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This Manual is to help you to select your prayer or prayers.

But this Manual is especially for family and individual worship, because the need of it today is painfully apparent as a cause of the irreligion of the times.

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I publish the Manual in three parts.

Part I. Prayers and Meditations for Daily Use.

Part II. Prayers and Meditations for Sabbath Eve.

Part III. Prayers and Meditations for Sabbath Morning.

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Once more imploring Divine blessing upon you for the coming year, and for many years,

I am,

Faithfully yours,

H. Pereira Mendes.

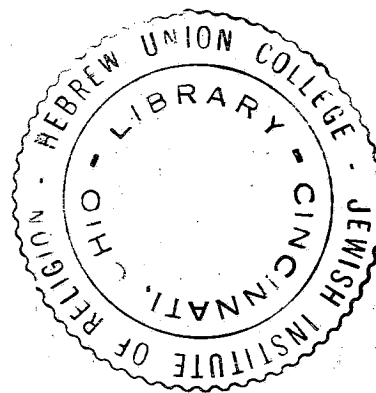
Elul 5694

Minister Emeritus

A Personal Letter

From

Rev. Dr. H. Pereira Mendes.



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52
Box
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New York, September, 1934

To Every Member of My Beloved Congregation

Dear Friend:

I send you my greetings for the coming year. May it be for you and your loved ones a year of Blessing, Uplift and Peace.

I ask you to accept from me a brochure from "Derech Hayim," "The Way of Life," "Prayers and Meditations for Family and Personal Home Use." May it, by the grace of God, help you and yours to find Blessing, Uplift and Peace.

The last year marked for me a notable milestone on my pathway of life, for I completed sixty years of actual Ministry. It was for me a solemn occasion. I desire to show my gratitude to God, Who has so blessed me, and my love for you, the Congregation He entrusted to me for so many years.

In my Sermon on the anniversary Sabbath, I told you I do not understand the title "Emeritus" to mean a cessation of duties; I told you that I prefer the Bible-concept of the word, as I understand it—a promotion from routine work and ritual rendition of service to undisturbed Spiritual duties as "Elder." I that day announced the preparation of two major works since my becoming Minister Emeritus. I said: "During all my 'emeritus' years I have found some God-work to do. I have been constantly occupied with our two greatest and most loved books, the Bible and the Prayer-Book, in effort to bring to the surface the sub-surface beauty of both books; for neither one receives the general veneration and use it deserves."

I said of the Bible: "The Bible is by too many unread or but little read because of mistranslations." Another reason is the absence of explanatory and ethical notes. I instanced, from the first chapters of Genesis, such passages as: "without form and void" (i.2); "evening and morning, one day" (v.5); "the institution of Sabbath as a blessing and consecration for humanity lest mankind become absorbed by the materialities of Creation" (v.ii.3); the whisper of Immortality, (v.7); that mankind was designed to live in happiness, which the word "Eden" means (v.8); that occupation (v.15), self-control (v.16, 17) helpful companionship (v.18) are essential for Human Happiness; that degradation and pain, "the thorns and thistles" of life, result from Sin (ch. iii); that even the murderer, the liar, the moral coward, "whose iniquity is too great to be forgiven" as Cain exclaimed, though he must bear his punishment, can win forgiveness by true repentance,—by "Consecration," which Hanoch (Enoch) means (iv.17). Similarly in Exodus, the wrong translation of God "hardening Pharaoh's heart"; and so right along throughout the Bible. Such passages need ethical explanation.

But I appeal to you, today, concerning the Prayer-Book.

It is too seldom used; too many never pray at all. To quote one of our modern Rabbis: "The flower of piety has withered, mothers have unlearned how to pray." How shall we imbue with the habit of prayer those who know not its blessing, its power for strength and poise?

It is with this earnest endeavor that I have worked on this Manual for Home-Worship; not to displace the Ritual Prayer Book from its rightful use in the Synagogue, for we love it; it is a bond of union; it is consecrated by its age and beauty. *It is our fixed Minbag.*

I PUBLISH THIS MANUAL FOR HOME WORSHIP AND FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS, maintaining that the regular congregational ritual must of course be used in congregational services in synagogue. It is designed for that purpose. But its language is therefore general, for general or collective needs, more than for individual or special private needs; the majority of the prayers are in the plural number. It cannot be otherwise, because it is obviously for congregational or general worship. Individual application is not sufficiently apparent. *Hence we need a manual for Home Worship and personal prayer.*

For Home-services, so necessary in child-character-building, and for adults, so necessary for promotion of family union, the ordinary Prayer-Book does not readily lend itself. The bulkiness of the volume, due to the inclusion of prayers for other than daily needs; due to Rabbinic excerpts not prayers; due to prayers said once a year or once in a lifetime; due to repetitions; the constant turning of pages back and forth in the Ritual as printed; the desirability of every worshipper having his or her separate book which the expense in most families forbids; the absence of ethical explanations; the absence of directions for family worship; the fact that, in so many households, Synagogue or Temple services are alike becoming more and more neglected; all these considerations prompt the issuance of this Manual for Home Prayer and Meditation.

We need both the fixed Ritual, for Synagogue use, and this Manual, for Home services and personal heart-outpouring. The preparation of this Manual has been the work of many years. Every prayer in it has been taken from our ancient ritual. All the chief prayers of our ritual are retained.

Every "meditation" is an application of the ancient and fixed ritual to the individual or personal needs of the worshipper. Above all, ethical notes and explanations of our home or other religious ceremonies and customs are given. Each prayer has a heading, indicative of its nature, in order that the worshipper may readily find a prayer that appeals to the individual at the time. Every prayer is numbered in order that in family worship the leader may announce the prayer selected.

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