differs greatly from that which was set down by Isaac Luria and his followers in the sixteenth century. Luria understood *tikkun olam* as a two-part process wherein a Jew purified his soul through the performance of *mitzvot* so that he could then assist, through the recitation of Sabbath prayers, in raising the material world back to the spiritual. As noted in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999, “In the latter part of the 20th Century, the Reform Movement appropriated this phrase to refer to acts of social justice which could help repair our broken

³⁴Central Conference of American Rabbis, “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism,” Central conference of American Rabbis, in the CCAR digital library, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=44&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

³⁵116th Annual Convention, “Resolution in Support of State.”

world.”³⁶ The shift from Luria’s view of *tikkun olam* to an understanding of *tikkun olam* as social action is a significant transition. Thus, the question arises: why did American Reform Judaism choose to adopt this term and then associate it with one of its fundamental principles, social justice? The next section will provide the background material necessary to answer that question.

The Structure of American Reform Judaism

This section will demonstrate: 1) Classical Reform Judaism, and by extension ARJ, rejected the Kabbalah and its doctrine as superstitious and inimical to a prosperous modern interpretation of Judaism; 2) the move to America proved to be indispensable to the development of Reform Judaism and its theology; 3) Social justice is and remains one of the founding principles of ARJ theology; and finally 4) *tikkun olam* was not associated with or used to indicate social justice until the 1950s. The term was not formally adopted into a platform until 1997.

The American Jewish Reform movement has its roots in post-Enlightenment Europe. During the Enlightenment, more than ever before, Jews were allowed out of the ghettos and into common Christian society. Here they were challenged in new ways regarding the acceptability of their religion. While Christianity had always maintained that it superseded Judaism with the coming of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the criticism of traditional Judaism generated by the Enlightenment was of a different nature. In the wake of the rationalism that gripped Europe during 17th and 18th centuries, many proponents of the Enlightenment claimed that Judaism was too backward a religion to continue into the modern era. “Even the most unprejudiced of the German enlighteners, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, had connected historical Judaism with an earlier state in the religious development of the human race, one which humanity had left

³⁶CCAR, “Principles for Reform Judaism.”

behind.”³⁷ Enlightened thinkers cited Judaism’s irrational and superstitious customs, such as its unwillingness to delay burial because of the “belief that between death and burial the body was subject to attack by Demons.”³⁸ They criticized Jews’ disharmonious synagogue services, where children ran up and down the aisles and men recited the prayers out of unison. And, as Lessing noted, enlightened thinkers did not believe that Judaism could meet the challenges of modernity intellectually. Judaism’s emphasis on tradition, they argued, was too limiting and indicative of an age long past. In response modern Jews such as Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), Israel Jacobson (1768-1828) and Samuel Hirsch (1815-1889) sought to explain and defend their religious adherence both through scholarly work and practical reforms.³⁹

The changes that reform minded Jews such as Jacobson and Hirsch first made were more aesthetic than substantive. They focused on Jewish worship, changing the length of services, promoting rules of decorum regulating behavior within the synagogue, and including group singing. Substantively the goal of theological efforts was to demonstrate that Judaism was “more rational,” and capable of answering the intellectual challenges of the modern day. Jewish Reformers were interested in presenting a view of Judaism which they felt was more in keeping with the true spirit of the religion, convincing Jews considering leaving Judaism to remain within the tradition as well as making Judaism better accepted by its Christian neighbors.⁴⁰ A classic example of this ideological shift is expressed by one of the most highly influential theologians of nineteenth-century Classical Reform Judaism, Rabbi Abraham Geiger (1810-1974). He wrote:

³⁷Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 19.

³⁸Meyer, *Response*, 15.

³⁹Meyer, *Response*, 30, 68.

⁴⁰Meyer, *Response*, 69.

The core is the pure faith in God. At a time when unbelief and superstition, idolatry, and nature worship were rampant everywhere, this core had to be enveloped in a mass of ceremonies, so that the pure spiritual treasure would not be crushed. But now spring has long since come into the life of mankind. All the civilized world has discarded primitive idol worship and the concepts of God and His worship have been refined. Hence, the spirit of Judaism now no longer needs this rough mantel; on the contrary...it must shed it in order to sow the seeds of its ideals that they may bear fruit in the total development of mankind.⁴¹

By asserting this view, Geiger rejected the Talmud and the practice of the *halakha*, Jewish law that is based on rabbinic interpretation of the Torah, and long-standing custom. Instead, Geiger insisted that Jews should focus on the ethical aspects of Judaism and on personal faith. This shifted the focus of Classical Reform Judaism away from the study of the Talmud and the emphasis on rabbinic interpretation and placed it on personal faith and personal engagement with the Torah itself.

As part of its efforts to demonstrate that Judaism was rational, Classical Reform Judaism also rejected the Kabbalah; Abraham Geiger and Heinrich Graetz (1817-1981) specifically targeted Lurianic Kabbalah, which they claimed was superstitious, irrational and of pagan influence.⁴² For example, the refusal to delay burial because of the fear that demons would attack the body was based on a Kabbalistic idea. Scholars such as Menahem Mendel Steinhardt (1720-1776), David Friedlander (1750-1834), and Soloman Formstecher (1808-1889) attempted to

⁴¹Abraham Geiger, "On Renouncing Judaism "in *Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism* , ed. Max Weiner (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962).

⁴²Meyer, *Response*, 38,45,71. See also Scholem, *Trends*, 251.

expunge any “references to Kabbalistic doctrines,”⁴³ such as Luria’s traditional “kabbalat Shabbat” prayer, *Lecha Dodi*, which welcomed the Sabbath bride.⁴⁴ Scholem notes that for men like Steinhardt, Graetz and Geiger, Friedlander, Formstecher and Steinschneider, the Kabbalah “epitomized everything that was opposed to their own ideas and to the outlook which they hoped to make dominant in modern Judaism.”⁴⁵

To summarize, as Scholem notes, the founders and most famous proponents of the Classical Reform movement in Germany were diametrically opposed to the Kabbalah, specifically the Lurianic Kabbalah. They worked diligently to distance Judaism from all aspects of what they deemed a degrading influence. The scholarship these men produced colored the Reform conversations that were taking place both in Germany and later in America; the hermeneutic lens that these men adopted and subsequently pass on to later generations of Jews is part of the reason why the idea of *tikkun olam* all but disappeared from American Reform dialogue.

In some cities, Jews, prior to the Enlightenment, were restricted to specialized locations called ghettos. Even after the Enlightenment, which allowed Jews some freedom of movement, Jews remained predominantly within the ghettos. Within each ghetto there was generally one synagogue whose chief rabbis governed the community according to Jewish law and answered to the government for the community as a whole. These communities were tightly controlled by the state in which they were located. For example, in Berlin additional private services held outside the official community synagogue were prohibited under the law of 1750, which

⁴³Meyer, *Response*, 45.

⁴⁴Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 118-157.

⁴⁵Scholem, *Trends*, 1-2.

restricted worship to the official synagogue.⁴⁶ The changes that the reformers sought to make, both aesthetic and substantive, were often blocked by traditional practitioners by appealing to the European rulers and courts to prevent such reforms. These appeals were more often than not successful. European governments, such as the one headed by Frederick William III in 1821, often feared that the changes proposed by reformers would make Judaism more attractive to Christians, or at the very least lead to a rapprochement between Christianity and Judaism. Because of these concerns European governments were inclined to side with the traditionalist and prevent the Reformers from making changes. In 1823 William III authorized the closing of the Beer temple, the one Reform synagogue in Berlin. The minister of the interior noted that if such changes were allowed the results could be disastrous for Prussian society.⁴⁷ The difficulties that the Classical Reform movement encountered in Germany and Western Europe leads me to my second point, that the move to America proved to be extremely helpful to the development of Reform Judaism and its theology.

The first Jews to make their home in what would eventually be the United States of America were fleeing Portuguese rule after the recapture of Brazil by Portugal in 1654. Maintaining a traditional Jewish way of life in America was challenging in ways unknown to the Jews of Western and Eastern Europe. The longstanding communities they had left behind included rabbis, *battei din* (Jewish courts) and *schochtim* (ritual slaughters), all necessary for traditional Jewish life. Jewish immigrants living without such institutional supports often struggled to adhere to Jewish law and customs. Individuals and families had to adapt, and were

⁴⁶Meyer, *Response*, 43. See also Daniel Jeremy Silver, *History of Judaism in Europe and the New World* Vol II (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 233.

⁴⁷Meyer, *Response*, 52.

left to determine *how* to adapt on their own. “Much like Jews of today, their interpretations of what it meant to be Jewish depended on individual beliefs, style and commitments.”⁴⁸

In addition to losing traditional institutional Jewish support, American Jewish communities did not have the government recognition or oversight that European Jewish communities did. Without the legally enforced restrictions that limited their choices in Eastern and Western Europe, American Jews were free to quit any synagogue with which they disagreed and find one with which they agreed. This severely limited the synagogue’s ability to effectively penalize members who refused to act in accordance with official doctrine, such as failing to keep the Sabbath or eating non-kosher foods. Initially, the threat of being barred from the local Jewish cemetery was enough to keep many Jews within the traditional fold. As more synagogues arose, however, Jews soon realized that adherence to any rules set by such communities was entirely voluntary. Should a Jew find himself not in agreement with how a synagogue conducted its business, it was possible to stop going, to find another, or even to start one of his own. Thus, the unique situation that Jews encountered in the New World allowed for heretofore unknown levels of self-determinism. It also provided the necessary conditions for the growth and spread of Classical Reform Judaism while at the same time presenting barriers to the practice of traditional Judaism.

Many of the new immigrants to the United States had been involved with the Classical Reform movement in Germany; some had even traveled to America for the specific purpose of being able to practice their religion without governmental interference.⁴⁹ These new men and women brought with them the Reform ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as Mendelssohn and

⁴⁸ Norman H Finkelstein, *American Jewish History* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2007), 36.

⁴⁹ Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 36.

Jacobson, Graetz and Geiger. Attempts at reform in American Jewish practices started as early as 1824 with a “local rebellion in Charleston’s’ only synagogue,”⁵⁰ and continued with the influx of reform-minded Jewish immigrants. But the movement was not universally well received in America. More traditional practitioners rejected many or all of the reforms suggested by the new arrivals. Congregations pulled apart and regrouped around ideologies. Even within Reform congregations, the amount of reform varied widely. Some reformers merely wanted to shorten services and add English. Others, however, were in favor of fundamentally reworking Jewish theology, including changing some of the prayers that were recited during services.⁵¹

While not without challenges of its own, the unique environment that the Jews encountered upon arriving in the New World was extremely beneficial to the growth and spread of the Reform movement. Without the hurdles as well as the deeply entrenched traditions they faced in Western Europe, American Jews were able to experiment more easily with prayer books, synagogue services and even theological deviations. One of the greatest benefits of the New World also posed a unique challenge for American Reform Judaism. Because of the ease with which new congregations were created and the wide range of beliefs there was a distinct lack of cohesion among American Reform Jews.

In a bid for stability and uniformity in relation to theology, Classical Reform rabbis from throughout the United States met in Pittsburgh on November 19, 1885, to determine a list of principles to which American Reform Jews would adhere. This meeting was declared a continuation of the Philadelphia Conference of 1869, which was itself seen as a continuation of the German Reform conferences of 1841 and 1846. At the 1885 meeting in Pittsburgh, the

⁵⁰Finkelstein, *American Jewish History*, 36.

⁵¹Sarna, *American Judaism*, 85.

Classical Reform rabbis adopted a set of governing principles for the Classical Reform movement, which would become known as the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. The last of these eight principles stated:

In full accordance with the spirit of the Mosaic legislation, which strives to regulate the relations between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve, on the basis of justice and righteousness, the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society.⁵²

This brings me to my third point: social justice is and remains one of the founding principles of ARJ theology.

Social justice, as understood by these rabbis, was intended to assist in closing the gap between rich and poor and to assist those in need. This understanding is echoed in the definitions currently offered today by ARJ regarding social justice and how it is to be understood and practiced. Much of the importance of social justice during the late 1800s and early 1900s was spurred on by the needs of newly arrived Jewish immigrants. Examples of such aid include “[free] matzot at Passover, coal for the winter, burial of the dead and education of poor children.”⁵³ Humanitarian organizations, such as the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Orphan society, the Henry Street settlement, and B’nai B’rith, sprang up throughout America to provide social services to the growing Jewish population. After the declaration of the Pittsburgh Platform, social justice remained at the forefront of the work of ARJ. Between 1889 and 1972, 214 resolutions were passed by the Central Conference of

⁵²1885 Pittsburgh Conference, “The Pittsburgh Platform Declaration of Principles,” 1885 Pittsburgh Conference, In CCAR Digital Library, (accessed June 11, 2010)

⁵³Finkelstein, *American Jewish History*, 60.

American Rabbis that dealt in part or in whole with the subject of social justice.⁵⁴ In the year 1937, the CCAR issued the Columbus Platform. This platform was offered in the spirit of the New Deal by the presiding rabbis in reaction to changes in the American culture shaped by events such as World War I and the Great Depression. These cataclysmic events helped to support the argument for Social Liberalism which argued that liberalism, which championed the ideas of liberty and equality, ought to also include social justice through political action. The Columbia Platform officially named “social justice” as one of its three key ethical points along with peace and ethics:

Social justice. Judaism seeks the attainment of a just society by the application of its teachings to the economic order, to industry and commerce, and to national and international affairs. It aims at the elimination of man-made misery and suffering, of poverty and degradation, of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife. It advocates the promotion of harmonious relations between warring classes on the basis of equity and justice, and the creation of conditions under which human personality may flourish. It pleads for the safeguarding of childhood against exploitation. It champions the cause of all who work and of their right to an adequate standard of living, as prior to the rights of property. Judaism emphasizes the duty of charity, and strives for a social order which will protect men against the material disabilities of old age, sickness and unemployment.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Central Conference of American Rabbis, “Resolutions Adopted by the CCAR” Central Conference of American Rabbis, In CCAR Digital Library, <http://ccarnet.org/> (Accessed June 11, 2010)

⁵⁵Central Conference of American Rabbis, “The Columbus Platform The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism,” Central Conference of American Rabbis, in CCAR Digital Library, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=40&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

Unarguably social justice was one of the founding principles of American Reform Judaism, enshrined in the Pittsburgh Platform and perpetuated by subsequent platforms, rabbinic responsa and resolutions. This commitment has been maintained by ARJ to the present day. The most recent platform adopted in 1999 by the CCAR also lists social justice, using the term *tikkun olam*, as one of its main principles.

What is missing prior to 1999 is the actual term *tikkun olam*. This omission brings me to my final point: while social justice is indisputably a founding principle of ARJ, the term *tikkun olam* was not associated with or used to indicate social justice until the 1950s and was not used in an official platform until 1997. In ARJ today, however, *tikkun olam* is the preferred terminology when speaking about social justice, as demonstrated in the 1997 and 1999 platforms as well as the multitude of rabbinic resolutions and responsa. This is significant because, as previously demonstrated, ARJ does not utilize the original definition of *tikkun olam*; rather they have reworked the term almost entirely. Why was this particular term chosen? Why choose a term only to change its meaning almost entirely? I suggest that this change did not occur simply because the meaning of the term was attractive to ARJ; but rather the term was adopted because of its historically Jewish lineage, a lineage that could be imparted to social justice more broadly.

Tikkun olam was first introduced in the Miami Platform on June 24, 1997. The Platform issued a statement in which *tikkun olam* was equated with the repair of the world and named a “historic commitment” of the Jewish people.

[ARJ is] confident that Reform Judaism's synthesis of tradition and modernity and its historic commitment to *tikkun olam* [repairing the world], can make a unique and positive contribution to the Jewish state, we resolve to intensify our efforts to inform and educate

Israelis about the values of Reform Judaism. We call upon Reform Jews everywhere to dedicate their energies and resources to the strengthening of an indigenous Progressive Judaism in *Medinat Yisrael*.⁵⁶

It is important to note what is and is not being mentioned here. While *tikkun olam* is expressly mentioned, no connection to Luria or the Lurianic Kabbalah is made. The Platform as a whole focuses on the State of Israel and Reform Judaism's place in relation to the newly created state. *Tikkun olam* is called a "historic commitment," implying a lengthy presence of the term within ARJ, despite the fact that this is the term's first appearance within an official Platform. No explanation is offered as to why *tikkun olam* is now considered a historical commitment, nor is any explanation of the term itself offered beyond the translation of the Hebrew.

The phrase *tikkun olam* next appears is in the 1999 Pittsburgh Platform and its commentary:

Tikun Olam, *repairing the world*. In the Aleinu prayer, dating from the Talmudic period, we ask God's help *I'taken olam b'malchut Shaddai*, in repairing the world through the sovereignty of the Almighty, reflecting a God who established divine rule in the world through the *mitzvot*. The phrase also has kabbalistic overtones, echoing Isaac Luria's belief that shortly after God created light, the vessels of the universe proved unable to contain it and shattered (*shevirat ha-kelim*, the breaking of the vessels), scattering the light through the physical world. To effect a repair of the world (*tikun olam*), he believed human beings need to fulfill the *mitzvot* which bring us into contact

⁵⁶ Central Conference of American Rabbis, "The Miami Platform Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform," Central Conference of American Rabbis, in CCAR Digital Library, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=42&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

with that part of the natural world connected to the *mitzvah* (e.g., Shabbat candles or wine, a Pesach table, a suffering human being). Fulfilling that *mitzvah* liberates the spark (*nitzotz*) of light contained in the broken vessel (*klipah*) and the light returns to its source. In the latter part of the 20th Century, the Reform Movement appropriated this phrase to refer to acts of social justice which could help repair our broken world.⁵⁷

There is a stark difference between how the term was introduced in 1997 and how it appears here. Here we have an extensive explanation of the term's meaning as well as recognition of *tikkun olam*'s connection to Isaac Luria. Luria's work is simplified and interpreted through a metaphysical lens, making it more compatible with ARJ theology. ARJ also acknowledges that it has "appropriated," this term and associated with the repair of the physical world, specifically social justice.

The Reform movement's adaption of *tikkun olam*, which focuses on the repair of the physical world rather than on elevating the physical to the spiritual realm, remains the most radical departure from what Isaac Luria taught to date. Given Classical Reform Judasim's historical animosity toward Luria and the Kabbalah, as well as the absence of the term in early ARJ documents, it is puzzling why they would choose to adopt the term in the first place. The next section will attempt to explain why American Reform Judaism chose to adopt a Kabbalistic term, *tikkun olam* and adapt it to its own needs.

Why ARJ Chose to Adopt the Term *Tikkun olam*

⁵⁷Central Conference of American Rabbis, "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism," Central Conference of American Rabbis, In CCAR Digital Library, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=44&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

As we have seen, the phrase *tikkun olam* is absent from all Classical Reform documents. The term first enters into ARJ's religious dialogue, specifically in the works of Fackenheim, Borowitz and others, in the 1950s and 1960s. The term does not appear in an official document until the Miami Platform in 1997 and then again in 1999. Even in the short time between the Miami Platform of 1997 and the Pittsburgh Platform of 1999, we see demonstrable evolution of the term and its understanding within ARJ. These changes reflect an ongoing shift in ARJ thinking that began to take place during the 1950 and 1960s. Rabbi Daniel M. Bronstein notes in his essay "Reform Judaism and Mitzvot: A Historical Overview" that "in the 1950s, an increasing number of reform rabbis attempted to create a theological framework for religious practice."⁵⁸ During this time, in reaction to concern over the losses caused by the Holocaust, fear over Jewish assimilation in America, and the growing importance of Jewish unity, ARJ began to move away from the ethic-centric Classical Reform Judaism of the nineteenth century and back toward a more conservative understanding of Judaism. Because of this shift, ritual and even Talmudic law began to play an increasingly important role in ARJ, which was acknowledged in the 1976 San Francisco Platform:

Our founders stressed that the Jew's ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: creating a Jewish home centered on family devotion; lifelong study; private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and

⁵⁸ Daniel M. Bronstein, "Reform Judaism and Mitzvot: A Historical Overview." in *Duties of the Soul The Role of the Commandments in Liberal Judaism*, ed. Niles Goldstein and Peter Knoble (New York: UAH Press, 1999)3-19.

community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence.⁵⁹

It is partially this desire to create a modern, functioning theological framework concomitant with the devastation of the Holocaust and continuing concerns of Jewish assimilation that led ARJ to make several fundamental changes. Such changes included an expansion in synagogue building and association, a dramatic increase in Jewish education with an increased focus on Jewish theology, and to a push for building Jewish solidarity.⁶⁰ I suggest that this shift also led to the adaption of the term *tikkun olam*. By associating social justice, one of ARJ's founding principles, with *tikkun olam* ARJ was able to situate social justice in a historically Jewish context, thus establishing Jewish historical continuity and authenticity.

The first verifiable modern use of the term *tikkun olam* is found in the 1950's. The phrase was used by Shlomo Bardin. Bardin founded the Brandeis Camp Institute, a camp for Jewish American children. The educational focus of the camp was organized around what Brandeis believed was the central tenet of Reform Judaism, "*l'taken olam b'malchut shaddai*" or "to establish/fix the world under the kingdom of God."⁶¹ Bardin's use of *tikkun olam* is one of the first instances where the term was associated with the importance of healing the physical plane rather than raising the physical to the level of the spiritual plane. Bardin started the camp in order to "safeguard against assimilation of young American Jews by making 'the great ethical

⁵⁹Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective," Central Conference of American Rabbis, In CCAR Digital Library, http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=41&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

⁶⁰Sarna, *American Judaism*, 279-230.

⁶¹Alan Samuel, "Jewish Ethics and a Synagogue's Executive Director" (2005): 1-2.

heritage of Judaism' relevant to them."⁶² Here we see the impetus to focus on Jewish education, with the specific goal of Jewish identity building.

The immensely influential theologian and scholar Rabbi Emil Fackenheim (1916-2003) continued to develop the concept of *tikkun olam* in this vein. After being arrested by the Nazis on November 9, 1938, Fackenheim and his brother escaped from Germany to Britain where his parents later joined them. His older Brother Ernst-Alexander, however, refused to leave Germany and was killed in the Holocaust. Fackenheim was heavily influenced by the Holocaust and often wrote with this tragedy in mind. The Holocaust provided one of the main impetuses for the theological shift in ARJ thinking. All Jews, American Reform Jews among them, were concerned not only with the huge loss of life, but also the loss of Jewish knowledge and culture which was destroyed along with those who died in the Holocaust. For many years after the Holocaust Jews feared that the Yiddish language and culture would be lost entirely. Similarly, many traditional Jewish practices maintained by the Russian and Slavic Jewish population were lost with the extermination of entire communities. Because of this ARJ shifted away from the Classical Reform thinking of theologians like Geiger, who argued for the removal of all *halakhic* practices in favor of ethical standards and pure faith. Tradition, once conceived of as backward and limiting in ARJ, began to be seen as important in order to maintain Judaism after so much had been lost. Again, as noted in the San Francisco Platform, "The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living."⁶³ It was with these sentiments in mind that Fackenheim

⁶²American Jewish University " American Jewish University formerly University of Judaism and Brandeis-Bardin Institute" <http://www.ajula.edu/Content/ContentUnit.asp?CID=141&u=6784&t=0> (accessed June 11, 2010)

⁶³CCAR, "A Centenary Perspective."

claimed, “For Jews to effect *tikkun*, they must recover Jewish tradition, that is, the word of God for religious Jews and the world of man for secular Jews.”⁶⁴

The concept of *tikkun* that Fackenheim introduces here is a cross between that which Luria presented in the 1500s and that found in the 1997 and 1999 Platforms. Fackenheim does not rule out the importance of the spiritual world, but he joins it with the importance of healing the physical. For Fackenheim, both causes fall under the heading of *tikkun olam*.

Fackenheim’s goal is to make sense of what it means to be Jewish after the crisis of the Holocaust, just as Luria sought to understand what it meant to be Jewish after the crisis of the expulsion from Spain. Fackenheim allows for the incorporation of the concept of social justice when he speaks of recovering the “world of man for secular Jews.” Fackenheim stressed the need to continue Jewish life and culture to avoid giving Hitler a posthumous victory. It is this latter focus which is emphasized in the Miami and Pittsburgh Platforms.

In “Historicity, Rupture, and Tikkun Olam (“mending the World”) From Rosenzweig Beyond Heidegger,”⁶⁵ a chapter from his book *To Mend the World*, Fackenheim lays out his thinking for his re-association of *tikkun olam* with the physical plane. For Fackenheim, the Holocaust takes the place of the crisis of the shattering of the vessels. This new rupture requires a new *tikkun*, which Fackenheim calls the “*tikkun* of the Holocaust.” Or put another way, the original purpose of *tikkun olam*, according to Luria, was to raise the physical world back to the level of the spiritual. The need to do so was caused by Adam’s sin and the shattering of the *sefirot*. Fackenheim says that the crisis of the Holocaust superseded the crisis of the shattering of

⁶⁴ Rosenthal, “Tikkun ha-olam,” 236. See also Emil Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*. (New York: Schocken, 1982) 250-313. *Fackenheim’s books is based of his earlier essays published in the 1950s and 1960s collected and reprinted in the book *Quest for Past and Future*.

⁶⁵Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*, 147.

the Vessels, so what is needed is no longer a spiritual response but a material one. The Holocaust was a crisis that took place on the material plane. Countless human lives and traditions were lost due to human fear and hatred. For Fackenheim this new *tikkun* must therefore be a human material response that focuses on the recovery of Jewish tradition as well as a repair of Christian-Jewish religions.

Fackenheim was also highly influential on other conversations taking place in regard to *tikkun olam*. Eugene B. Borowitz (born 1924), whom Charles Kroloff, a past president of CCAR, identifies as “the preeminent theologian of our movement,”⁶⁶ built on Fackenheim’s ideas in his own work on Jewish theology and Jewish ethics. Borowitz discussed the meaning of *tikkun* in multiple essays including, “Rethinking the Reform Jewish Theory of Social Action” in 1980, “Exploring Jewish Ethics” in 1990, and again in 2008 when he laid out a functioning theology for social justice. In his 1980 essay, Borowitz addressed the problems with social justice in the wake of the Holocaust. Previously, Borowitz explained, ARJ’s belief in social justice rested on the belief that people were basically good. Jews spoke of “the perfectibility of humankind, believing that if [they] could change the situation in which people functioned—the educational, the occupational, the nutritional—what was inside them would respond by creating goodness.”⁶⁷ Here Borowitz echoed the San Francisco Platform which states, “Previous generations of Reform Jews had unbound confidence in humanity’s potential for good. Early Reform Jews, newly admitted to general society and seeing in this the evidence of a growing universalism, regularly spoke of Jewish purpose in terms of Jewry’s service to humanity.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶Kroloff, “Introduction,” 1-2.

⁶⁷Eugene Borowitz, “Rethinking the Reform Jewish Theory of Social Action” *The Journal of Reform Judaism* Vol. XXVII, 4, (1980): 2.

⁶⁸CCAR, “A Centenary Perspective.”

Borowitz explained that many Jews understood this desire to perfect humanity as the equivalent of Liberal politics, and the desire to assert the rights of the underprivileged in the face of entrenched power. Such views were not merely idealistic but also practical for a minority with a long history of oppression. In the face of the devastation of the Holocaust, however, this optimistic view of humanity was called into question, and along with it social justice. In response, Borowitz notes, Jews turned inward, searching their ancestry in order to protect and promote their Jewish identity. Again the San Francisco Platform states, “In recent years we have become freshly conscious of the virtues of pluralism and the values of particularism. The Jewish people in its unique way of life validates its own worth.”⁶⁹ Being Jewish was now emphasized over being liberal or American. Universalism was no longer a sufficient context for the perpetuation of Jewish social justice, argued Borowitz. Instead Jews now wished to focus on the particularistic aspects of social justice rooted in a Jewish context.⁷⁰ In order to root social justice in a specifically Jewish context, however, a new understanding of social justice was required.

Borowitz presented his solution to this problem in his 2008 essay, “Jewish Theology of Social Action.” Borowitz claimed, “today’s *tikun olam* has little to or nothing to do with halakhic adjustments or mystical intentions. Rather, it summons us to Jewish ethical duty, most often of a universal cast—but in keeping with our intensified postmodern particularity; *it legitimates this remnant of modernity by cloaking it in a classic Jewish term.*”⁷¹ By incorporating the term *tikkun olam*, ARJ was able to tie social justice into a distinctly Jewish context. By linking *tikkun olam* with God, however loosely, it raised the performance of social justice above that of universalism to a vocation advocated by the divine.

⁶⁹CCAR, “A Centenary Perspective.”

⁷⁰Borowitz, “Rethinking Social Action,” 5.

⁷¹Eugene Borowitz, “Renewing the Covenant” (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1991) Emphasis is mine.

But let us turn back a moment to the 1980s, and Borowitz's original query of how social action was to be perceived in the wake of the Holocaust. In 1986 the magazine *Tikkun* was founded by Nan Fink Gefen and Michael Lerner, who remains the editor-in-chief. While not explicitly part of the American Reform Movement, the magazine styled itself as the voice of liberal Judaism. According to the magazine's founding editorial statement, it was formed in reaction to and because of the highly charged atmosphere of the civil rights movement of the sixties, the feminist movement of the sixties and seventies, and psychological studies of workers in the 1970s and 1980s. *Tikkun* magazine advocated the role of social justice or *tikkun olam* in repairing the damaged social fabric of American and the world.⁷² The image of *tikkun olam* that *Tikkun* presented focused on the physical, and the use of social justice to combat inequalities within the world.

It does not require a large stretch of the imagination to see how these ideas, those in *Tikkun* as well as those voiced by Fackenheim and Borowitz, might be picked up by CCAR and used to answer the problem raised by the San Francisco Platform. It was only after these conversations taking place in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that the CCAR issued the 1997 Miami Platform in which *tikkun olam* was presented as a "historic commitment." As previously noted, the term is used only in passing; no explanation of its meaning is given beyond a translation of the Hebrew. This implies that the rabbis who formulated this platform assumed that their audience would already be familiar with the term and its meaning. This familiarity would necessarily have developed as a result of the conversations taking place in publications like *Tikkun*, *To Mend the World*, and "Rethinking the Reform Jewish Theory of Social Action" as

⁷²Michael Lerner, "The Founding Editorial Statment TIKKUN: To Mend, Repair and Transform the World." *Tikkun*, (1986): 3-13.

well as in religious journals such as *The Journal of the Central Conference of American Rabbis* because, as I have demonstrated, the term was all but nonexistent in mainstream Judaism prior to these conversations.

In 1999, a more detailed understanding of the term was provided that officially linked the term back to Isaac Luria's understanding and use of the concept. This is not to imply that ARJ adopted this understanding, but rather that they acknowledged the Jewish heritage of the word, as a logical step toward anchoring social justice in a Jewish context. The appeal of the modern age having waned, and Social liberalism having proved insufficient to ARJ to surmount the "frequently corrosive aspects of a popular culture too often filled with violence and degrading language and imagery," ARJ required a different approach to maintain one of the cornerstones of their movement. ARJ "looked to Jewish learning and practice to elevate the lives of contemporary Jews to the plain of holiness."⁷³ The reason that American Reform Judaism chose to adopt *tikkun olam* and then associate it with one of its founding principles, social justice, was to provide a historically Jewish context for social justice in a time when the liberal philosophical basis of social justice was no longer sufficient.

It is curious, however, as to why ARJ chose to adopt *this* term to situate social justice within Judaism given Classical Reform Judaism's antagonistic history with the Kabbalah. Despite such historical antagonism, the term has become immensely popular within the movement. As we have seen it has replaced the use of the term social justice in ARJ Platforms, resolutions and responsa. It was the title and one of the main chapters within Fackenheim's book, *To Mend the World* as well as the name of the popular activist magazine, *Tikkun*. What is it about this particular term that is so appealing for ARJ purposes? I would like to take a

⁷³CCAR, "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism."

moment to speculate, based on an extrapolation of the data presented here, on why the term *tikkun olam* has proved so popular. *Tikkun olam* is the language of crisis. More specifically *tikkun olam* is presented as the means by which Jews are to survive and even flourish during a time of crisis. *Tikkun olam*'s very existence and its original purpose were formed out of the cosmogonic crisis of the shattering of the *sefirot*. *Tikkun olam* provided a way to rectify this crisis, a way back toward the spiritual world that *ein-sof* originally intended. This theology was developed by Isaac Luria during one of the most severe historical moments of crisis for Jews prior to the Holocaust, the Spanish Expulsion of the Jews in 1492. Luria offered *tikkun olam* as a way to empower the Jewish people, both as a community and as individuals, by offering them a role in the salvation of the world through the practice of the Jewish traditions. The term was resurrected and popularized once more by Emil Fackenheim, who used *tikkun olam* to advocate for a return to Jewish tradition and the rapprochement of Jews and Christians in the wake of the greatest crisis the Jews experience in the modern era, the Holocaust.

Tikkun olam's popularity during these crisis points is possibly due to the fact that *tikkun olam* has the ability to refocus Jews on a sense of unity, in a time when assimilation might seem especially tempting. *Tikkun olam*, presented both in its Lurianic form and in the form eventually adopted by ARJ, focuses on the importance of and need to maintain Jewish traditions and community. By turning inward and focusing on the community, this provides purpose and meaning to individual Jewish lives in a time of bleak self doubt. Luria offered *tikkun olam* as a reason for Jews to maintain the Jewish traditions in the face of the Jewish expulsion and continued persecution of Jews throughout Europe. Fackenheim offered the goal of *tikkun olam* as a way forward in a world devastated by the Holocaust.

To conclude, the purpose of this paper was to contextualize the use of *tikkun olam* in American Reform Judaism in order to determine why this movement chose to appropriate the kabbalistic term *tikkun olam* and equate it with social justice. ARJ was initially adverse to the Kabbalah and its doctrine. The Kabbalah was viewed by Classical Reform as indicative of the type of Judaism from which the reformers strove to distance themselves. In 1997 and then in 1999 ARJ reversed this trend and appropriated the term *tikkun olam*, which it acknowledged in 1999 as rooted in Lurianic Kabbalah. *Tikkun olam* was associated with the concept of social justice in order to provide historical Jewish authority for this seminal principle of ARJ. The adoption of the term coincides with the later stages of an ongoing conversation regarding social justice, liberalism and new concepts of *tikkun olam* that began in the wake of the Holocaust. These conversations expressed dissatisfaction with the ideas of liberalism and innate human goodness—current ideas undergirding the concept of social justice. Because of this dissatisfaction and a desire, in the face of so much Jewish loss, to turn inward and seek to strengthen the Jewish tradition, ARJ chose to find a new way in which to advocate for social justice in a distinctly Jewish manner. The use of the term *tikkun olam* was appropriated for this purpose, and ultimately linked back to Luria in order to better substantiate this claim.

Future research on this topic would involve exploring the connection and impact of the establishment the Kabbalah Center on the increasing popularity of the term *tikkun olam* within mainstream Judaism. The Kabbalah Center is a nondenominational entity that became popular in the 1960s, a period in which a great deal of religious experimentation took place in the United States. The center focuses on the mystical teachings of the Kabbalah promising its members a path to personal fulfillment and joy. I wonder if the inclusion of a more mystical flavor—the

link to Luria and Kabbalistic mysticism—might also have been introduced into ARJ in order to induce those Jews seeking religious fulfillment in other religions, such as Buddhism or the Kabbalah Center, to return to their Jewish roots. From what research I have done in that direction I believe that it would be very difficult to prove that the decision in ARJ to make the connection to Luria was made with the expressed purpose of staving off Jewish exploration of other religions. I maintain a belief, however, that it did provide a substantial contributing factor.

Finally, what is at stake here is that the desire to adopt *tikkun olam* by ARJ indicates a shift in religious thinking due to situations such as the Holocaust and the limitations of liberalism which are not unique to Judaism. While the Holocaust holds a special place within Judaism, Jews are not the only religious community shaken by the events that took place in the concentration camps. Many of the world's religions and philosophies have struggled to deal with the theological question of how such a tragedy could occur. Universalism in particular, which emphasizes the essentially good nature of people, was called into question. For ARJ universalism ultimately proved unequal to the task; other religions equally steeped in universalistic ideology may face the same challenges as ARJ. In such cases these religions may also turn toward historically sacred language within their own traditions, language that may lend itself toward dealing with crisis. Just as *tikkun olam* lends its historical and religious gravitas to the action of social justice while at the same time offering hope and a way forward, similarly useful language might also be found in other traditions. Scholars can use the information presented here to look for similar trends, such as a shift toward a more conservative understandings of the religion or a resurrection and reinterpretation of ideas or terms deeply

rooted within that particular religious context. These might be indicators of similar theological repositioning.

Bibliography

102nd Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. "Domestic Agenda." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. June 1991. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=agenda&year=1991> (accessed June 10, 2010).

109th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis . "Resolution on Protecting and Restoring the Ecological Integrity of Headwaters Forest ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. June 1998. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=forest&year=1998> (accessed June 10, 2010).

116th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. "Engagment with Israel ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. March 2005. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=israel&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010).

—. "Poverty in Israel ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. March 2005. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=poverty&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010).

—. "Resolution in Support of State, Provincial and Local Advocacy." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. March 2005. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=advocacy&year=2005> (accessed June 10, 2010).

1885 Pittsburgh Conference. "The Pittsburgh Platform Declaration of Principles ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. November 1885. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=39&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

65th General Assembly Union for Reform Judasim. "Adopted Resolution on Smart Growth." *Union for Reform Judasim*. December 1999. http://urj.org/about/union/governance/reso/?syspage=article&item_id=1991 (accessed June 10, 2010).

American Jewish University . *American Jewish University formerly University of Judaism and Brandeis-Bardin Institute*. 2010. <http://www.ajula.edu/Content/ContentUnit.asp?CID=141&u=6784&t=0> (accessed June 11, 2010).

Borowitz, Eugene. "A Jewish Theology of Social Action." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, 2008: 1-11.

—. *Renewing the Covenant*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1991.

--"Rethinking the Reform Jewish Theory of Social Action." *The Journal of Reform Judasim Vol. XXVII, 4*, 1980: 1-19.

Bronstein, Daniel M. "Reform Judasim and Mitzvot: A Historical Overview." In *Duties of the Soul The Role of the Commandments in Liberal Judasim*, by Niles Goldstein and Peter Knoble, 3-19. New York: UAHC Press, 1999.

CCAR Board of Trustees. "CCAR Resolution on Arab Citizens of Israel." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. June 10, 2009. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=arab&year=2009Ju> (accessed June 10, 2010).

—. "Resolution on Social Justice in Israel ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. June 2001. <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/resodisp.pl?file=socialjustice&year=2001> (accessed June 10, 2010).

Central Conference of American Rabbis . "Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis* . 1976. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=41&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

—. "The Columbus Platform The Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis* . 1937. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=40&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

--"1999 Pittsburgh Convention A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. May 1999. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=44&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

—. "A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. May 1999. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=44&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

—. "The Miami Platform Reform Judaism & Zionism: A Centenary Platform ." *Central Conference of American Rabbis*. June 24, 1997. http://ccarnet.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=42&pge_prg_id=4687&pge_id=1656 (accessed June 11, 2010).

Fackenheim. *To Mend the World*. New York: Schocken, 1982.

Fine, Lawrence. *Physician of the Soul Healer of the Cosmos*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

--"Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif in Contemporary Jewish Thought." In *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judasim: Intellect in Quest of Understanding--Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox, Vol. 4*, by ed. Jacob Neusner et al, 35-55. Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1989.

Finkelstein, Norman H. *American Jewish History*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2007.

Geiger, Abraham. "On Renouncing Judasim." In *Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judasim*, by Max Weiner. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962.

Jacobs, Jill. "The History of "Tikkun Olam"." *Zeek A Jewish Journal of Thought and Culture*, 2007: <http://www.zeek.net/706tohu/>.

Kroloff, Charles. "Introduction." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, 2008: 1-2.

Lerner, Michael. "The Founding Editorial Statment TIKKUN: To Mend, Repair and Transform the World." *Tikkun*, 1986: 3-13.

Rosenthal, Gilbert S. "Tikkun ha-olam: The Metamorphosis of a Concept." *Journal of Religion*, 2005: Vol 85; Part 2 pages 214-240.

Samuel, Alan. *Jewish Ethics and a Synagouge's Executive Director*. Victoria: Temple Beth Israel, 2005.

Sarna, Jonathan D. *American Judasim*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah*. New York: Meridian, 1974.

—. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticim*. New York: Schocken Books, 1946.

—. *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*. New York: Schocken, 1965.

—. *The Messianic Idea in Judasim*. New York: Schocken, 1971.

Schwartz, Howard. "Reform Judasim Union for Reform Judasim." *Reform Judasim Online*. 2009. <http://reformjudaismmag.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=1540> (accessed Febuary 28, 2010).

