

CHAPTER III

THE DAYS OF AWE: “A SEASON WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE SO RELIGIOUS THAT TEMPORARY SYNAGOGUES ARE NEEDED”¹

In September of 1916, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the *Morgen Zhurnal* printed a feuilleton by A.D. Ogus entitled “Satan’s defeat.” The story focuses on Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, when the Heavenly Council measures and evaluates the deeds of Jews everywhere as it determines whether individuals merit inscription in the Book of Life. The feuilleton captures the drama and anxiety of the season by drawing upon an old legend that during the Days of Awe, Satan travels to earth as a “celestial prosecutor” for the Heavenly Council to gather evidence against the Jews. In the fall of 1916, 5676 by the Hebrew calendar, Ogus’s Satan feels confident that he will amass sufficient evidence to mount a strong case against the Jews, thereby thwarting their hopes for inclusion in the Book of Life.²

As in past years, Satan commences his quest for sin in Eastern Europe, where the majority of Jews live. This year, however, presents a radically different situation, as each town in each region he visits finds the Jewish population ravaged by the World War. A Galician town where in past years Satan had discovered “treasures of

¹ Headline, *New York Daily Tribune*, 8 September 1901.

² A.D. Ogus, “Dem Satan’s mapole [Satan’s defeat],” *Morgen Zhurnal*, 27 September 1916. Aaron David Ogus (1865-1943) was born in Grodno where he received a traditional heder and yeshiva education and became a village teacher. In 1896, he immigrated to America, and worked alternately as a peddler, a glazier and a tailor. In 1901 he began to publish stories in the Yiddish papers, working for the *Morgen Zhurnal* for over 40 years. *Leksikon fun der nayer yidishe literatur*, vol. I, (New York: Marstin Press, 1956), pp. 18-19.

evil thoughts under the *shtraymels* [hats]" of the resident Hasidic Jews, is now almost devoid of Jews as war had driven the *rebbe*, his followers and their families away; the widows and orphans who remain now suffer from hunger and sickness. At first Satan rejoices, "laughing with a devilish laughter," but soon his heart "breaks" upon realizing that these Jews have already paid for their sins, and he cannot use their past transgressions as evidence. The scenario repeats itself when Satan ventures to Poland, where he witnesses Jewish children "bathing in their own blood." In Lithuania, too, where he used to find even sinful scholars, he now sees how "suffering ha(s) washed people of their sins." Disappointed, Satan concedes he can garner no evidence in Europe. Where, then, would he be able to amass the necessary evidence for his annual New Year's case against the Jews?

With renewed energy, Satan sets his sights on America: in New York, where "evil inclinations" rule, he feels he will certainly find a "pack of evidence" against the Jews. But despite New York's reputation, the streets of the Jewish quarters are "silent, the Jewish stores closed, and overall the holiday air was filled with religious holiness." Upon entrance to a *shul*, Satan is "bombarded by liturgical poems, prayers, psalms, supplications and the voice of the *shofar*." A second, third, fourth and fifth *shul* project the same chorus of piety, "a mighty offensive" against Satan. A bit shaken, Satan brightens upon remembering what he had heard of New York's infamous dance halls, where young men and women gather daily. Certainly there he will encounter those guilty of dishonoring parents and teachers and of desecrating the Sabbath. Yet upon entering the dance hall, he is struck with full force by the blast of the *shofar*. Gasping, Satan realizes that even the dance halls house pious Jews.

Moving picture halls offer the same scenario. As a last resort, Satan tries the area's saloons, seeking his "old acquaintances," those who "played cards and ate forbidden foods." Alas, the Jews Satan discovers in the saloons have their minds intent on prayer, not cards; in America praying Jews even assemble in churches on the Days of Awe. Having found holiness in America after all, Satan abandons his quest. "And the angel Michael and the group of good angels who defended the people of Israel," the story concludes, "laughed with a holy laughter and their joyful gaiety reached God's throne. And the Heavenly court issued its verdict—not guilty!"³

Published just a few days before New York's immigrant Jews would stream into their neighborhoods' *shuls*, dancing halls, saloons and even churches to atone for the sins of the past year and pray for their souls for the coming year, this feuilleton ran against the grain of most contemporary commentary devoted to the question of Jewish piety among the immigrant masses. Uptown and downtown newspaper columnists, rabbis and communal leaders alike denounced the widespread use of profane places such as dance halls or saloons for holy activity, and despaired of the Jewish settlement's seeming inability to conduct prayer properly. Ogus's story is unusual for the way it portrays the activity and intentions of many of the worshippers as praiseworthy, arguing in the parable that regardless of the strange accommodations that shelter them in their moments of observance, the most important question is not where, but *whether* Jews pray during the Days of Awe. His parable implicitly challenges the accepted notion that America is the *treifene medinah*, the impure land. How could it be if the Days of Awe found New York Jews in a frenzy of religious activity, engaged in traditional rituals and prayer?

³ A.D. Ogus, "Dem Satan's mapole [Satan's defeat]," *Morgen Zhurnal*, 27 September 1916.

The Satan anecdote depicts the immigrant neighborhood in the midst of the Rosh Hashanah holiday, but to fully interpret this immersion, we need to broaden the scope of our investigation to examine the business preparations that preceded the holiday. While contemporary communal leaders condemned this unholy mix of business and sacred matters, this chapter argues that these business practices were actually necessary to organize the full-scale religious outpouring in the urban environment. Satan set his avaricious sin-seeking sights on New York because its Jewish settlements had no religious authorities capable of enforcing ritual observance, and its populace appeared too engrossed in business to pay heed to religious obligations of their own accord. It was, however, precisely the business activity so condemned by contemporary critics that laid the practical groundwork for the organization of public prayer. In short, the three-day period's removal from material concerns and concentration on spiritual reflection demanded a month-long flurry of commercial preparation that paved the way for the "mushroom synagogue" phenomenon, as entire streets shed their usual facades and were re-outfitted as temporary synagogues. This chapter examines the supply side of the Days of Awe: the business practices that transformed profane places into sacred ones, commissioned prayer leaders, advertised to the masses and sold holiday articles, from greeting cards to prayer books, and argues that this activity suggests not wholesale profanation, but rather a complex and interdependent mix of worship and commerce.

The examination of the supply side activities leads necessarily to a study of the demand-side: the overwhelming desire for religious observance that fueled what the Yiddish newspapers called "the season of piety." Without a demand for religion,

businessmen would not have invested in religious merchandise, nor would they have undertaken the work of transforming lucrative dance halls and moving picture halls into temporary synagogues. Again, in the absence of a centralized religious authority that could enforce observance, or established tradition that would reinforce the customs, immigrant Jews' deviation from the American calendar and its adherence to the Jewish calendar on these days has to be interpreted as a sincere demand for the holiday. Though contemporary critics disparaged the immigrant Jews as "Yom Kippur Jews" for praying in public only on the Days of Awe, this chapter looks at these Yom Kippur Jews anew. It attempts to understand how and why the Days of Awe figured so prominently in the new sacred economies immigrant Jews forged to adapt their religious sensibilities to New York.

What emerges as central in the analysis of the Yom Kippur Jews and their mushroom synagogues is the ultimate importance of the Days of Awe as a time for Jews to publicly assert their distinctive Jewish identity in America, and to use the time afforded by the holiday to contemplate new meanings of *klal yisroel*, or the Jewish collective. An examination of the Yiddish press in the final section of this chapter analyzes the ways in which writers, in their sermon-like articles, combined the fear and anxiety of the season as well as the business skills of their Americanizing readers to encourage individuals not only to participate in the public worship, but to find new ways to build and support *klal yisroel*, the Jewish collective, on both a local and global level.

Commercial Preparatory Period

Before we analyze how immigrant Jews brought the Days of Awe to the streets of New York, it is instructive to examine the general traditions of the holiday. The Days of Awe, a ten-day period which encompasses Rosh Hashanah, the start of the Jewish New Year and culminates with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, marks a time of solemn repentance, when tradition enjoins Jews to reflect on the past year and pray to have their sins forgiven. The holiday liturgy and supplications invite both personal reflection and communal action, as they emphasize that the season offers a window of opportunity to interact with a God attentive to repenting Jews. But the holiday is not only about an individual's relations with God, for a central component of the holiday is a consideration of one's ties to one's neighbors. Tradition requires Jews to turn to their fellow neighbors, to forgive those who have harmed them in the past year and beg forgiveness from those they have harmed. Underlying these actions, for immigrants, as Ogus's feuilleton demonstrated, was an understanding of Rosh Hashanah as the Day of Judgment, when the Heavenly Council determines whether individuals will be inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year. The *un'saneh tokef* prayer recited on the day of Rosh Hashanah in front of an open ark underlines this powerful theme of judgment, as it details how an all-knowing God records every individual's deeds and sentences him or her accordingly. On Rosh Hashanah the council issues its verdict, but Jews have until Yom Kippur to repent, in the hope that they will earn a favorable sentence by Yom Kippur's *ne'ilah* service, when the council seals its judgments, and the gates of heavens are closed.

Spiritual reflection and repentance are intensified on a physical level through a prescribed fast lasting from the eve of Yom Kippur until sundown on Yom Kippur day. The blowing of the shofar, or ram's horn, augments the solemnity of the season, emphasizing the importance of the New Year and also calling attention to the gravity of the season and its judgments.⁴

The above description outlines the ideal characteristics of the holiday season. How though, were these qualities manifested in the urban setting of New York, a place in which, as the last chapter has shown, the business workweek often trumped the Jewish calendar? A brief analysis of the period of *selikhes*, the week of prayer and supplications that preceded Rosh Hashanah, gives us a sense of the complications inherent in adapting the religious calendar to New York. Another article by the *Morgen Zhurnal's* A.D. Ogus underscores these complications by comparing the holiday season in America to a remembered holiday past in Eastern Europe in which the rituals were naturally bound up in the rhythms of daily life.⁵ Though the

⁴ S.Y. Agnon, *Days of Awe: A Treasury of Traditions, Legends and Learned Commentaries Concerning Rosh Ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur and the Days Between* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948); Schauss, Hayim. *The Jewish Festivals* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938).

⁵ In general, the European holiday stories in the Yiddish press project a nostalgic image of shtetl life as completely untouched by urbanization or secularization. These short stories or feuilletons of the press seem to adhere to the dynamics that Dan Miron lays out in his study on the shtetls of modern Yiddish and Hebrew classics. As Miron writes, "...there actually existed in Jewish literature an influential tradition, a potent norm, which demanded the radical Judaization of the image of the eastern European shtetl; it had to be presented as purely Jewish." Miron, "The Literary Image of the Shtetl," *Jewish Social Studies I*: no. 3, (Spring 1995), p. 4. For an example of the type of nostalgia—one which made the shtetl universally pious—found in both newspaper sketches and memoir literature, see Miriam Shomer Zunser, *Yesterday* (New York: Harper and Row, 1939), p. 230: "On Yom Kippur mother always thinks of her "old home" in Pinsk. There the whole town was steeped in solemn fear. No one took a morsel of food or even a drink of water for twenty-four hours. The men were in shul all day in their stockinged feet and wearing the shrouds in which they would someday be buried. The cries of the women in the gallery rent the heavens. All were atoning for the sins they might have committed during the past year. All beat their breasts, forgave their enemies, clasped their friends to their hearts, and

comparison made by Ogus elevates to an ideal the piety and naturalness of religion in Eastern Europe, and sees the incessant business activity of New York as indicative of conditions inhospitable to true piety, it also suggests new ways to approach religiosity in an urban setting.

The example of the function of *selikhes* in turn-of-the-century New York raises the important issue of Sabbath observance, and more broadly, the difficulty of adapting an Orthodox lifestyle to urban working conditions. Traditionally, the series of daily prayer services begin in the early morning of the Sunday the week before Rosh Hashanah, and the prayers invoke the powerful and integral Days of Awe themes of forgiveness, reflection and repentance. Many immigrants scrupulously attended these prayer sessions, and advertisements for permanent and temporary synagogues included *selikhes* prayer as part of the package. Yet whereas few worked during the Days of Awe, *selikhes* took place before Rosh Hashanah, in the Jewish month of Elul, when the vast majority of the population went to work as usual. Integrating the *selikhes* prayer services into a workaday schedule presented certain contradictions. As Ogus pointed out, a prominent refrain in the liturgy emphasizes the fact that traditionally, *selikhes* services begin “at the end of the day of rest,” that is, at the end of the Sabbath.⁶ But as noted in the previous chapter, many of the immigrants worked on Saturday. And so, even one who could be credited as diligently attending

asked the Lord to be merciful to them, to forgive them their trespasses and to grant them life and happiness for the coming year.”

⁶ A.D. Ogus, “Selikhes un shabes,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, 1 September 1918.

the *selikhes* services held “after midnight and before dawn,” were in fact lying when they recited the liturgy.⁷

Ogus protested that his goal was not to criticize the “lying” worshippers, but merely to depict the confusion surrounding religious life in New York, even for those workers with the best intentions.

It is, naturally, not to blame the Jews who here in America have changed the rest day from Saturday to Sunday. At least a great portion of them cannot be blamed. Perhaps they are not guilty of this. Perhaps they are just doing this from force, out of need. They cannot help it, poor things, a job, one needs to make a living, and they have no other choice.⁸

Rather than judging, Ogus stated he wished to address the absurdity of workers going to great lengths to attend *selikhes* services, yet lying by virtue of their participation in the recitation of the liturgy. Instead of resting as required, they had been hawking bananas, baking bread, and sewing clothes! Yet at the end of the workweek, they prioritized *selikhes* services and prayed fervently:

A Jew stands in shul and says, it seems—*selikhes* with intention. He cries and quivers, “at the end of Sabbath,” although in reality he rested neither the Sabbath before *selikhes*, nor the rest of the year’s Sabbaths. The Jew is a tailor who works on Sabbath and holidays and rests Sundays and “legal holidays.” How can he call Sabbath evening, “the end of rest?” Who is he fooling? Don’t God and the people know that it was not his rest day?

Despite the contradictions between their prayer and work schedules, Ogus emphasized that they recited the prayers “with intention.” Though he did not further probe the motivations of the worshippers, it is quite possible that some of them prayed so fervently and made such sacrifices to attend the *selikhes* service precisely

⁷ In the immigrant neighborhoods of New York, men gathered for *selikhes* services between two and three in the morning. “The Jewish New Year: Traditions and Ceremonies of the First of the Fall Holy days,” *American Hebrew*, September 6, 1907.

⁸ Ogus, “Selikhes un shabes.”

because “God and the people” knew they had worked all year long, had shirked other religious obligations and hence had felt a stronger need to seek forgiveness. Their experience as immigrants in America and their immersion in the six-day workweek had added a new and powerful dimension to the annual drama of atonement and the seeking of forgiveness and renewal.

Clearly, as Ogus explained, the recitation of *selikhes* services after a day of work illustrates the confusion surrounding religious life in the new American setting. To further underscore this argument of contextual complexity, Ogus contrasted this dynamic to his own memory of *selikhes* prayers in Eastern Europe, in which people genuinely rested on the Sabbath and could therefore absorb the season’s atmosphere of holiness and awe.⁹ In general, comparisons to holiday celebrations in Eastern Europe were rife in both the Yiddish and Anglo-Jewish press. As a foil to the harried and complicated American scene, these articles presented holiday settings in Eastern Europe as solemn, serene and pious. Ogus did not end his piece with any solutions or suggestions as to how to inject holiday solemnity and serenity into the market-driven atmosphere of New York. He noted the confusion, and made the distinction between holiday celebrations in Europe and in America, but also seemed to suggest that a different historical context merited different gauges of religiosity.

New York, of course, was not the pious shtetl so often recalled in essays that idealized the serenity of religious life in Eastern Europe. Yet the market-driven atmosphere of the immigrant quarter, which Ogus presents as both a distraction to the *selikhes* worshippers and a foil to the serenity of remembered holiday seasons in

⁹ Ibid.

Eastern Europe, sets the stage for a greater understanding of the Days of Awe in New York. Looking at business practices and trends with a wider lens allows us to see how the aggregate of commerce in the months of September and October was geared to the upcoming holiday, serving in a sense as a commercial preparatory season leading up to the Days of Awe. In this section, we will be analyzing the buying of holiday clothes, greeting cards, prayer shawls, prayer books, and even tickets for public worship as an indicator of religious sentiment among the populace. Ultimately, this demand for religious goods and services not only prepared the immigrant Jews for the Days of Awe, but also made a bold impression on the broader New York community.

Indeed, one of the most astute observers of the immigrant religious community, Rabbi Moses Weinberger, voiced the notion as early as the 1880s that the commercial aspects of America had the power to invigorate rather than weaken Orthodoxy. As historian and Weinberger translator Jonathan Sarna has written:

[Weinberger] realized, as many of his colleagues did not, that the religion business—“mitzvah merchants”—ultimately served to strengthen Jewish practice. As the business-minded made ritual objects cheaper and more accessible, more people used them. The easier Judaism was to observe, the more people observed it.¹⁰

At the other end of the ideological spectrum, the socialist *Jewish Daily Forward* acknowledged how the production and marketing of religious goods during the holiday season increased their availability: “It seems that Jews buy more *makhzorim* here than they did in the countries from which they came.” Moreover, “[m]en say

¹⁰ *People Walk on their Heads: Moses Weinberger's Jews and Judaism in New York*, ed. Jonathan Sarna (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 9. This idea has been further explored by Andrew Heinze, who has shown how immigrant Jews integrated “mass marketed luxuries into major celebrations” through an exploration of the Jewish holidays of Sukkot, Hanukah and Passover. *Adapting to Abundance*, pp. 5, 68-85.

easily that in no other Jewish city are sold as many prayer shawls in proportion to the number as Jews.”¹¹ In 1906, the *Morgen Zhurnal*'s B. Gorin observed how tickets for worship services “sold like hotcakes” and surmised, “if one measures piety according to the sale of tickets, then one can come to the conclusion that in America Jewishness has not fallen.”¹² Keeping this view of the relationship between religion and commerce in mind reinforces the idea that business activity can, to some extent, be used as a gauge of religion in the immigrant neighborhoods.

With this in mind, it is instructive to look at merchants' wares as a method of understanding and analyzing religious demand. In the weeks before Rosh Hashanah, vendors sold religious articles: prayer books, prayer shawls, green boughs (used for building the Succahs, or booths for the holiday after Yom Kippur), and greeting cards for the New Year. In turn, each type of item was offered in a seemingly infinite variety. For example, the holiday prayer books, *makhzorim*, could be found in the traditional Hebrew along with Yiddish or English translations, or even Yiddish and English translations. Advertisements for *makhzorim* with English translations stressed their suitability and accessibility to the American-born children of immigrants. Moreover, customers could select the type of paper the prayers were printed on, from regular paper stock to special satin. To boarders, single men or women who rented a very small space in another's typically cramped tenement apartment, vendors recommended the “boarder makhzor” which was small enough to fit in one's pocket. Prayer shawls for men and boys were available in wool or in silk, and ranged in price

¹¹ “Yarid fun makhzorim,” *Forward*, September 16, 1902.

¹² “Gehert un Gezehn ,” B. Gorin, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 11, 1906.

from \$1.50 to \$10.00. Bookstores added holiday cards to their selections, and manufacturers advertised their supplies of yohrzeit candles for “jobbers and peddlers.”¹³ The very variety of these gifts showed that they were being marketed to, and ostensibly purchased by the young and old, rich and poor.

All groups alike funneled their resources into grooming themselves and their families for the upcoming holiday. Indeed, to be dressed up for the holiday was part of the religious tradition, an essential aspect of presenting a clean, pure appearance for the Days of Judgment.¹⁴ Catering to the seasonal needs of Jewish immigrant families, New York department stores placed advertisements in the Yiddish press announcing special sales “In honor of Rosh Hashanah.”¹⁵ The savvy department store managers knew enough to take advantage of the desire to greet the New Year in new clothes. Irving Heymont, who grew up in Brownsville in the 1910s, recalled how “[t]he purchase of new clothes was always associated with Passover in the spring and the High Holy Days in the fall.”¹⁶ Often, Rosh Hashanah fell in early or mid-September, when warm temperatures made woolen clothes impractical. No matter:

¹³ See, for example, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 21 September 1908.

¹⁴ Barbara A. Schreier, *Becoming American Women* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1994), p. 8: “Jews honored the Sabbath with special outfits and acquired new articles of dress as an integral part of holiday celebrations.” One immigrant recalled holiday celebrations in his town of Starodub: “All the Jews of the city would go to *tashlikh* dressed to the nines.” Quoted in Jocelyn Cohen, “Discourses of Acculturation: Gender and the East European Jewish Immigrant Autobiography, 1942” University of Minnesota, 2000, p. 72.

¹⁵ See papers. Also, for historical discussion, see Andrew Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance*, pp. 68-85.

¹⁶ Irving Heymont, “As I Remember,” AJA Small Collections, 4987 (1989). Also see Goldie Roth, NS33-76, Esther Eisner, NS33-52, Lower East Side Oral History Project, Tamiment Institute.

the Jewish calendar, and the importance of wearing new clothes proved stronger than the seasonal weather. As Minnie Feurman, raised on the Lower East Side in the 1910s, recalled, “When it came Rosh Hashanah—you’d go into the warmer clothes—whether it was 80 degrees or not, you still put on the woolen clothes because you had to go all dressed up to *shul*.”¹⁷ Not only did the pushcarts and department stores reflect this desire for the holiday embellishment of one’s home and one’s self (even if it defied the otherwise rigid standard of weather), so too did the neighborhood pawnshops. A Grand Street pawnbroker claimed that in the month preceding Rosh Hashanah, immigrants took six times the amount of jewelry “out of pawn” than in the average month.¹⁸

Just as immigrant Jews used the market to prepare their families for the holidays, they also used the market’s spectacular variety of holiday cards to connect to extended families and friends. In New York, the traditional custom of wishing one another a “*shana tova tikasevu*,” or a good inscription for the year, was transformed into “a rushing business” as the sending of greeting cards for the New Year acquired an increasingly important and elaborate character.¹⁹ Whereas many immigrants had grown up in small towns where they personally wished their neighbors and friends a good inscription, migration and urbanization had made such direct greeting impossible. Not only did immigrants have family overseas that they needed to

¹⁷ Minnie Feurman, NS33-54, Lower East Side Oral History Project, Tamiment Institute.

¹⁸ “Hebrews Use Churches,” *New York Daily Tribune*, September 20, 1903.

¹⁹ “Ready for the Jewish New Year,” *New York Daily Tribune*, September 23, 1900. On the origin of the greeting “*shana tova*” and the sending of greeting cards, see Hayim Schauss, For more on the development of this custom in America, see Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Wonders of America*.

contact, their friends and associates within New York were too numerous and too spread out to greet personally. “Shana tova” cards provided the perfect solution. In the immigrant neighborhoods, pushcart peddlers and booksellers sold multiple packages of cards to individual families, who mailed them to relatives, friends and acquaintances both locally and abroad.²⁰ According to one report, one of every three pushcart peddlers sold the cards, and they offered a wide assortment, ranging in price from as little as one cent to as much as \$3.50 a card. “Paper lace, gilding and colored celluloid” adorned the most expensive of the cards.²¹ Many featured designs detailing synagogues or religious rituals, such as candle-lighting or the sacrifice of the hen, *kapara shlagen*; others adapted American themes, with pictures of President Theodore Roosevelt and his family emblazoned on the card’s cover.

Contemporary reports of the *shana tova* cards identify women as the supervisors of the practice, and some even mocked the seriousness with which the women treated the custom and ascribed status to the types of cards exchanged.²² Yet while detailed depictions of women painstakingly decorating their tenement mantelpieces with choice cards are humorous, the timing and the scale of the greeting card activity suggests that there was more to this obsession than whim.

Anthropologist Micaela DiLeonardo’s study of Italian-American women and holiday cards underlined how her subjects viewed the sending of holiday cards as imperative in the face of a rapidly urbanizing, mobile and dissolute community. The vigor and

²⁰ “Hebrew New Year,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 24 September 1900, p.3.

²¹ “Jews Preparing for Festival,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 19 September 1903.

²² See, for example, A.D. Ogus, “Dekoratirte shane tove karten,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, 21 September 1908.

energy devoted to exchanging holiday cards prompted DiLeonardo to term it the “work of kinship.”²³ Jewish immigrant women especially felt the rapidly changing and destabilizing effects of migration and urbanization, and perhaps engaged in the sending of cards as a symbolic means of maintaining family connections. The fact that Jews participated in greeting card exchanges during the Jewish New Year further suggests important religious overtones. The cards bore the traditional Hebrew greeting which refers to the holiday’s sacred judgment, but they could also perhaps be interpreted as a means of fulfilling the obligation of asking for and granting forgiveness of one’s friends and neighbors. The careful and ordered exchange of such cards affirmed social and familial ties, and served the same communal and social ends of the commandment to make peace with one’s neighbors.

Regardless of the motivations behind the sending of greeting cards, the very scale of the greeting card activity significantly impaired the functioning of the city’s postal office. In 1910, Edward Morgan, postmaster, issued the following notice to the Jewish press for publication:

On account of the large quantity of letters and cards of greeting deposited in the General Post Office and Post Office Stations incidental to the Jewish Holy Days falling on October 4th, 5th and 13th, this year, it is suggested that as much of this and other mail matter as possible be mailed on or before October 2nd, 3rd and 11th, respectively, so that it may be handled and despatched before the Holy Days in question. Many of the Post Office clerks are Hebrews and desire to observe these days, and this request for co-operation is made so that it may be able to gratify their wishes in this respect and, at the same time, prevent congestion of the mails.²⁴

²³ Micaela di Leonardo, “The Female Work of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship,” in Barrie Thorne, ed., *Rethinking the Family* (Boston: Northeastern Press, 1992), p. 246.

²⁴ “Mail Your Greetings Early,” *American Hebrew*, 30 September 1910. See also, “Jews freed from Work on High Holidays,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 16, 1910.

The Yiddish press echoed these pleas to stagger the mailing of New Years cards, pointing out how the bundles of mail not only weighed down postal carriers, but also encumbered already harried Jewish institutions with overwhelming amounts of incoming mail to sort. The *Morgen Zhurnal* devoted editorial space to this predicament, urging Jews to send cards around the time of Sukkot (after Yom Kippur) rather than all at once before Rosh Hashanah. Additionally, the newspaper advised more discretion in selecting card recipients. While one should send cards to close family and friends, the editorialist deemed it “inappropriate” to send cards to every acquaintance; more care in this regard would curtail the trend of making “martyrs” out of the mail carriers in the Jewish neighborhoods.²⁵

Contemporary observers drew comparisons between the Jewish New Year cards and American Christmas cards. Certainly, immigrants purchased goods, including greeting cards, in anticipation of the Jewish holiday, but could this activity be interpreted as a slavish imitation of American consumer practices? Is it possible that all this activity merely depicts immigrants learning how to be good consumers? In a short story entitled the “The Convertible New Year’s Card,” the noted Yiddish and English writer Dr. Israel J. Zevin (known also as Tashrak), concretized the symbolic links between Christmas cards and High Holiday cards. The story focuses on an irate father who almost severs his daughter’s engagement when an elaborate Christmas card from her suitor arrives at the family home the week before the Jewish New Year. When confronted, the fiancé expresses surprise, and upon further investigation, involving a trip to the local Hebrew bookstore where the unwitting

²⁵ Editorial, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 29 September 1910.

fiancé had purchased the card, the mystery is unraveled. As the weary bookseller explains, a company with an overstock of Christmas cards had pasted over the “Merry Christmas” greeting with a Hebrew “*shana tova*” greeting. The glue, however, was not strong enough and the labels peeled off, causing untold havoc on the East Side (especially for the bookseller).

In one respect, this story raises an unavoidable point: the marketing and customs of the Days of Awe suggested the commercialization of Jewish tradition. Although the story shows that the sending of cards modeled itself on a pre-existing American/Christian practice, the demand for Jewish content (as seen by reactions of the irate father in the above story) was the reason for number and variety of Jewish holiday-themed cards. Jews did not send Christmas cards to one another during the Christmas season, nor did they send Christmas cards to each other during Rosh Hashanah; they sent their holiday cards with traditional inscriptions during Rosh Hashanah.²⁶ In Tashrak’s story, the receipt of a Christmas card on Rosh Hashanah constituted sufficient grounds for the breaking off of an engagement with an otherwise wholly desirable suitor! The sending and receiving of holiday cards paralleled the American card sending practices, but in their timing and their content testified to the importance of the Jewish calendar and its traditions.²⁷

Indeed, rather than promoting assimilation, the buying and selling of holiday goods served to mark Jews as a distinct group of influence in New York City. So profound and so pervasive was this interaction between the Jewish holiday and the

²⁶ Israel J. Zevin (Tashrak), “The Convertible New Year Card,” *American Hebrew*, 6 September 1912.

²⁷ See *American Hebrew* article, August 1905 about how before mass immigration, it was very common for the relatively small Jewish community to be sold pasted-over cards.

city's commerce that it had the power to convince city government to alter—albeit temporarily—municipal laws. In the 1890s, Jews simply kept their stores open the Sunday of the pre-holiday week despite the blue laws that restricted Sunday trade. By 1902, what had merely been accepted by custom was codified in law as Mayor Seth Low issued an edict permitting the brisk pre-holiday business. The *New York Daily Tribune* described the scene that year:

The lower East Side presented an unusual scene yesterday for Sunday. Nearly all of the Jewish stores were open, and the streets were lined with pushcarts piled high with goods. . . . that part of the lower East Side east of the Bowery and between Canal and First sts. presented a scene of bustle and activity. The fish market under the new East River Bridge was open, and was crowded with pedlers [*sic*].²⁸

That Jewish immigrants would view the holiday commerce as important enough to break the much despised Sunday laws is perhaps not too surprising; for the city to grant an official exemption from the Sunday laws at this time of the year in honor of the Jews, however, certainly suggests a significant municipal recognition of the Jewish calendar.

By actively interweaving High Holiday customs into the American marketplace, Jews not only created a unique environment for themselves in their own neighborhoods, but on a larger scale also made their adherence to the Jewish calendar known to the New York community. This commercial preparatory period changed the face of the immigrant neighborhoods, and also made its way onto the pages of American newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The New York Daily Tribune* as reporters annually chronicled how the activity from the increase in pushcarts, the purchase and donning of new clothes, and the buying and selling of religious articles

²⁸ “Jews’ Stores Open on Mayor’s Edict,” *New York Daily Tribune*, September 21, 1903.

in anticipation of the holiday created a distinct atmosphere palpable to all New Yorkers. These newspapers printed explanations of the definitions and history of the holidays alongside thick descriptions of the rituals that took place on the streets and even bridges of the city.²⁹ In the weeks before the holiday New York's city agencies, public schools and post offices acknowledged the importance of the holiday season to its growing Jewish population by announcing that they would grant their Jewish workers leave for the holiday.³⁰ The visibility of the Jews in this commercial preparatory season and in the midst of the holiday season itself combined with the interest they attracted from the city, shows how Jews used the marketplace to weave the Jewish calendar into the urban environment of New York. This was a time in

²⁹ For a description of a journalist's fascination with the Jewish East Side and its holidays, see Lincoln Steffens, *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), pp. 243-4. "The *Post* observed all the holy days of the Ghetto. There were advance notices of their coming, with descriptions of the preparations and explanation of their sacred, ancient biblical meaning, and then an account of them as I saw these days observed in the homes and the churches of the poor. A queer mixture of comedy, tragedy, orthodoxy and revelation, they interested our Christian readers."

³⁰ The following posting in the *American Hebrew* shows the extent to which the Kehillah asked, and was granted official recognition of the holiday: "As in previous years, the Kehillah has written to the various city and other governmental departments, and to the railroad companies and other governmental departments and to the railroad companies and large concerns, requesting that leave of absence be granted to Jewish employees on the coming High Holidays. Replies stating that every consideration will be given to the religious feelings of Jewish employees have so far been received from the United States Post Office, the Treasury Department House (U.S. Custom House), the Tenement House Department, Department of Street Cleaning, Department of Correction, Department of Health, Department of Commerce and Labor (Immigration Service), Department of Finance, Bureau of License, and the Metropolitan Street Railway Company [sic]. In the U.S. Custom Service, Jewish employees will be granted leave of absence on account of their regular vacations. Employees who have not left any time out of their vacations in order to be able to be free on the Jewish holidays, will be able, upon application, to secure leave of absence, but without pay."

22 September 1911: In 1907, Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham denied the 200 Jewish policemen on his force time off, but did make provisions for them to be stationed in Jewish synagogues to administer the crowds and still be able to participate (somewhat) in the services, "Must Work on Yom Kippur," *New York Times*, 18 September 1907.

which the aggregate of their holiday preparations and activities defined themselves as Jews to the broader American public.

The “Evil” of the Mushroom Synagogues...³¹

While the holiday market of religious goods enabled Jews to define themselves as Jews to the broader American public, the practice of purchasing tickets for Days of Awe worship services allowed immigrant Jews to fulfill the commandment to participate in public prayer, as they formed hundreds of Jewish collectives throughout their own immigrant neighborhoods. Orchestrating public worship for a population that exceeded the neighborhoods’ available synagogue spaces was its own business, as much a part of the commercial preparatory season as the pushcarts laden with prayer shawls and prayer books. As the *Morgen Zhurnal* described it:

Suddenly, so many worshippers spring up that even shops, dark basements, rear stores, dance halls, restaurants, theaters and even dwelling places become transformed into *shuls* and everywhere they are packed! The prayer suddenly becomes an expensive experience, and one needs a ticket for it ...³²

The contemporary critics termed the temporary synagogues “mushroom synagogues” because they seemed to sprout from nowhere and spread quickly.³³ The above *Morgen Zhurnal* description highlights the agency of the worshippers as here, the

³¹ The description of the mushroom synagogues phenomenon as “evil” was common among contemporary critics; see, for example, Minutes of the Executive committee of the Kehillah, October 12, 1909.

³² “Perek Shira Nakh’n Yom ha din,” A.D. Ogus, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 28 September 1908.

³³ The English-language press, like the *American Hebrew* used this term, while the Yiddish-language press did not.

worshippers, not the synagogues, “spring up” to demand participation in public worship. This section examines the players identified in this description—the worshippers, the businessman, the prayer leaders—in an effort to explain the context and the mechanics of the mushroom synagogue phenomenon. Scholarly mention of the temporary synagogues has tended to interpret contemporary criticisms of the “unscrupulous” and “unethical” organizers of the mushroom synagogues as a blanket condemnation of the entire enterprise, thereby disparaging the worshippers along with the business entrepreneurs.³⁴ This chapter argues that contemporary criticisms of the temporary synagogues did not necessarily apply to those who chose to worship in them. To the contrary, many contemporary communal leaders recognized and sought to cultivate what they interpreted as a demand for religious services. A case study of efforts to streamline worship by the nascent Jewish Community of New York, commonly referred to by its Hebrew name, Kehillah, places into relief the various players, allowing us to ask the essential questions: Why would an immigrant choose to worship in a temporary synagogue? And what does this choice tell us about the community at large?

On the most basic level, the majority of Jewish immigrants relied on the market in their quest for holiday prayer services because most Jews did not belong to

³⁴ See, for example, Jeffrey Gurock, *When Harlem Was Jewish* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) and “The Orthodox Synagogue,” in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The American Synagogue: A Sanctuary Transformed*, (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1987), pp. 75, 77. See also, Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 77. This assessment of the temporary synagogues has focused on the intentions of the business entrepreneurs who managed the temporary synagogues, and hired “imposters” in the role of rabbis and prayer leaders and in general paving the way for the “commercialization” of worship. Yet this approach, which concentrates on the supply, neglects to look at the demand that sparked the need for provisional worship venues. Moses Rischin likewise focuses on the supply: “...religious entrepreneurs annually contrived a rash of provisional prayer hall. They were packed to capacity so as to yield the highest return on investment...” *Promised City*, p. 147.

synagogues, and thus had no regular synagogue to attend. The six- or seven-day workweek, economic strain and the enticements of secular forms of leisure and association created an environment inhospitable to Orthodox religious life in general, and sustained synagogue membership in particular. Not being able to attend worship services on Saturday, many workers refrained from joining synagogues altogether.³⁵ Though available attendance statistics are inconclusive, various estimates from the turn of the century suggest that only 25-40% of the Jewish community members belonged to synagogues. Jews, perhaps as many as 70% of them, did not pray on the Sabbath and hence had no need to affiliate with a synagogue.³⁶ Some of the reasons were economic. Even for those who did not work on Saturday and could participate in

³⁵ This sentiment is described by Mordecai Kaplan in his study on the synagogue: “Many elements, undoubtedly, have contributed to the undermining of that sentiment, but chief of all is the dwindling of Sabbath observance. Kept away from attendance at the synagogue on the traditional day of rest and common worship, the Jew finds little motive for being identified with the synagogue...” “Affiliation with the Synagogue,” *The Jewish Communal Register of New York City 1917-1918* (New York: Kehillah (Jewish Community) of New York City, 1918), p. 119.

³⁶ Of course, the exact percentages or numbers of synagogue membership are difficult to ascertain. In 1899, James Gerould, citing a canvass done by David Blaustein of the Education Alliance, estimated that 40% of the adult population (I am assuming he referred only to the male population) were synagogue members. In a 1905 *American Hebrew* article, a writer hazarded that only 30% of New York Jews were Sabbath observers. *The New York Daily Tribune* reports a “conservative estimate” that seventy-five percent of those praying during the Days of Awe do not pray publicly the rest of the year: “Hebrew Use Churches,” September 20, 1903. Edward Steiner estimated that only 20% of Jews prayed on Saturday but that almost all of them did during the Days of Awe: *The Outlook*. By 1918, more concrete figures are available. The Kehillah canvassed the various Jewish neighborhoods and calculated synagogue membership by the district. Out of the entire population of the city’s Jews, a mere 5.3% were identified as synagogue members. In the “East Broadway” district in the heart of the Lower East Side, however, 20.8% of the population was identified as synagogue members. *The Jewish Communal Register of New York City 1917-1918* (New York: Kehillah (Jewish Community) of New York City, 1918), p. 125 (insert). The difficulty of assessing synagogue membership was raised by Solomon Foster, a Reform rabbi who researched the immigrant neighborhoods in the first decade of the twentieth century. Not only did Foster point out the difficulty in assessing the percentage of synagogue affiliation, he also suggested the relative unimportance of statistics in gauging one’s attachment to Judaism in this period: “It was a matter of both practical and philosophic perplexity to determine to what extent our people were affiliated with the Synagogue, as well as to establish a standard to measure the degree of religiosity of our people. The records of Synagogue affiliation in this country, as compiled by official and private statisticians, as will be shown, are imperfect, and largely underestimate the actual number of Synagogue supporters. But still this does not measure Jewish loyalty.” Foster, *The Workingman and the Synagogue* (New York, 1910), p.6.

the Saturday Sabbath services, the “poorest member” still paid \$15-20 a year, and while most synagogues would still allow those who could not afford membership dues to attend services, observers surmised that many workers would feel uncomfortable with such a situation.³⁷ The immigrant generation’s geographic mobility also impeded regular synagogue membership.³⁸

In addition to basic factors such as economics and geography hampering synagogue membership, it is also important to recognize how sentiments towards *halakhic* Judaism had changed in the process of adaptation. When daily pressures receded and immigrants had time to contemplate religious obligations, many realized that these obligations could not be resumed in the same manner in which they had been practiced in Eastern Europe. In the absence of religious authorities, immigrants took it upon themselves to forge new approaches to religious life, for example, adapting the Sabbath to the six-day workweek by emphasizing Friday nights. Economic constraints and political ideologies were factored into this adaptation process; as shown in Chapter One, this was a time in which an individual could be

³⁷ “A Busy Season of Piety,” editorial, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 21, 1908; “Tiny Places of Worship,” *Tribune*, September 16, 1896: regarding poor Jews reluctance to join larger synagogues—but this is used to explain membership in smaller chevras. Rabbi Bernard Drachman, a member of the Religious Committee of the Kehillah discussed “the condition of the poor who could not afford to be members of synagogues.” Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Kehillah, June 9, 1909. Also, see Foster, pp. 13-14: “The method of Synagogue support is also a bar to the participation of the poor in public worship. Our Synagogues charge an exorbitant rate, comparatively speaking, for the ownership of pews. It is an expense hard to meet by our working people to associate themselves with many of our Synagogues. In their pride, they refrain from attending the service they are unable to support.” Eldridge Street Synagogue’s records show that seat ownership could cost between \$200 and \$400. Though annual rentals at \$10 (with additional payments) were available, only seat owners could serve on the board of the synagogue. See, *Minutes of the Eldridge Street Synagogue*, translated by Fruma Mohrer (New York: Lower East Side Tenement Museum, 1988). Still, Foster notes that there existed synagogues among the working people that charged a more affordable rate of \$2 for yearly membership. Foster, pp. 13-14.

³⁸ Arthur Goren, *New York Jews*, p. 77.

considered “half pious” or “one quarter Orthodox.” Yet even as immigrant families forged their own responses, no institutional organization existed which reflected their more accommodating or nuanced approach to religion. Synagogue membership on the Lower East Side or in other immigrant neighbors assumed, at least in name, that one was an Orthodox (read: Sabbath-observant) Jew.³⁹ Reform synagogues that did adopt a more flexible approach to religion remained far from the cultural sphere of the immigrant generation.⁴⁰

Yet, just because Jews did not join synagogues did not mean that they had forsaken public prayer on the Days of Awe. Indeed, as immigrant families constructed the sacred economies that enabled them to adapt their religious sensibilities to their new lives in New York, we see that the Days of Awe emerge as central, the season “when everybody goes” to synagogue.⁴¹ The American newspapers described how the worship services had the power to attract men and women, old and young, newly-arrived immigrants to fully Americanized children to the services.⁴² Even if—or precisely because—they had not attended synagogue the rest of the year,

³⁹ Jeffrey Gurock, “The Orthodox Synagogue,” p.48.

⁴⁰ Still, Reform rabbis did work with the immigrant communities, especially the children, with an eye towards introducing Reform Judaism. See Foster, *The Workingman and the Synagogue*. See also, Myron Berman, “A New Spirit on the East Side: The Early History of the Emanu-El Brotherhood, 1903-1920,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, September 1964, pp 54-77.

⁴¹ Edward Steiner, “The Russian and Polish Jew in New York,” *The Outlook*, vol. 72, Nov. 1, 1902.

⁴² “Phases of Yom Kippur: Odd Mingling of Ancient and Modern in Synagogue Congregations,” *New York Daily Tribune*, October 13, 1902. The reporter was struck by the fact that both young and old men practiced these rites. A gray-haired, bearded man engaged in such practices seemed fitting, but to see “a young man, in a Derby hat of this season’s vintage, and very smart as to collar and tie, beating his breast as he prayed, it produced a curious sensation.”⁴²

immigrants found that participating in public worship on these days was absolutely essential.⁴³ And so, during the Days of Awe, the surge in seekers of synagogue seats overwhelmed the available synagogue accommodations in the immigrant neighborhoods.⁴⁴

Jewish organizations attempted to bridge the gap by offering space for worship in their own halls; however, this accommodation effort still failed to satisfy demand. Individual *landsmanshaftn*, *chevras* and Talmud Torahs sold tickets for religious worship.⁴⁵ Starting in 1897, the Educational Alliance used its auditorium to hold Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services [for a nominal price: 10 cents].⁴⁶ And, as we shall see, when the Kehillah formed in 1909, it developed a multi-pronged

⁴³ Failure to attend church regularly often has been interpreted by scholars and contemporary observers as an abandonment of religion wholesale. Recently, scholars of religious life and popular religion have begun to challenge these assessments, arguing that it is important to extract what practices—usually holidays and life cycles—were kept and adapted as indicators of religious life that were held sacred by the subjects. See, for example, the Robert Orsi’s *The Madonna of 115th Street* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), in which he challenges how contemporary religious leaders categorized the Italian immigrants of East Harlem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as irreligious due to the fact that they were not regular church-goers. Orsi demonstrates his point with a rich and detailed analysis of the annual festa celebration. Likewise, Sarah Williams’ analysis of rites of passage among the London working class emphasizes the importance and sacredness of religious events to her subjects, in spite of the fact that they were not regular church-goers. “Urban Popular Religion and the Rites of Passage,” in Hugh McLeod, ed., *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 1830-1930* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁴⁴ See for example, “Lack of Synagogue Accommodations,” *American Hebrew*, 23 August 1912.

⁴⁵ This phenomenon was not invented by the East European immigrants of the late nineteenth century. Records show that already by the late 1840s and 1850s some Jews in New York opted out of annual synagogue membership, choosing instead to purchase tickets solely for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. While some synagogues, such as Shearith Israel, did not sell tickets, other synagogues, such as Emanu-El and Anshe Chesed, happily obliged by making such tickets available. Hyman Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York City* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), p. 63.

⁴⁶ Ratner Center Archives, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Jacob Grossman, Box 2: “As early as 1897 the Educational Alliance was conducting a People’s Synagogue with services for the Sabbath and holidays.”

approach to streamline and organize services. But even then, the Kehillah's efforts could only accommodate a small percentage of the population. Into the void between demand for worship and lack of synagogue space stepped minions of business entrepreneurs, who translated religious demand into actual, concrete services. They rented halls, hired prayer leaders, placed advertisements, hung posters and established temporary synagogues in the available gathering spaces: saloons, dance halls, and political clubs. The vast majority of immigrants thus employed their well-honed individual and commercial skills of perusing newspaper advertisements and street posters as they shopped for a synagogue.

Most observers did not favorably regard the fact that business proved an inextricable element of the arrangement of holiday prayer services. The Orthodox, Anglo-Jewish and socialist press alternated taking journalistic stabs at this mixture of the sacred and profane. Uptown leaders and the Kehillah, the Jewish Community of New York that formed in 1909, voiced the opinion that prayer in profane places not only disturbed the aesthetic experience of prayer, but also reflected badly on the Jewish community. On the topic of the temporary synagogues Rabbi Henry Pereira Mendes of the uptown Shearith Israel announced the following in the *American Hebrew*:

From whatever point of view it is regarded the holding of holy services in unholy places is, a *chilal hashem*, a desecration, and it is the desire of all right-thinking Jews that this public disgrace be avoided.⁴⁷

Interestingly, Mendes, a prominent leader known for his work within both the Jewish community and the progressive New York community at large, proclaimed the

⁴⁷ "Kehillah Will Provide Holiday Services," *American Hebrew*, July 22, 1909.

temporary synagogue phenomenon a “public disgrace.”⁴⁸ To Mendes and other uptown leaders, the mushroom synagogue phenomenon was a problem not only in the eyes of God---as a *hillul hashem*, but also an important problem for the broader non-Jewish New York public. Mendes and the “right-thinking” Jews who served on the Committee for Religious Organization seemed genuinely concerned with how the mixture of prayer in a profane place might disturb the worshippers, and worked tirelessly to provide suitable worship venues. At the same time, they concerned themselves with how this disorganization might appear to non-Jews. Likewise, an *American Hebrew* writer, defined only as “A Holiday Saunterer,” emphasized his perspective as an objective observer walking the streets of New York on Yom Kippur—from the Bronx to Harlem to the Lower East Side--- and seemed to be dismayed with the appearance of Jews worshipping in temporary synagogues, describing the activity he witnessed on the streets of the city as “unseemly” and in general, “a rotten state of affairs.” Because the “Holiday Saunterer” makes no mention of entering a synagogue during his jaunt through the city, his perspective as an outsider lays emphasis not on the *hillul hashem* that allegedly went on inside the synagogues, but rather on what New Yorkers might observe from outside the synagogue.

Downtown writers for the Orthodox Yiddish press were decidedly less interested in the outward appearance of temporary synagogues to the New York public, and concentrated instead on the *hillul hashem* that unfolded within the walls

⁴⁸ 1906---listed as member of Committee of Fourteen on letterhead. Committee of Fourteen Records, Box #1, “General Correspondence, 1905-1912,” Folder 1, 1905-1911. Manuscript and Archive Division, Special Collections, New York Public Library. Thank you to Jennifer Fronc for bringing this to my attention.

of transformed dancing halls, moving picture halls and saloons and created an unsatisfactory setting for a worshipper to pray to God. In relating the story of a newly-arrived immigrant who, for lack of viable neighborhood alternatives, settled for a temporary synagogue in a local moving pictures hall, the *Morgen Zhurnal* underlined how business overruled piety in the temporary synagogue:

At *ma'ariv* [evening prayer service], when the audience had not yet finished the *shmoneh esreh* [eighteen benedictions, recited in the middle of the service], [the manager] entered and began to pull the cantor by his prayer shawl, "Hurry up, Mister, make it quick! The people are waiting outside!"⁴⁹

To make room for the evening's movie-goers, the "management" expelled the congregants before the prayer session had finished. Not too subtly, the *Morgen zhurnal* suggested that many of the temporary synagogues, housed in profane places, could not provide the holy atmosphere required to serve God. The *Morgen zhurnal* urged unaffiliated Jews in search of tickets to buy from established organizations, such as Talmud Torahs, which would use the income to support communal causes rather than line the pockets of movie hall entrepreneurs.

The Kehillah sought to address the criticisms of *hillul hashem* as perceived by both downtown and uptown observers, as it called for an improvement in the internal and external organization of the holiday season's prayer services. Founded in 1909 by uptown and downtown Jews representing various sectors (Orthodox, Reform, but not socialist) of the community, the Kehillah championed the support of permanent synagogues and religious organizations. The first large-scale organization of New York's Jewish community, the Kehillah deemed crime, education, philanthropy, and religious affairs within their purview. One of the religious committee's first priorities

⁴⁹ "Prayed Alone," A.D. Ogus, September 17, 1912.

would, in fact, be an attack on the temporary synagogues, and the unruliness they represented.⁵⁰ By administering their own Days of Awe worship services, decorous ceremonies led by qualified officials, the Kehillah's religious committee aimed to solve the dissolute mixing of sacred services in profane places.⁵¹

In 1909, its first year, the Kehillah hired cantors to conduct holiday services at four places of worship on the Lower East Side and Harlem. After some debate over whether to charge a nominal fee, the decision was made to distribute free tickets at pre-announced locations.⁵² The clamor for tickets was such that "the tickets [were] exhausted 24 hours after they were delivered by the printer." Demand far outweighed supply, and on the day of the services, Kehillah officials granted "ticketless" men and women permission to stand in the halls. Even with these overflow crowds, the "orderly and decorous, and impressive services" so pleased the committee that it resolved to plan for at least 25 provisional synagogues "throughout Greater New York" for the next holiday season.⁵³

⁵⁰ It could be argued that on one level, the same impetuses that motivated them to create a Bureau on Crime to rid the Jewish neighborhoods of unseemly criminal organizations and deter Jewish children from joining gangs also motivated them to clear the area of the disreputable entrepreneurs and their mushroom synagogues. On the Kehillah see, Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment*.

⁵¹ Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Kehillah, June 1909.

⁵² Synagogue services were organized in the auditoriums of Clinton Hall, the Hebrew Technical School for Girls, the Hebrew Technical Institute and the Young Women's Hebrew Association. Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Kehillah, August 10, 1909.

⁵³ Minutes of Executive Meeting of the Kehillah, October 12, 1909.

In the next few years, the Kehillah continued to expand its efforts, establishing provisional synagogues in Brooklyn, the Bronx as well as Harlem and the Lower East Side. They also introduced special children's services in these areas.⁵⁴ Yet complaints from the leaders of permanent synagogues, who viewed the Kehillah activity as an intrusion on their territory and a loss of profit caused the Kehillah to open fewer of its own synagogues than originally planned, and to compensate, it purchased tickets from established synagogues to disburse. In doing so, it sent the message that it viewed the permanent synagogues' services as more reputable and decorous than the temporary synagogues. This message was further underlined when, in 1912, the Kehillah commissioned an investigative study to report on the conditions of the temporary synagogue: the fact that the investigation restricted itself to temporary synagogues reflected the assumption that permanent synagogues did not threaten the respectability of the community.

Applying the social science methods of contemporary reform agencies, the team of investigators hired by the Kehillah spent the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur of 1912 counting and visiting the city's 286 temporary synagogues.⁵⁵ The report confirmed the Kehillah's worst suspicions, listing egregious

⁵⁴ Minutes of Executive Meeting of the Kehillah, September 12, 1911, October 10, 1911. The adult services were held in at the Hebrew Technical School for Girls on Second Avenue and 15th Street and the Young Women's Hebrew Association (Lexington Ave and 100th Street), and seven children's synagogues were held on the East Side, Brooklyn, Harlem and the Bronx. In 1912, the Kehillah increased its number of provisional synagogues to seven, and purchased 300 tickets from existing synagogues for distribution, ultimately serving over 1495 people.

⁵⁵ The hiring of canvassers to assess religious identification and synagogue affiliation perhaps was sparked and informed by methods employed by Walter Laidlaw's Federation of Churches and Christian Workers of New York City. Beginning in 1896 and continuing through the first decade of the twentieth century, the Protestant federation hired canvassers to collect data on New York neighborhood's residents' religious tendencies. The results of these "sociological canvasses" were published in the Federation's annual reports and in its journal, *Federation*. In 1918, the Kehillah's

examples of the unholy mixture of the sacred and the profane. In one dance hall the entrepreneurs had relegated the ark to a corner, and covered it with a sheet during the interim days between the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Such callous treatment of a Torah and its ark dramatically exemplified the strongest charge against the mushroom synagogue entrepreneurs: that they lacked respect for Judaism.

Another holiday worship venue was located in a hall that displayed pictures and picture frames during the week; the visibility of “graven images,” one investigator noted, should have disqualified the hall as a site of Orthodox worship.⁵⁶ The investigators stated that

by far the majority [of temporary synagogues] were conducted in cheap dance halls, theaters, moving picture places, factory lofts, sweatshops and meeting-rooms which are either connected with saloons or are otherwise so dingy and unclean as to make them entirely unsuitable for the holding of religious services.

One of these “dingy and unclean” venues hosted prizefights every Thursday evening. In another service, at Max Gabel’s Comedy Theater, ticket-buyers waited in vain for the prayer leader to arrive on Rosh Hashanah. Apparently, Rev. Moses Hotz, the entrepreneur/prayer leader who had rented the theater and sold the tickets had become disappointed with dismal sales. Conceding defeat, he fled the Suffolk Street theater, leaving “the congregation on Rosh Hashonah to drift for itself without a chasan [cantor].” The uninformed crowds waited and waited, becoming increasingly

Jewish Communal Register also shows how evidence collected on high holy days mirrors this dynamic of applying modern, social techniques to the gathering of religious information. For more on Laidlaw, see Jon Butler, “Protestant Success in the New American City, 1870-1920,” in Harry Stout and D.G. Hart, eds., *New Directions in American Religious History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Hugh McLeod, *Piety and Poverty: Working Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York, 1870-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1996).

⁵⁶ Solomon Foster, in *Workingman and the Synagogue*, 1910, also notes the appearance of covered arks in the corner of dance halls during the Days of Awe.

outraged as the day wore on. When evening came with no services having been conducted, Max Gabel himself placated the outraged crowds by distributing tickets to the evening show! Gabel then made arrangements to hire a replacement prayer leader for Yom Kippur.⁵⁷

Yet despite the notorious reputations of temporary synagogues, ticket buyers appear to have preferred to attend temporary synagogues rather than permanent ones. At most of the temporary synagogues the prayer leaders did in fact appear, and the worst that the investigators had to offer regarding the halls was a less than favorable assessment of their physical appearance: “unfit for the purpose from the hygienic point of view, since they are dark and shabby and poorly ventilated.”⁵⁸ Despite the investigators’ personal disdain, they did acknowledge that ticket buyers themselves seemed to think that temporary synagogues on the average were *more*, rather than less, aesthetically appealing than many of the permanent synagogues. The Kehillah report cited aesthetics as one of three main reasons why the temporary synagogue appealed to the ticket buyer:

Many of the halls where temporary synagogues are held are much more attractive physically, are much cleaner and more sanitary than many of the permanent synagogues. For many of the synagogues that are located in the sweat-shop buildings, especially in the Galican quarter between Ridge and Goerck Streets, are from the point of view of cleanliness and sanitary conditions terribly repulsive.⁵⁹

A survey of temporary synagogues’ advertisements in the Yiddish papers supports this theory: one advertisement for a prayer service to be held in Tammany Hall

⁵⁷ “Investigative Report,” Report to Executive Committee, October, 1912.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

invited prospective ticket-buyers to “the finest and airiest hall in all of New York.” Likewise, the Bronx Casino assured its readers that the “hall is big, airy, and well lit, and you will be comfortable.”⁶⁰ On the other hand, evidence supports the notion that permanent synagogues were not the most serene places of worship. One early twentieth century observer noted that most of the over one hundred synagogues he surveyed were not “anything more than halls or large rooms in tenement-houses, sometimes above or below a drinking-place, and in a few instances in a ball-room, which on Saturdays puts off its unholy garb.”⁶¹ Thus even many of the synagogues classified as “permanent” were in fact halls and business establishments also re-outfitted for sacred purposes; the only difference is that they went through these transformations on a weekly basis, throughout the year instead of just once a year for the Days of Awe.⁶²

Still, even if the temporary synagogues could be made decorous enough to draw ticket buyers away from the permanent synagogues, wouldn't the accompanying taint of bad business ultimately make the permanent synagogues more successful? The answer to this question forces us to reconsider the assumption that the permanent synagogues were immune from the business tactics associated with the mushroom synagogue entrepreneurs. Having no central authority to turn to for financial support, permanent synagogues also realized they could generate funds by selling tickets to

⁶⁰ *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 20, 1914.

⁶¹ Edward Steiner, “The Russian and Polish Jew in New York,” *The Outlook*, vol. 72, Nov. 1, 1902. p. 533.

⁶² In 1917, the Kehillah reported that only 77 out of 435 Lower East Side congregations had their own buildings, *Jewish Communal Register*, 122.

non-members. To reach the “unsynagogued” they also hired special prayer leaders, and advertised heavily. *The New York Post* reported that “the net proceeds from the sale of seats are in many instances the main source of the congregation’s income.”⁶³ Much to the dismay of Efroyim Kaplan, a commentator in the Orthodox press, local shuls pasted “posters, playbills, advertisements, handbills, circulars and announcements” all over their facades, “from the roof to the basement.” Kaplan quotes the “nauseating, bombastic prose, with clumsy bluff exaggerations” used to describe the qualities of the congregation’s cantor and choirs. One example hailed a cantor’s voice as “five hundred times stronger and sweeter than Caruso’s” which had the power to “render obscure all the other singers and cantors from the time of the six days of creation up to the present.”⁶⁴ This “grating market tone,” Kaplan wrote, constituted a blatant desecration of God, for the walls of the synagogue should be unhampered by such material matters.⁶⁵ The 1912 Kehillah canvass also testified to the proliferation of permanent synagogues’ advertisements, claiming that their

⁶³ *New York Post*, September 15, 1897. Quoted in Rudolf Glanz, “Jewish Social Conditions as Seen by the Muckrakers,” *YIVO Annual*, vol. 9, 1954, p. 327. See also, Moses Rischin, *The Promised City*, on how synagogues, hoping to alleviate debt on their properties, competed with one another to hire cantors who would in turn, attract ticket-buyers for the High Holidays, p. 138. According to Peter Wiernik, *History of the Jews in America*, synagogues achieved more financial security by the first decade of the twentieth century, and the rivalries inherent in attracting the most popular cantor subsided, p. 284-5. (New York: The Jewish History Publishing Company, 1931), 2nd edition (first edition: 1912.)

⁶⁴ “The appearance of our shuls,” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 19, 1912. See also, “Elul in Amerike,” Efroyim Kaplan, *MJ*, September 15, 1910. Efroyim Kaplan, a permanent writer for the *Morgen zhurnal* from 1907 until his death in 1943, was considered among the “most distinguished agents of Orthodox Judaism.” The son of a Vilna rabbi, Kaplan received a traditional yeshiva education and became a writer in Russia. He pursued his writing career when he came to America in 1904. *Leksikon fun der nayer yidische literatur*, vol. I (New York: Marstin Press, 1956), p. 90.

⁶⁵ For more on Yiddish culture and American advertising, see Heinze’s chapter, “American Bluff,” in *Adapting to Abundance*, pp. 161-177.

number created an impression that there “were more temporary synagogues for the High Holidays than really exist.”⁶⁶

Thus, many of the established congregations engaged in the same type of business practices as the temporary synagogues, also selling tickets and using “undignified” methods “to attract sitters.”⁶⁷ Some of the cantors hired to lead services in both the temporary and permanent synagogues were indeed well known, although it seems reasonable to speculate that many of the singers lauded as “world-renowned” with voices like “fifty canaries” had never been heard in public before. Indeed, the press described prayer leaders as “more showmen than cantors.”⁶⁸ One commentary imaginatively adopted the perspective of a Days of Awe cantor to describe the situation:

Many cantors say...whoever has a bit of a voice for singing and is an impertinent person, for him the Days of Awe are a time to make some money. One does not need to be a fine man, or a pious man, or a scholar. He may be the biggest loafer, the most impure person, and do every forbidden thing; he may be the coarsest youth and not know any Hebrew. He may even thumb his nose at the business under the *tallis* [prayer shawl], as long as he can sing a bit, all of the other things don't matter and he can take a cantorial position and earn money.⁶⁹

Since serving as a Days of Awe prayer leader was a temporary job, entrepreneurs found it difficult to fill the jobs and became increasingly less scrupulous; as one critic

⁶⁶ “Investigative Report,” Report to Executive Committee, October, 1912.

⁶⁷ Editorial, *American Hebrew*, 6 September 1912.

⁶⁸ “Season of Piety,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, editorial. September 21, 1908.

⁶⁹ Perek shira nakh'n yom ha din,” A.D Ogus, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 28, 1908.

pointed out, “As to moral and intellectual fitness no questions are asked.”⁷⁰ Just as permanent synagogues displayed many of the tendencies commonly associated with the temporary synagogues, many of the businessmen who conducted the temporary synagogues were not the wholly impious businessmen they were made out to be. The *Morgen Zhurnal* published an article in which it accused its own pious readers of displaying too much eagerness to earn a profit and lambasted those who exploited as a business opportunity their less religious neighbors’ desire to celebrate the Days of Awe.⁷¹ Thus, it becomes clear that the line separating pious from impious, or pure worship from pure business was extremely indeterminate.⁷² Temporary and permanent synagogues alike employed similar commercial strategies, and both profited from the religious busy season.

Why, then, did so many communal leaders, especially the Kehillah, ultimately recommend permanent synagogues over the temporary synagogues? Indeed, even after the report found that ticket-buyers preferred the temporary synagogues, viewing them as more aesthetically impressive, the Kehillah continued to prioritize the interests of the permanent synagogues, gradually ceding more and more control of the organization of provisional synagogues to already established organizations. Though in the fall of 1913, the Kehillah had organized “a larger number of provisional

⁷⁰ Solomon Foster, *The Workingman and the Synagogue*, 1910. See also, Editorial, *American Hebrew*, 6 September 1912.

⁷¹ Efroyim Kaplan, “Elul in Amerike,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, 15 September 1910.

⁷² See also the articles in the *Morgan Zhurnal* and *Der Amerikaner* which used the Days of Awe to critique the leaders and presidents of the immigrant synagogues, and their failure to accord proper respect to the leaders of religious worship, from rabbis, cantors to preachers. For example, “Preaching and the Cantorial Profession in America, A.D. Ogus, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 13, 20, 27, 1910.

synagogues than ever,” attracting more than 2000 worshippers, by 1914 the Kehillah had altered its approach, appropriating the financial and organizational responsibilities to pre-existing synagogues and local institutions.⁷³ The reasoning behind this was the notion that the permanent synagogue and the already established organizations were more likely to evolve into a decorous and stable housing with time. In the same way that the *Morgen zhurnal* had advised its readers to buy tickets from Talmud Torahs rather than business entrepreneurs, the Kehillah most likely advocated the support of organizations that had a larger and more permanent stake in the community: “Such temporary synagogues organized by permanent organizations, even when conducted in unsuitable or unseemly quarters, have the distinct advantage of having the redeeming feature of using funds derived out of the sale of tickets for public work.”⁷⁴

From the perspective of the ticket-buyer, however, intent on purchasing tickets for the current season, and not necessarily thinking about the future of the community, the issues of organization and permanency paled in comparison to the more immediate factors of aesthetics, affordability and geography. The more legitimate places of worship, such as the established synagogues, charged more for

⁷³ Minutes, May 12, 1914, August 11, 1914. Minutes, October 8, 1912 and December 10, 1912. “Provisional Synagogues of the Kehillah,” *American Hebrew*, 19 September 1913. And Goren, *New York Jews*, p. 84.

⁷⁴ Kehillah, “Investigation of the Temporary Synagogues,” October, 1912. Meeting of the Executive Committee, October 8, 1912.

their tickets.⁷⁵ On the other hand, venues such as Adler's Theater sold seasonal tickets for as little as 50 cents. The Bronx Casino promised "the best seats at the cheapest prices."⁷⁶ Geographical trends influenced the prominence and usefulness of temporary synagogues. The report found that the actual number of temporary synagogues on the Lower East Side had been decreasing over the last few years, as a result of the general movement out of the neighborhood into neighborhoods such as Harlem and the Bronx.⁷⁷ This movement created more space in the East Side synagogue establishments while simultaneously spiking a greater demand in the newer neighborhoods. Of the 286 mushroom synagogues reported on by the 1912 committee, 95, or one-third, were located in Harlem, as opposed to fifty on the Lower East Side (south of Houston Street).⁷⁸ Thus, the committee recommended a particular

⁷⁵ Drachman, The Minutes of the Executive Meeting of the Kehillah, June 9, 1909: "He [Drachman] outlined at length the conditions of the poor who could not afford to be members of synagogues nor to purchase tickets for religious services."

⁷⁶ "Investigative Report," Report to Executive Committee, October, 1912.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Investigations carried out by the Kehillah in 1917 showed the trend had continued. Permanent synagogues in the East Broadway district could accommodate all of the holiday worshippers, whereas in East Harlem, permanent synagogues could accommodate only 57% of the worshippers; in the north Bronx, 56%, and in the south Bronx, 25%. *Jewish Communal Register*, insert graph, p. 12[x]. In terms of affordability: See also the "Report of the Religious Committee, Shebat, 29, 5760. February 8, 1910. The Vaad Horabbanim." "In the provisional synagogue work, however, our vision of provisional synagogues in every district and the total disappearance of money-making enterprises amid unholy surroundings cannot be realized in a year or in five years. If each respectable Congregation could be convinced that it does not live for itself alone, but that it owes a certain duty to a community, perhaps each Congregation would undertake to make provision for one Congregation of the unattached who cannot afford to become regular members of a regular Congregation. The subject leads to the study of the problems of the Synagogue and the working man and working woman."

⁷⁸ "Investigative Report," Report to Executive Committee, October, 1912. The rest of the synagogues were located in Lower East Side between Houston and 21st Streets: 47; Yorkville: 13; Washington Heights: 2; Bronx: 29; Brooklyn: 31; Brownsville: 15; Borough Park: 4.

focus on the newer neighborhoods, where the Jews should be called “synagogueless” rather than “unsynagogued” as “there is no place for them in the few synagogues of their places of residence.”⁷⁹ Whereas many historians have assumed that the choice of a temporary synagogue as opposed to a permanent synagogue or a Talmud Torah’s services represented less of a commitment to religion, this canvass suggests that more practical matters such as geography, cost and hygiene influenced the choice of a synagogue.

The Kehillah’s work on the mushroom synagogues was arguably its most fruitful endeavor in the area of religious work—the one area that dealt most directly with the immigrant populace. By the late 1910s more reputable organizations and institutions administered the holiday worship services. The *American Hebrew*, which, since the turn of the century, annually had run articles and editorials critiquing the temporary synagogues and the lack of decorous services, had ceased this practice by the mid-1910s, an indicator that perhaps efforts of the Kehillah and other synagogues to upgrade services had succeeded. Though the Kehillah’s *Jewish Communal Register* reported a total of 343 “provisional synagogues” for the 1917 season, it noted that pre-existing synagogues and fraternal organizations administered over 50% of them.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ “Investigative Report,” Report to Executive Committee, October, 1912.

⁸⁰ The venues for the provisional synagogues—whether organized by private businessmen or established organizations-- ranged from the rental of private halls (165), moving picture halls (59), institutions (31), private homes (26), lofts (9), clubs (8), churches (6) and miscellaneous/blank (14). The Kehillah reports that ticket prices for the services ranged from seventy five cents to \$3.00. [Advertisements earlier in the decade seemed to offer a broader range of prices, from fifty cents to \$5.00.]

The Kehillah, which strove to represent the entire Jewish community, viewed the Days of Awe season as an incredible opportunity. The Days of Awe was the one season during the year in which Jews, despite political or ethnic divisions, almost universally came together for public prayer.⁸¹ As much as the Kehillah, in its attempts to extirpate the temporary synagogues, railed against the disreputable nature of them, it is reasonable to assume that the organization, which aimed to establish itself as *the* representative organization of the Jewish population in New York City, was also attracted by the demand for religious services that fueled the spread of the mushroom synagogues. After all, the mushroom synagogue phenomenon pointed to the most widely observed public Jewish event of the year. In the Kehillah's 1918 *Jewish Communal Register*, Mordecai Kaplan estimated that at least 100,000 Jewish men and women were "exploited" by the businessmen who ran mushroom synagogues; at the same, time, he saw the demand for religion inherent in this dynamic:

What a wonderful opportunity is this for organized Jewish effort! The dormant Jewish will-to-live of these thousands ought not to be permitted to be made into a means of private gain. With proper organization, it could be impressed into the service of the communal cause, and developed into a living, active Jewish consciousness.⁸²

Another contemporary critic of the mushroom synagogues, the *Jewish Daily Forward* also spotted the signs of this "active Jewish consciousness" and the way in which the Days of Awe encouraged it. Clearly, the leader of the socialist press zeroed

⁸¹ The universality of religious practice during these days is testified by the fact that demographers actually configured Jewish population by factoring in the attendance rate at public schools.

⁸² M.M. Kaplan, "Affiliation With The Synagogue," *Jewish Communal Register* (New York: 1918), p. 129.

in on the profit and commerce, using it as a means to show how the American capitalist spirit had rendered holiday observance a farce, a “busy season for religion.”⁸³ Yet dismissing this religious activity as merely another manifestation of American capitalism was not satisfactory, and the *Forward* turned its attention back to the demand that fueled the holiday commerce. It interpreted the upsurge as pure “superstition,” a simple-minded fear of God’s wrath; animalistic fear caused the “driving rain of piety.” People feared not for their souls, but rather for their flesh: “It is only a trembling, as when an animal hears thunder. And here there is the thunder of the Days of Awe which men are frightened of.”⁸⁴ Even as it belittled the emotions as superstition, in devoting space to this fear, the *Forward* acknowledged that there was more to this market than the mere acquisition of goods. As we saw in Chapter Two, “enlightened” socialists acknowledged the lingering belief in God that the Days of Awe somehow elicited. Though the *Forward* interpreted this religious activity in a

⁸³ “Yarid fun makhzorim,” *Jewish Daily Forward*, September 16, 1902. In a particularly scathing article, it compared the market-heavy nature surrounding the Days of Awe unfavorably to the sincerity of the holiday in Eastern Europe. The traditional prayer books “and everything that has any kind of connection to the holidays and piety...sold like hot blintzes.” But though the people buy religious goods, they neglect their repentance, instead participating in the market fair just like it was a “busy season for cloaks or seasonal hats.” To illustrate this point, the *Forward* relayed a mock interaction between a peddler selling prayer books and a prospective buyer. The prospective buyer displayed interest in the prayer book, but considered the dollar price too high, and offered seventy-five cents. The peddler refused. The buyer then tried another tactic:

--Well, I will give you a dollar, but add something to it. A dollar is too much.

--What can I put down? A pack of *tsitsis*.

--That’s right, a pack of *tsitsis*; I will buy them for my old woman, she is pious, you know.

In this exchange, the writer mocked the way business, and the prospect of saving a quarter had cheapened the religious experience. Further, the reporter humorously showcased the haggler’s ignorance of Jewish tradition when he depicted his request for *tsitsis*, garments worn by religious *men*, for his wife. The silken prayer shawls also sold on the street became another object of derision, as the writer comments that in Europe, having a worn prayer shawl served as a badge of honor, for it pointed to its actual use and hence, the piety of the owner. In America, he argued, the rush for new prayer shawls on a yearly basis emphasized the showiness of the garment rather than the sincerity of its owner.

⁸⁴ “The Trembling of the Days of Awe,” *Forward*, 17 September 1902.

thoroughly negative light, whether from the perspective of commerce or superstition, the fact remains that it felt obligated to address this sustained demand for public worship.

Thus, in the end, most parties recognized the importance of the demand for public worship that fueled the business of the mushroom synagogues. Admittedly, the commercial spirit necessary in bringing services to the “unsynagogued” or “synagogueless” masses in the immigrant neighborhoods engendered its share of business operators interested in nothing other than profit, yet that they profited from this is telling. In one of the most forceful critiques of the profit-driven antics of a coterie of entrepreneurs who rented churches for holiday services, a reporter for the *Orthodox Morgen Zhurnal* exclaimed that these businessmen “themselves have no faith in their hearts and undoubtedly would prefer to arrange an anarchist Yom Kippur ball if this would pay better.”⁸⁵ But, of course, the Yom Kippur balls that existed primarily in the early 1890s and gradually diminished in importance over the first decade of the twentieth century did not pay better.⁸⁶ The vast majority of immigrant Jews, regardless of their piety over the course of the year, opted to pray in public during the Days of Awe and waited in line to buy tickets for religious services.

Though wary of the business tactics surrounding the busy season of piety, and skeptical of devotion expressed only on a yearly basis, the Orthodox press expressed the most optimism over this seasonal demand for religious accommodation. It openly

⁸⁵ “Di Kloister Iden [The Church Jews],” Efrogim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 24 September 1916.

⁸⁶ For example, see *New York Daily Tribune*, “Rioting in the Ghetto,” September 26, 1898 in which a resident of the neighborhood spoke of anarchist balls held in the early 1890s as opposed to the late 1890s.

criticized the business element of the season, but more importantly, recognized in the continued demand for places of worship a more sincere demand for religion that it wished to nurture. At times writers and editorialists denounced the Yom Kippur Jew as lazy, but they also defended the Yom Kippur Jew and strove to highlight his religious devotion. In an editorial simply titled “The Yom Kippur Jews,” the *Morgen Zhurnal* looked to the tradition to justify a more lenient and accepting attitude towards the Yom Kippur Jew. This 1906 editorial relayed how in the days of Rav Yokhanan, a man by the name of Rav Idi used to travel a great distance to study for one day at Yokhanan’s famous center of learning. The other students, who studied daily, naturally laughed at this man, dubbing him “the one who only studies for one day.” But Rav Yokhanan remonstrated them, explaining that “one who studies only one day a year should be treated as one who studies all year long.” The editorialist recognized the leap in applying this lesson to that of New York’s Yom Kippur Jews, for the first case involved studying, not just prayer, but nevertheless argued for its applicability, explaining that since the time of Rav Idi, the religion in general had weakened considerably. More importantly, the editorial stressed how even one day of study or prayer shows that an individual feels bound or connected to broader Jewry, despite the irregularity of prayer and study:

The single visit to a *shul*, or even to a hall or to a temple where they don’t cover their heads, is still a sign that the visitor is not completely cut off from the religious life...The same Jew under other circumstances would stand much closer to Judaism than he does now. The circumstances that keep him from coming more often are perhaps negligence, laziness, or indifference. But he is not an adversary, not a spiteful one (*lehakhis ’nik*). The Yom Kippur Jew is a Jew and needs to be treated as a Jew.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ “Di Yom Kippur Iden,” editorial, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 28, 1906.

Thus, the Orthodox press treated the Jews who arrived to pray rather sympathetically. A story published in the *American Hebrew* echoed this sentiment, seeing the potential in the Yom Kippur Jew, despite his faults: ““There is hope for this man, so let us make room for him.””⁸⁸

Efforts to streamline religious worship service revealed the disorganization of the community with regard to religious affairs; at the same time, they also showed how despite this disorganization, immigrants with limited means and time still managed to find a place to pray. Though it is possible to condemn—as the contemporary critics did—the chicanery and profit-seeking of many of those who organized the temporary synagogues, it is also important to note that business, advertisement and fundraising efforts were undertaken by the permanent synagogues as well, showing how intrinsic these methods were to the full-scale organization of prayer. Moreover, as recognized by the Kehillah, the orthodox press, and even, to an extent, the socialist press, the Days of Awe extracted a widespread demand among Jews to worship together as collective groups.

The construction of an American Jewish Collective: *K'lal Yisroel*

Writing in 1929, while in his early thirties, Lower East Side born and bred Zalmen Yoffeh, a child of immigrants, recalled the Yom Kippur atmosphere of the synagogue he attended in his childhood and adolescence, and in turn, the emotions of the worshippers:

⁸⁸ “Enter---The Yom Kippur Jews,” Bernard G. Richards, *The American Hebrew*, September 6, 1907.

The shul itself was different, too. There were many more lights than usual, and it was much more crowded. All the men sat with shoeless feet, and nobody ever dreamed of opening a window. Everybody prayed with feverish intensity. There was none of the lightness that was often present on the ordinary Sabbath. From the women's section came the sound of weeping and wailing. To me it was always a physical and emotional upheaval. Something big and overwhelming was happening to us, to all Israel. What was it all about? I would rush out of the synagogue when services ended.⁸⁹

Most of the memoirs and oral interview literature testify to the fear and intensity of the Days of Awe season; few of them, however, express these emotions as eloquently and with such intensity as Yoffeh.⁹⁰ Yoffeh's description proves particularly insightful for the manner in which he binds his own emotions to that of the broader collective. Initially, he prefaces his account with the personal, "to me," yet, in the very next sentence, he explains that what made him feel so overwhelmed was the sense that "something big and powerful was happening to us, all of Israel." Yoffeh links his personal feelings not only to the crowded synagogue population he has described, but in turn connects that crowded synagogue to the broader Jewish collective. This section seeks to explore and answer Yoffeh's question: "What was it all about?" Once enwrapped in new prayer shawls, or a new silk dress, adorned with a necklace or wristwatch recently redeemed from the pawnshop, and surrounded by fellow Jews in a hall of public worship, how did the immigrants experience the

⁸⁹ Zalmen Yoffeh, *Menorah Journal* XVII (December, 1929), pp. 538-9.

⁹⁰ Although not a memoir, the personal recollection in Hayim Soloveitchik's pathbreaking article, "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy," depicts the overwhelming sense of awe characteristic of the immigrant generation. Soloveitchik recalls how as a child attending a Boston synagogue comprised mostly of Eastern European immigrants, he could sense the fear among the worshippers: "...at the closing service of Yom Kippur, the Ne'ilah, the synagogues filled and a hush set in upon the crowd. The tension was palpable and tears were shed. What had been instilled in these people in their earliest childhood, and which they never quite shook off, was that each person was judged on Yom Kippur, and, as the sun was setting, the final decision was being rendered..." *Tradition* 28:4, 1994, p. 99.

holiday? How did individuals mentally prepare themselves to become part of a larger collective? What kinds of guidance did they have? How did Jews bind together spiritually in the formation of a collective, or *k'lal yisrael*?

The Orthodox Yiddish press acts as a guide to the meanings of *k'lal yisrael* in this generation, for the sermon-like articles that filled the pages of the papers are geared to channel seasonal anxiety or personal fear into a sense of the collective. In general, various accounts, from contemporary observers to later historians, have anointed the Yiddish press as the most important authoritative voice in the immigrant Jewish neighborhoods. In the absence of rabbis, editors attuned to both the physical hardships and spiritual needs of their readers gradually established prominent advisory roles through their mass-distributed newspapers. Most often, these comparisons have focused on Abraham Cahan and the *Forward*, in part because it was the most popular of the newspapers, and consequently, the one most studied by latter-day scholars.⁹¹ The present analysis, however, focuses instead on the Orthodox press, in particular the *Morgen Zhurnal*, as it examines how the Yiddish press guided its readers on matters of religion. By focusing on the Days of Awe, it shows how writers rhetorically adopted the duties of the traditional East European preacher or

⁹¹ See for example, the observations of contemporary sociologist, W.I. Thomas, as recorded by Marvin Bressler's dissertation, "Jewish Behavior Patterns as Exemplified in W.I. Thomas' Unfinished Study of the Bintl Brief," University of Pennsylvania, 1952. Also, for scholarly sources on the importance of the Yiddish press as a source of communal authority, see Arthur A. Goren, "Pageants of Sorrow, Celebration and Protest," in *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 32-33; Goren, "Saints and Sinners: The Underside of American Jewish History," *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, 1988, p. 21: "Other devices in some small measure filled the vacuum, the press for one." Tony Michels, "Socialist Politics and the Making of Yiddish Culture in New York City, 1890-1923," Ph. D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1998, pp. 17-18.

rabbi who used the Sabbath in between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (*Shabes shuveh*, or Sabbath of Return) to deliver a sermon rousing listeners to repentance.⁹²

Using this window of time and drawing upon the drama of repentance and return, the *Morgen Zhurnal* devoted articles to the specific and general meanings of the holidays, and shepherded readers through the stages of the holidays. Writers offered advice on how to repent, and how to improve one's character for the coming year. In both timing and tone, the journalists for the Orthodox press followed in the footsteps of rabbis and preachers who aimed to encourage repentance. To a large extent, these articles served as pointed critiques and laments of the immigrant Jews, their congregations, and their deviance from piety. At the same time, it could be argued that the writers and editorialists wrote these negative accounts in order to inspire better behavior. They would call attention to this negative behavior, and perhaps even exaggerate the extent of it, in an effort to shock readers into more pious behavior. Appearing before Rosh Hashanah, and again before Yom Kippur, the timing of these articles allowed for a constructive role in effecting better behavior before the final Day of Atonement.

The articles and sermons urged a recognition of readers' emotional, as well as financial obligation not just to the local Jewish community, but to the global Jewish community; to this end, they wove the events of the past year, whether pogroms or the devastation of World War One, into the framework of the holiday. These sermon-like editorials worked to inspire fear in the communities, and for our purpose, serve to

⁹² See Hayim Schauss, *The Jewish Festivals* (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations), 1938. p. 149: "The Saturday between the two holidays is called Sabbath *Shuvoh*, from the first word of the portion of the Prophets which is read on that day [Hosea 14:2]. This Sabbath is observed much more strictly than are ordinary Sabbaths, and the rabbi delivers a long sermon before the afternoon prayers, in which he endeavors to arouse the congregation to whole-hearted penitence."

elucidate the collective themes of the season in the immigrant generation. In this section, we will examine the articles, sermons and editorials of the Orthodox papers, specifically the *Morgen Zhurnal*, as well as Days of Awe sermons drawn from published collections of sermons, drawing out the guidelines for collective behavior in the immigrant generation.⁹³

Repeatedly, sermons and editorials pronounced that the Days of Awe served as a time to remind oneself of one's Jewish identity and one's essential separateness not only from the world of business but also from the non-Jewish world more broadly: "... [D]o not forget that Rosh Hashona is the New Year just for the Jews and not for the whole world. The other peoples, those who compose the majority of humanity, [view Rosh Hashona as an ordinary day]."⁹⁴ Jews observed their New Year, as the writer Y. Pfeffer explained, not like the non-Jews celebrated their New Year, with parties and celebrations, but rather in a more pensive and solemn manner. Another article by Pfeffer reinforces the notion that Jews should use the holidays to distinguish themselves from their daily life and their identities as Americanizing immigrants:

The change in the time counting is a Jewish one. It is not the change of a business year. It is not a regular calendar year. It is the year of the Jewish people, and this change can only be considered from a Jewish standpoint.⁹⁵

⁹³ See Menachem Blondheim, "Divine Comedy," in Werner Sollors, ed., *Multilingual America* (New York: New York University Press, 1998) for an excellent description and analysis of the role of Yiddish preachers and their sermons in America, 1880-1950.

⁹⁴ "Rosh Hashanah, What One Must Ask for and What One Must Not: The interests of all Jews," Y Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 21, 1906.

⁹⁵ "At the End of the Year," Y. Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 28, 1908.

Efroyim Kaplan reaffirmed this notion of a specific Jewish standpoint as he argued that even though the Jewish New Year ushered in a time of “tears and sorrowful prayers” as opposed to the non-Jewish customs of attending a “happy, cheerful party” involving “dance” and “drink,” the holidays united “all the Jews and brings the half-lost and half-rejected of our people back to the Jewish situation.”⁹⁶ Something about the holiday serves to draw people in, and remind them of their identity and their distinctiveness as part of the Jewish people:

During the Days of Awe, which begin with Rosh Hashana, the cold Jews will warm up a bit, and our people will be refreshed with new energy and will have more Jewish courage to swim against the stream and hold fast to Judaism despite all the persecutions and oppressions they have endured because of it.⁹⁷

Without explaining why, Kaplan argued that the essential purpose of the Days of Awe was to reinforce one’s identity as a Jew. Even though they may forget their hours spent praying to God and regretting their “non-Jewish behavior,” the rituals serve to bind them to the Jewish collective: “Rosh Hashanah reminds us that we are a special nation, that we have entirely separate national customs, with an entirely different calendar than other nations.”⁹⁸

In a sense, just as the holiday provided a window of time in which one could forgive and be forgiven, the Orthodox press used the heightened interest in religious matters to connect with the “unsynagogued” Yom Kippur Jew:

⁹⁶ “Unser Neye Yohr [Our New Year],” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 1918.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

On Yom Kippur fresh, warm blood flows in their veins and they awake and crawl out of their narrow, constricted frames. The memory returns to them and they remember that they are a part of the general Jewish world and they find themselves obligated to appear on the “Day of Judgment” just like the entire Jewish community.⁹⁹

Indeed, as these various writers noted, it seemed as if the Days of Awe and especially the coming of the New Year offered potential for a return to Judaism and the Jewish people. This was a time when those who had been entwined and absorbed in business matters the year through could now, if only briefly, attend to their spiritual side. The press magnified this sentiment of return by depicting extreme cases of “renewal.” Stories were printed—both real and fictional—of men and women who had absented themselves from religion for years only to find themselves unexpectedly brought back into the fold during the Days of Awe. Many of these accounts highlight the geographical importance of New York, with its concentration of Jews, as a vital factor in reawakening Jewish consciousness in errant Jews. In Ogun’s story, “Back to Jewishness,” a portrait is drawn of an immigrant named Todros Shitshik. Before coming to America from Lithuania, Todros prayed dutifully and obeyed Jewish law. In America, alas, he adopts the name Thomas Smith, and discards his Jewish observance in almost direct proportion to the growth of his successful business. Later in his career, he and his family relocate to New York City, where he establishes another successful business. One autumn day, he opens a package someone had left behind at the store and finds *makhzorim*. The unexpected sight of the Hebrew words and their meanings stir his soul, and he undergoes what Ogun calls a “*tekhias hameysim*,” a reawakening of the dead. He decides to bring his family to services, and

⁹⁹ “An entire people’s confession of sins,” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 29 September 1914.

the story ends with Shitsik/Smith described as a “practicing Jew.”¹⁰⁰ With less enthusiasm than the *Morgen Zhurnal*, the *Forward* also addressed this phenomenon of Days of Awe Jews’ return to religion. One writer recounted the story of an immigrant who for many years lived in the South, where she had forgotten about religion and did not even notice when the Days of Awe came around. But after her husband died, she returns to New York, taking up residence in Harlem and returning to Jewish folkways. On the Days of Awe, the Jewish community of Harlem no longer seems resonant enough, and she relocates to the Lower East Side, where the number of Jews and synagogues allows her to become even more immersed in the Days of Awe.¹⁰¹ In underlining the inescapability of one’s Jewish identity, even in America, both of these stories point to the combined power of the Days of Awe season and the mass of Jewish settlements to evoke and nurture one’s sense of belongingness to the broader Jewish collective.

Once their audience was reawakened to their Jewish identity, and hence, their obligations to the Jewish collective, writers emphasized the importance of public prayer. So important was this injunction that writers who normally decried the temporary synagogues conceded their usefulness in bringing Jews together as a collective. The *Morgen Zhurnal*’s Days of Awe guidelines emphasize public prayer, and in general Jewish distinctiveness. Even those who had shirked religious obligations the year round were accepted under the Jewish collective umbrella, provided that they prayed publicly with fellow Jews. Cognizant of the

¹⁰⁰ “Back to Idishkeit,” A.D.Ogus, *Morgen Zhurnal*, October 3, 1910.

¹⁰¹ “The Trembling of the Days of Awe, *Forward*, September 17, 1902.

“unsynagogued” status of many of its readers, the *Morgen Zhurnal* seemed to grudgingly accept prayer in a temporary synagogue, but developed a sort of hierarchy for prayer. If one did not have tickets to a permanent synagogue, then an established communal organization such as a Talmud Torah sufficed. Though the transformed moving halls, dance halls and saloons ranked lower on the list, they were still valued for their potential to draw Jews together in public prayer, and they certainly ranked higher than the churches-turned-synagogues. All in all, the hierarchy and the guidelines worked to reinforce this sense of distinctive collective identity.

The one exception to this injunction to pray publicly, interestingly enough, is one in which the collective prayer fails to sufficiently assert Jews’ distinctiveness. No other activity aroused the ire of certain community leaders more than the practice of Days of Awe services held in churches, which, like the phenomenon of temporary synagogues in general, proved particularly widespread in areas of newer Jewish settlement, such as Yorkville, Harlem, the Bronx, and areas of Long Island. In an article entitled “The Church Jews,” Efroyim Kaplan explores what he calls a new type of Jew in the history of the Jewish people: one who prays in a church. Kaplan dismisses the businessmen who arrange such affairs outright, and of those who “put an *amud* [lectern] under a cross,” nothing good can be said for they are in it “only for the money.” Worth pondering, Kaplan writes, is the psychology of the Jew who buys tickets to pray in a church. Clearly, the Church Jew harbors some attachment to the religion, otherwise he would not close his business, purchase a block of tickets, and gather his family to pray. Unlike the businessmen who arrange these affairs, and rather like all those who actually worship on the Days of Awe, those who assemble

have some sincere spark of interest and attachment to the holidays. Still, Kaplan emphasizes that praying in a church is simply indefensible.¹⁰²

Why? Though the church Jews seemed to follow the guidelines by gathering their families to pray with other Jews, thus seemingly rendering themselves distinct from the rest of the New York populace, their choice of venue fails to sufficiently demarcate Jews' collective distinctiveness. For Kaplan, in fact, it has the potential to harm the future of Judaism by confusing the children. He argues that though an adult Jew understands that Christian iconography and crosses do not belong to Judaism, Jewish children will be misled. For how should they know the distinctive symbols of their religion? The parents then, act as “unknowing missionaries” and “agents of apostasy” who “are indirectly showing their children [how to] throw off the yoke of Judaism and receive the yoke of the cross.” Following this train of thought, Kaplan prophesies that the children of the so-called “Church Jews” will become apostates as they have already become accustomed to the Christian iconography and setting. And for the child, the distinction between Judaism and Christianity will become only a matter of form, or variety, akin to the difference between *nusakh sefarad* and *nusakh ashkenazi* [two different regional customs of prayer among Jews]. After all, even though America offers Jews the freedom to practice their religion, it is still more convenient and comfortable to be Christian.¹⁰³

Although it is highly improbable that the children of the “Church Jews” actually converted to Christianity, the point made regarding the potential blurring of

¹⁰² “Di Kloister Iden [The Church Jews],” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 24, 1916.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Jewish distinctiveness by the “Church Jews” had touched a communal nerve. One Orthodox Jew, when asked his opinion on the growing use of churches by a *New York Daily Tribune* reporter, responded, “I don’t like this thing. It is all right in case of fire or a like disaster to use one another’s churches, but our inherited belief is so entirely different from the Christian religion that it seems wrong to use their houses of worship.”¹⁰⁴ Kaplan even went so far as to argue that it would be preferable for Jews to pray alone at home, rather than pray publicly in a church. He urged sensible readers to go out into the streets and convince their confused friends and neighbors of the danger of praying in churches:

We need to start a great, energetic, and mighty enlightening agitation against the new church *idishkeit*. People need to go from house to house in the neighborhoods of the “church *minyanim*” and speak personally with each Jew and explain to him that it is a lot easier and better for him to sit at home on Yom Kippur and do what ever his heart desires rather than go pray in the house of Jesus.¹⁰⁵

In this request, we can see how even the phrasing suggests the ultimate fear of loss of Jewish identity. His invention of terms such as “church *idishkeit*” [church Jewishness] and “church *minyanim*” [church prayer sessions] by their very juxtaposition seem designed to shock readers of the Church Jews’ potential to blur the boundaries of Judaism and threaten the distinctiveness, and hence very survival of Jews in America.

This rant against the “Church Jews” suggests that at this time in America, the Days of Awe had become the ultimate marker of one’s Judaism. If one participated

¹⁰⁴ “Hebrews Use Churches: They Are Hired From Christians for Holiday Celebrations,” *New York Daily Tribune*, September 20, 1903.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

correctly in the Days of Awe, then one was a Jew.¹⁰⁶ It also points to the difficulties of adapting Judaism to a tolerant environment, and in the minds of some, an environment that was actually too tolerant. In Eastern Europe, one could rely on animosity towards Jews to maintain Jewish identity. In America, where churches offered their spaces to Jews, the boundaries were not so clearly drawn.¹⁰⁷ As the *New York Daily Tribune* noted: “This use of the Christian churches is regarded as a striking evidence of religious toleration on both sides, by most Jews and Christians.”¹⁰⁸ To Kaplan’s mind, it was precisely this swell of tolerance that made it all the more important for Jews to guard their boundaries and preserve their collective distinctiveness.

Although Kaplan concentrated on the mysterious “psychology” of the “church Jews,” more material factors, such as geography and income, tempered the practice of church-rentals for the holiday season. As noted previously, the bulk of such church use seems to have taken place in Yorkville and Harlem, where the Jewish presence

¹⁰⁶ See also, Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, “Ordinary immigrants went to shul at least several times a year, especially on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, having so sacred a resonance that they felt that to go then was to confirm one’s identity as a Jew,” p. 191.

¹⁰⁷ A Reverend J.S. Stone of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Saviour, on East 109th Street and Madison Avenue, praised the erosion of boundaries: “‘You see,’” he puts it, ‘in the old country the Jew was hounded. And, on his side, he looked on Jesus in times gone by as an incarnate fiend. To-day that is all changed. A Jewish rabbi told me the other day that in the Sunday school class of young Jewish women which he taught the Sermon on the Mount was studied. So thoroughly is the Jew changing his attitude that he is realizing that Jesus, if not divine, was the noblest Jew that ever lived. Personally, I am very glad to see the hand of fellowship stretched out toward the Jewish worshipper. I had Jews occupy my church at this period last year, and I was greatly impressed by their zeal.’” “‘Hebrews Use Churches: They Are Hired From Christians for Holiday Celebrations,’” *New York Daily Tribune*, September 20, 1903.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

was increasing in number but the relative newness of the settlement had not allowed sufficient time for the building of synagogues.¹⁰⁹ Attesting to this quandary is the fact that a significant number of the church rentals were carried out not by business entrepreneurs, but rather by homeless Jewish congregations. In terms of the logistics of such uses of churches by Jews, it is important to note that Jews favored the rental of Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches as opposed to Roman Catholic or Episcopal churches that displayed the crucifix, which shows that even in renting churches Jews were still concerned with distinctiveness, in selecting a place with less apparent iconography. Although in 1916, Kaplan would state that the price of praying in a church was \$10, and more expensive than a synagogue, in 1903 one Yorkville resident stated that it was less expensive (though the synagogues he is referring to are those of the Upper East Side as opposed to the Lower East Side):

“Down at one of the big synagogues,” he said, “it would cost you \$12 or \$15 for a pew for those three days, or \$3 for a sitting. Here you can get a good seat for \$1. On the upper East Side I know of at least nine congregations that will worship, as we are going to worship, in Christian churches, rented for these three days.”¹¹⁰

In fact, by the 1917 holiday season, the Kehillah found that only six of the city’s 343 provisional worship services took place in churches. The church phenomenon then,

¹⁰⁹ Another article from the *Morgen Zhurnal*, “Shul for the Days of Awe in a Mission House,” mentions two congregations renting churches in Harlem for the Days of Awe, one on 121st and Madison, the other on 121st and Lexington. This fact speaks to both the geography of Harlem and its relatively new settlement as a place for church rentals and also to the dynamic of established but “homeless” congregations renting churches (as opposed to business ventures). An *American Hebrew* report on the holidays in Brooklyn shows a similar situation: the constant rush of people to new neighborhoods had not allowed time for the building of synagogues. Though many were under construction, they would not be ready for the upcoming holidays. See “Lack of Synagogue Accommodations,” *American Hebrew*, 23 August 1912.

¹¹⁰ *New York Daily Tribune*, September 20, 1903.

seemed more important for what it might symbolize—the potential loss of Jewish distinctiveness in America--rather than an actual threat in and of itself.

In turn, this communal norm of promoting Jewish collective distinctiveness during the Days of Awe appears to reflect sentiment already present in the immigrant community. Residents of the Jewish immigrant neighborhoods expected each other to uphold the sanctity of these days, and not to deviate from the religious communal standards. In fact, public or blatant transgression often warranted a collective response. In 1898, the opening of a new restaurant attracted attention on the Lower East Side. Herrick Brothers, the owners of a Division Street café, in the heart of the neighborhood, had placed an advertisement in the *Forward* several days before Yom Kippur announcing that their restaurant would remain open during the holiday. At around six o'clock a small group of young men and boys gathered to protest this decision. Protest led to violence when some of the young men pounced on three restaurant patrons who managed to escape the group by jumping onto a passing horsecar. This struggle, of course, attracted attention and the protestors found fresh recruits as those on their way home from synagogue services joined the group. According to the newspapers, the demonstration grew to number several thousand who continued to prey upon the restaurant's customers:

Whenever a luckless patron of the restaurant would emerge from its doors... he was immediately surrounded, and he was fortunate if he escaped with a whole skin. In several cases the united force of the policemen was necessary to rescue an individual. Half a dozen policemen would force their way into the crowd and, seizing the victim, would make a rush worthy of a football team for the nearest horsecar, into which they would pitch the man's head foremost, much to the astonishment of the other passengers.

During the course of the evening, police officers called for reserves to help control the situation, which by ten o'clock had peacefully dispersed. Clearly some of the Jews who had gathered to protest the opening of the restaurant were themselves shirking religious responsibilities of the holiday, yet the maintenance of community support for the holiday, including the closing of the restaurants, was deemed paramount. As one observer noted, those who wished to eat during the communal fast would go to other neighborhoods: "In this instance, however, there has been such a flagrant violation of tradition and religious precept that it caused the just indignation of the Jews residing in the Ghetto."¹¹¹ What is key in this statement is the word "flagrant," for unobtrusive deviance from tradition went unquestioned, whereas public acts of desecration were seized upon and considered an affront to the entire community.

Although most accounts of public disturbance during the holidays focused on the phenomenon of Yom Kippur balls held by anarchists or socialists to proclaim their independence from and their scorn for religious precepts, the Herrick Brothers incident speaks to a more widespread recognition of upholding the sanctity and distinctiveness of the holiday and religion in the immigrant neighborhood.¹¹² As others have pointed out, the Yom Kippur ball phenomenon, after all, could only be significant as a rebellion in an environment that valued the holidays. With this in mind, the broader workings of the neighborhood show that the vast majority of

¹¹¹ "Rioting in the Ghetto: A Serious Disturbance Caused by an Open Restaurant," *New York Daily Tribune*, September 26, 1898.

¹¹² Incidents such as Yom Kippur balls have often been discussed with reference to religious declension Moses Rischin, *The Promised City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 154-155; Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, pp. 105-106.

residents recognized the Days of Awe as a time to publicly assert Jewish collective distinctiveness.

After asserting the importance of the Days of Awe as a time for individuals to reawaken and join the collective for prayer, the Yiddish writers pressed their audience to reassess its deeds of the last year and redirect its energies to bind itself to the collective more forcefully in the coming year. One obstacle that the press identified was that of overcoming one's individual and one's business interests; however, the press also realized that their readers' business acumen could be used to buttress the formation of a collective. To that end, they encouraged readers to use the money they had accrued during the year to physically support the local and global Jewish community. In this manner, the articles evidence a complicated relationship to business; on the one hand, in that it represented a distraction from piety, and too much of a focus on one's individual, rather than collective welfare, it must be suppressed. On the other hand, it was recognized that hallmarks of business such as efficiency and fundraising were aspects that their readers not only understood, but traits that, if properly channeled, could practically support the Jewish community in need of formation (in New York) and desperately in need of financial support (the European Jewish community).

First, individual business interests and street tactics needed to be suppressed. To this end, articles and sermons published in the weeks before Yom Kippur cautioned that concentration on one's personal desires would fail to appease a more discerning God. One should leave behind the tactics one used to bargain for a better price at a Hester Street pushcart when one enters the synagogue; one could not make

a deal or a bargain with God: “If you are a Jew who goes to *shul* on Rosh Hashanah simply to do practical business, trying to beg pardon from God in order to receive a good inscription, God help you.”¹¹³

Once in prayer amidst the congregation, articles cautioned Jews to keep their minds focused on the collective. Implicit in this was a not-so-nuanced critique of individualism: “You must also keep in mind that Rosh Hashanah is a day which was not just made for you, that you should obtain a good year, but it is a day when the Jewish people must take stock, to inspect what we have done in this year, where we are in the world, and what more needs to be done.”¹¹⁴ Sermons reminded readers of the impracticality and foolhardiness of asking for the elimination of one’s competition, as one’s competition would no doubt wish for the same thing. Likewise, a landlord’s desire for increased rents might be negated by his tenants’ request for decreased rents. For those who thought the Days of Awe were a time to ask for personal consideration in the coming year, a 1906 *Morgen Zhurnal* article did not mince words:

¹¹³ “At the End of the Year,” Y. Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 28, 1908. This article shows again the importance of timing: the article was published on September 30, a few days after Rosh Hashanah but with plenty of time to encourage repentance or a change in behavior in time for Yom Kippur, which fell on October 5.

¹¹⁴ “Rosh Hashanah, What One Must Ask For, and What Not: The Interests of All Jews,” Y. Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 21, 1906. In a similar manner, an article by Kaplan deplores the intersection of business conversations in a synagogue. Efroyim Kaplan writes of his dismay in finding that some congregants not only had adopted mercenary approaches to the holidays, but once in the synagogue could not keep themselves from talking about business. In hopes of hearing a sermon, he entered a Brooklyn congregation that had hired a respected preacher. Alas, though he had a good seat, he could not hear the preacher: The American Jewish crowd had no tolerance for preachers, they were too much taken with business, and conversed about business. ... Everyone had in his area an acquaintance and they led extensive conversations, so that it was impossible to hear anything... My head became a big mish-mash of the preacher’s sermon and my neighbor’s chatter. “Ales iz business in amerike [All is business in America],” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 30, 1908. The same point that was made in the previous footnote on the importance of timing applies to this article as well.

Rosh Hashanah is a day that is more important than fulfilling your little and foolish desires. And when you go to *shul*, and approach a day to the highest level which you have forgotten the entire year, you need to know that you must devote yourself to something higher, that you must rise a little bit higher than the low step that you usually stand upon.¹¹⁵

To rise above business or individual concerns, readers were instructed to look beyond one's person and one's family, and to help others in the Jewish community. Part of the spiritual "stock-taking" necessitated assessing one's links to the Jewish community.

At the same time, taking stock and assessing one's records were not only acceptable, but even encouraged when the goal was the tethering of business tactics to personal piety and the interests of the "Jewish people" writ large. Writers used business metaphors to impress upon readers the importance of accounting for one's actions. Just as a businessman must make accounts for the year if he wants his business to prosper, so must a man review his morality and spirituality:

The man who doesn't look over the past, and who isn't interested in analyzing and revising to what extent he has been moral and honorable, is just like the man who leads his business without accounting and who doesn't make a balance to see what he has in the world with his profits or his losses. In today's civilized world we cannot imagine a business could be run in such an awkward and dumb manner. A business which does not have any book-keeping, and which doesn't at any point in the year make any balances cannot succeed and will eventually die.¹¹⁶

This passage suggests that just as carelessness and awkwardness in business will lead to bankruptcy, gross inattention to one's spiritual life and one's responsibilities to the broader Jewish collective will lead to death as well. Implications of death were

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ "The Days of Repentance and Remorse: Yom Kippur Thoughts," Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 20, 1912. This article was published the day before Yom Kippur, again lending credence to the argument that these articles were designed to encourage repentance.

undoubtedly forceful, summoning the gravity of the season; at the same time, using business metaphors, something very daily and practical, and therefore accessible, served to guide immigrants in the transition away from temporal matters to the spiritual issues and responsibilities of the Days of Awe.

One might assume that writers and editorialists targeted this type of message to those who had neglected piety the year through. Yet, some writers emphasized that the plague of individualism made little distinction between the year-round pious and the Yom Kippur Jews, and so the pious Jews too had to be reminded of the collective ends of the Days of Awe:

[W]e have become great egotists. We no longer care for the entire community, but for ourselves. Even the best of us worry more for our own body and our own soul. If he is himself a fine Jew with fine children, he does not care if other Jews and other children are fine.¹¹⁷

A pious Jew's responsibility to the collective also comes across in an article dedicated to the practice of *teshuva*, or repentance. This article examines the traditional liturgy, in which Jews ask for forgiveness as a collective for a litany of sins, ranging from gossip to thievery: "*we* have sinned, *we* have transgressed." The writer identifies with Jews who question why they should beg for forgiveness for sins that they have not personally committed: "As far as I remember, I have been true to my duties as a Jew and as a man..."¹¹⁸ The writer interjects that though an individual may not have engaged in thievery or in adultery, or maybe in any of the sins listed, certainly not all Jews are innocent of these transgressions. One is responsible not only for one's personal conduct, but also for the sins of one's neighbors, and of the Jewish people as

¹¹⁷ Unser Naye Yohr [Our New Year], *Morgen Zhurnal*, 1918.

¹¹⁸ "Why I do Teshuva" A.D. Ogus, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 5, 1910.

a collective. Though the writer adopted a gentle tone, even identifying with the pious reader who had resisted the array of sins, and even expressed pride in this piety, in raising the issue that the entire point of the prayer is to step beyond one's self and claim responsibility for the Jewish collective, the reader's much valued piety is derided as harmful when it causes one to lose sight of the broader Jewish collective. Read together, these articles argue that piety does not automatically guard against "egotism," and that the pious too need to repent and to ultimately improve themselves through their connection to the broader Jewish collective.

The orthodox press's glosses on the liturgy and repentance required one to consider one's place in the broader community. Though one should indeed consider one's behavior, and motivate oneself to improve it, one had to think about this in the context of how one treated others. Perhaps realizing the difficulty in altering behavioral patterns, one writer gave practical advice, suggesting that readers make incremental changes. The writer urges people to try and do favors for one another, and if necessary, start with the favors that don't involve personal sacrifices, for the worst sin is to refuse to help someone when there is no sacrifice:

Rabbi Israel Salanter, z"l, once said the following in one of his *musar-droshe*s: When people are bad due to a motivation of profit, that is half a sorrow. When they refuse to do good for one another because the good thing requires certain sacrifices, that is something to be sorry about. But the worst misfortune is when people are bad even though that doesn't bring them anything.

Thus, the writer uses this example to emphasize that if incremental steps can be taken to help others, people can gradually add more and more challenging changes in behavior. In this way, he argues, not only would they be able to keep the promises made in synagogue, but they would also build rapport with one another, and in turn improve

the character of the broader neighborhood.¹¹⁹ Further, this spirit underlines the aspect of the Days of Awe, which demand Jews to turn to fellow Jews, not just God, in their repentance and quest for forgiveness.

The strongest manifestation of the linking together of immigrant business sense and success and the holiday came in the calls and responses for *tsedakeh* during the Days of Awe season. Just as they were receptive to moral guidance—after all, readers paid money to read these jeremiad-like sermons and editorials---so too were they receptive to calls for *tsedakeh* at this time of year. Indeed, in this generation, editorialists went so far as to suggest that repentance and the expiation of sin were rendered invalid if not backed up by money. In the immigrant context, money was one of the best ways to improve both the local and global Jewish situation: “to be sincere the Jew in these days must keep in mind his financial obligation to the Jewish community [*k’lal yisrael*], the responsibility he has to help people who find themselves in an unfortunate situation....¹²⁰ In short, true repentance requires supporting the collective, and supporting the collective requires money. No matter that an individual may have the most devout of religious convictions, the most piety of personal behavior; if he or she failed to look beyond himself or herself to the broader community’s fortunes or misfortunes, and failed to cement that sense of communal responsibility through “financial obligation,” piety meant very little.

¹¹⁹ “Di teg fun forgebung [The Days of Forgiving],” *Morgen Zhurnal*, October 6, 1916.

¹²⁰ “Der tog fun relief nedeves,” *Morgen Zhurnal*, October 6, 1916.

To effect this link between awakened consciences and *tsedakah*, or charity, the Yiddish newspapers regularly issued reports on the state of the community, with topics ranging from education to rabbis to charity. Various charities and organizations made the most of the “days of *idishkeit*, when every Jew is ready to hear Jewish words,”¹²¹ and executed special charity drives around the Days of Awe. At this time of year, the newspaper editorials also reminded Jews specifically on how to act on this connectedness. For example, in an editorial entitled “Elul, the month of charity,” readers were asked to donate money to the Hakhnasas Orkhim, the Hebrew Sheltering Agency.¹²² Another writer used the window of time afforded by the Days of Awe to rouse Jews to collective duty. In a three part series published in September of 1908, Y. Pfeffer focuses on the disorganization of the Jewish community in New York. He details the state of this disorganization and calls upon Jews to rectify the situation. Overall, his goal is to arouse those awakened by the season’s religious activity to devote themselves to more long-term religious and communal goals.¹²³ In one sense, the reports acted as a communal check (a sort of *kheshbon nefesh*) on the organization(s) or the community in question; in another sense, they served as a sort of communal check on the reader’s support or lack thereof, and provided addresses and encouraged readers to support the community.¹²⁴ Though these writers had been

¹²¹ “At the end of the year,” Y. Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 28, 1908.

¹²² *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 19, 1910.

¹²³ “The state of idishkeit,” Y. Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 18, 1908.

¹²⁴ “Preaching and the Cantorial Profession in America, A.D. Ogus, September 13, 20, 27, 1910; “Elul, the month of charity,” September 19, 1910; “The Status of our Educational Institutions,” September

advocating a shift away from business concerns toward a concentration on spiritual concerns, in their advocacy of *tsedakeh* and their promotion of new, organized means of publicizing and collecting funds, they, in effect, drew upon the immigrant communities' business knowledge and attempted to weave it into the spiritual aspect of the holiday, namely, the promotion of *k'lal yisrael*.

Charity drives not only benefited local Jewish institutions, but served to further connections between American and Eastern European Jewish communities. As the papers constantly reiterated, acknowledging one's responsibility to the Jewish collective necessitated moving beyond the local community to take stock of world events and politics that shaped the global Jewish community. During the years of pogroms and World War One, articles in the papers during the Days of Awe season referenced the plight of European Jews in vivid and evocative language. In 1906, after a year of pogroms, Jews on their way to prayer services were admonished to think of the plight of their brethren in Russia: "As a conqueror who turns from the battlefield, 1906 will leave behind mountains of fresh corpses, rivers of hot blood, and masses of people with wounded hearts." Jews in New York were reminded that part of Rosh Hashanah entailed mourning for their fellow Jews:

You need to let a tear out for the Jewish grave which this year has had so many of our brothers and sisters thrown into it, and you will need to devote yourself to an account...and to help prevent such scenes in the coming future.¹²⁵

22, 1912; "Unser Klal Arbeit [Our Community Work]," B. Selvin, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 27, 1914;" Idishe Anstalten un Organazatsianen [Jewish Institutions and Organizations]," *Morgen Zhurnal*, October 6, 1916; "How Our Orthodox Treat their Spiritual Leaders," Efrayim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 24, 1914; "Hilfe fir di ortodaksishen rabanim [Help for the Orthodox Rabbis]," *Morgen Zhurnal*, Editorial, September 27, 1916.

¹²⁵ "Rosh Hashanah, What One Must Ask for and What One Must Not: The interests of all Jews," Y Pfeffer, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 21, 1906.

Though they could no longer save those who had already fallen into the “Jewish grave” in the past year, admonishments like this set the tone for the Days of Awe in America, as they, in no uncertain terms, stressed that true repentance and observance of the Days of Awe required devoting attention to the broader Jewish collective.

The eruption of World War in Europe and the resultant consequences for European Jews were called to the attention of Jews in New York during the Days of Awe.¹²⁶

With fearful broken dispositions, with deep wounds and hearts, we gather today in the *shuls* to “celebrate” our “New Year.” We will have no need for preachers... to bring us to tears, we will be able to cry on our own, and our tears will flow without need of artful awakening means. Because we all know fully well what a horrible, gruesome situation the great majority of our brothers on the other side of the ocean now find themselves in.¹²⁷

In this case, the writer suggests that no liturgy or speakers are needed to evoke the awesome, fearful mood of the Days of Awe, as world events have already served that purpose; current events mirrored and supported the solemnity of the liturgy. In Eastern Europe, Jewish villages had been plundered; in America, Jews were safe. What could New York Jews do to help their brethren? Editorialists beseeched American Jews “to give and to give” more charity than ever before. Without

¹²⁶ On World One’s general importance in promoting the organization of Jewish philanthropy in America, see Marc Lee Raphael, “The Origins of Organized National Jewish Philanthropy in the United States, 1914-1939,” in Moses Rischin, ed., *The Jews of North America*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987). On October 4, 1914 the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations formed the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War. The American Jewish Committee brought forty organizations under their wing later that autumn to form the American Jewish Relief Committee. Downtown Jews organized the People’s Relief Committee under the leadership of Meyer London. These separate organizations agreed to cooperate to raise and distribute funds, and so in November of 1914, formed the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In 1915 the Joint raised 1,500,000; in 1916, 4,750,000, by the end of 1918, nearly 15 million.

¹²⁷ “A Just Argument,” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 20 September 1914.

decreasing one's contributions to local charities, one must give additional monies to Jews abroad:

Each who has been helped by God that he can give material help must not be satisfied with an expression of sympathy. The poor person can give only his tears but the majority can participate in wiping off the tears of others, and today is the day of all days when this must be done.¹²⁸

The best way to pray for peace and to request a *khatima tova*, a good inscription for the coming year, was to do so on behalf of the entire Jewish people, and the “best way to earn” this is to give “more *tsedakeh*.”¹²⁹ Indeed, if one neglected to help, he forfeited his opportunity to ask for forgiveness on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

All Jews should come together in the *shuls* and in the *minyanim* and take on the great problem, which now stands before us—the problem of how to build up from the destruction of Judaism caused by the gruesome World War. In this Sabbath of Repentance there should be a true beginning of collecting a fund for this holy goal. Each Jew should give the greatest sum that he can, each should strain to give additional great donations according to his abilities or even beyond his abilities and only then he will be in a place with a pure knowledge for the Day of Judgment and send his requests to the heaven.¹³⁰

In this formulation, the very purpose of the Days of Awe and its liturgy and prayer is to help the collective body of Israel.

As noted, the Yiddish papers in general devoted a large share of their front-page news to the events in Europe; in a sense, their readers were already extremely

¹²⁸ Editorial, “More Tsedakeh this Erev Yom Kippur,” *Morgen zhurnal*, 29 September 1914.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “What True Repentance Is,” Efrayim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, 25 September 1914. See also, *American Hebrew* editorial, 24 September 1915: It is too early to determine how far the appeals made on Yom Kippur for contributions to the various relief committees have been successful in producing large amounts, but there is no doubt of the appropriateness of the appeal on that most solemn occasion of the year. Many must have felt their conscience ill at ease at the relatively small amounts they had contributed to the relief of their brethren overwhelmed by the miseries attending warfare, not to speak of the families bereaved by the loss of Jewish combatants at the front. Yom Kippur was an appropriate occasion for doing *Techuvah* for such a lapse.”

aware of the events overseas and though safe in America, felt the gravity of these events keenly, for their friends and family remained in Europe. However, the Days of Awe sermon-like articles that filled the pages of the Orthodox Yiddish papers acquired an additional purpose as they worked to weave these events into the meanings of the liturgy and mood of the holiday season. Moreover, in weaving the events and meanings of the holiday together as a platform from which to recommend action, they infused philanthropy with a religious meaning entwined with the Days of Awe:

In such a terrifying time will we Jews in America commit the greatest injustice if we today on Yom Kippur as always go to pray only and after *ne'ilah* [closing prayer] go away entirely forgetful of our duties to our unfortunate people and brothers. We are in a lucky situation, we live under the free joyful sky of the United States, we know not the horrors of war, and we thus have the circumstances to do so much and to lighten the horrible fate of this great part of our people, that swims in a deep sea of fearful sorrows.¹³¹

Another editorial echoes this theme: “And one needs to imagine only for a minute the mood this evening in the *shuls* of Russia, Rumania or Galicia to know what is lacking and how good it is to be here and to be able to send support from here.”¹³² What is important in this formulation is that American circumstances are extolled as being favorable to the fulfillment of religious injunctions to aid the collective body of Israel. Whereas usually the circumstances of America—the business week, the drive to get ahead—were cited as circumstances hostile to piety, here these circumstances, when directed towards charitable ends, pave the way to a properly-observed Days of Awe, one in which “prayer only” will not suffice.

¹³¹ “An entire people’s confession of sins,” Efroyim Kaplan, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 29, 1914.

¹³² “Der Tog fun relief nedeves [the day for relief donations],” Editorial, *Morgen Zhurnal*, October 6, 1916.

As noted earlier, Orthodox papers published reports on communal organizations, a significant part of the annual communal *kheshbon ha-nefesh* [accounting of the soul]. These reports tell of the fundraising efforts of the American Jewish Committee, the People's Relief Committee, and the Central Relief Committee, which together raised five million dollars during the previous year. Additionally, Jews sent individual donations to their friends and families that the writer estimated yielded several million dollars. Not only did the immigrants donate money, they also donated time and work by venturing in inclement weather to collect donations.¹³³ The author uses these examples to praise the “freely-giving nature” of American Jews.

The American Days of Awe intertwined religion with business acumen and skill in selling and providing the necessary materials, from prayer books to prayer shawls to prayer tickets. Business entrepreneurs invested the time and money in re-outfitting neighborhood halls and theaters to accommodate the throngs of worshippers. Business, and the organization of philanthropy, not only brought individual Jews together in prayer, but prompted those individuals to donate money to local and global charities. Thus, this combination of business and religion forged a new meaning of *klal yisrael*, one Jewish immigrants subscribed to and helped build even if, or precisely because, they did not subscribe to permanent synagogues. Though it does not talk specifically about the American Jews' responsibilities to the Jews caught in cities and towns ravaged by war, the feuilleton about Satan's visit that opened this chapter also served to show Jews how fortunate they were to be in America, where they had the freedom to both prosper and pray. In America, the combination of popular sentiment for prayer as well as *tsedekah* and business created

¹³³ “Unser Klal Arbeit [Our Community Work],” B. Selvin, *Morgen Zhurnal*, September 27, 1914.

a distinct Days of Awe that reverberated not only in the immigrant neighborhoods,
but more broadly, on a global level.