

From the Preface to the Revised Edition of Seder Avodah, Part II: Innovations in this Edition of Seder Avodah (continued from the May Newsletter)



The new edition of *Seder Avodah* is a companion volume to the *Mahzor* published in 2004, and dedicated to Barbara B. Rubenstein, of blessed memory, by her loving husband Mark, their children and grandchildren.

The Hebrew text of the *Siddur*, as in the *Mahzor*, has been updated and revised to conform to the traditional Ashkenazic text. However, in many places choices are given in the text between "Traditional *Nusah*," and "*Nusah Seder Avodah*." In some sections, notably in

Shaharit and *Hallel*, there is an indication of new passages that had been omitted in *Seder Avodah*, allowing either for their new inclusion, or continued omission.

Many unique features of the *Seder Avodah* text and the AJ liturgy have been retained, such as raising the *Torah* before the public reading, the arrangement of *Nishmat*, and certain passages that, when linked with AJ's unique melodies, are an inextricable part of our liturgy.

One of the main issues in contemporary liturgy is gender. The clear direction of liturgy among Conservative Jews is the addition of the Matriarchs to make the prayers more inclusive and thereby more accessible. I decided that in this *Siddur*, unlike in the *Mahzor*, the Matriarchs would be included in the *Avot* paragraph throughout the *Siddur*, and the paragraph arranged based on the established text of the Rabbinical Assembly's most recent *Sim Shalom* prayer books. I realize that we are not all ready to worship using this expanded text. Therefore, the interpolations regarding the Matriarchs are in a shaded background, with a notation for those who choose to

include them. In this way, we have the option of including the Matriarchs in private worship. It may be that in the near, or more distant future, we decide to include the Matriarchs in public worship. Should that come about, the *Siddur* is ready and usable for that purpose.

A major part of my energy has been devoted to the English translation. As in the *Mahzor*, I have sought to retain the feel, elegance and literary quality of Rabbi Klein's language. While many modern translations prefer to use the informal "you" and "your" when referring to God, I continue to be partial to the more formal "thou," "thee," and "thy" when referring to the Deity. I believe that it adds to the honor and reverence due to God, and distinguishes between God and humans. In referring to humans, "you" and "your" are used, consistent with Rabbi Klein's usage, particularly in the *Mahzor* published in 1960. However there are a number of major departures from the Klein text. Archaic verb forms have been mostly eliminated. Words like "didst," "dost," and "hast," words ending in "est," like "endowest," have been eliminated.

Unlike the *Mahzor*, the translation in this *Siddur* is gender neutral. Neither God nor humans are referred to using masculine terminology. The few exceptions are some poetic translations which were retained, such as *Adon Olam* and *Yigdal*, which I view as works in themselves.

Seder Avodah is meant to be a *Siddur Shalem*, a comprehensive prayerbook for weekdays, Sabbath and the Festivals. It is primarily for synagogue use, but includes prayers for home rituals and individual devotion.

CONGREGATION
ADATH JESHURUN



7763 Old York Road
Elkins Park, PA 19027
215.635.6611
www.adathjeshurun.info