

Seder Avodah Revisions — *The Next Step: A Call for Volunteer-Partners*



Since 1951, AJ has used the *Seder Avodah for Shabbat, Festivals and Weekdays*. It was edited, translated and arranged by Rabbi Max D. Klein, of blessed memory, who was rabbi of the congregation from 1910 to 1960. The High Holy Day edition was published to coincide with his retirement in 1960.

Both volumes are distinctive and closely identified with the prayer service of AJ. They are an expansion of the liturgy used in the previous prayerbooks, the Abodath

Israel of Marcus Jastrow and Benjamin Szold, and owe some of their unique characteristics to those volumes. Distinctive AJ practices, such as the lifting of the *Torah* before the reading, and some liturgical texts, are found only in *Seder Avodah*. The English translation is marked by a poetic reverence that is particularly worshipful.

However, after decades of use, the volumes have needed updating and revision. Significant prayers were omitted, and some have been added back through the label inserts that have multiplied in the last decade. Some changes in the service require constant shifting back and forth from earlier to later pages, and back again. The English translation required some modification as many turns of phrase are simply awkward to the modern ear, and constant references to God using masculine pronouns are jarring to our sensibilities.

With that in mind, the revised *Seder Avodah Mahzor* for the High Holy Days was introduced in 2004. While expanded and modified, it is clearly in the *Seder Avodah* tradition. I am gratified that so many people have commented positively on the new *Mahzor*, and that it has been met with so much acceptance both by those who were eager for a more traditional volume, and by those who cherished *Seder Avodah*. Its introduction has been virtually seamless. I shall always be grateful to **Mark**

Rubenstein and his family for their generosity in dedicating the *Mahzor* to the memory of their beloved **Barbara B. Rubenstein**. Their commitment enabled us to move to a new stage in liturgical development at AJ.

We are now ready for the next step—the revision of *Seder Avodah for Shabbat, Festivals and Weekdays*. I have been working on this project for over a year now, and I am happy to say that the material has now been given to our designer to develop the working document for the new *Seder Avodah*. Some of the material will be borrowed from the *Mahzor*. New material has been added, reflecting tradition and innovation. Alternate readings are identified where the *Seder Avodah nusah* and the traditional *nusah* are at variance. Moreover, the translation has been made more gender-sensitive than was possible in the *Mahzor*.

In the next several months, I would like to enlist volunteers from the congregation to help in the project. I will need readers who are expert in Hebrew and liturgy to proof the Hebrew text, and others to review the English manuscript for style, readability, and typos. The *Mahzor* project benefitted greatly from many such volunteers, and I am looking forward to having a larger group involved in the *Siddur* project.

If you are interested in participating, please call me, write me, or email me at rabbirosenbloom@adathjeshurun.info, with “*Seder Avodah Project*” in the heading line. The liturgy project for both the *Mahzor* and *Siddur* has been particularly fulfilling for me. It has been a labor of love, for God, the congregation and for the sacred liturgy that links both together. I look forward to many of you partnering with me in the next stages so that we can bring to light a wonderful volume that will serve the congregation for at least as long as Rabbi Klein’s original texts.

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