

**Whether Automatic or Manual Shift,  
Best to Check the Handbook:  
*The CCAR Rabbi's Manual*  
*in the Twentieth Century and Beyond***

Michael F. Weinstein

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Referee, Rabbi Dr. Richard Sarason

## Digest

This rabbinic thesis is a historical study of the CCAR Rabbi's Manual tracing changes in the Reform Movement through the liturgical insertions and changes which have occurred over the years. The writing consists of five chapters. Each chapter offers a look at the historical background, and a brief analysis, of each edition of the Rabbi's Manual: 1917, 1928, 1961, 1988, and the draft manuscript of the Rabbi's Manual, Volume II, 1992. My larger goal in this project was to find one thread in the history of Reform Judaism, and follow it through to the present. I found that thread in the Rabbi's Manual. Some of my conclusions transcend the liturgy altogether, touching upon socio-political understandings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, American Jewish history, and even Jewish history as a whole.

The first chapter recounts the developing need for a manual for rabbis, dating back to 1892. This chapter focuses on the Minister's Hand Book, published in 1917. Chapter Two resumes our story of the Minister's Hand Book in 1926, when the need for a reprint was felt. We follow the evolution and revision of the renamed Rabbi's Manual of 1928. Chapter Three picks up the story eighteen years later, in 1946, when once again, the stock had run low and the question of a reprint of the Rabbi's Manual arose. The next Rabbi's Manual did not make it to the presses until 1961. Chapter Four resumes in the mid-1970s and deals with the genesis of the current Rabbi's Manual: Maagle Zedek, printed in 1988. The final chapter focuses upon the never-published *Rabbi's Manual Volume II: Siah Siftotenu*. This project finally dissolved in the mid 1990's, however the manuscript is one that would serve quite usefully even today.

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With a project such as this as the culmination of the journey I am completing, I must remember my greatest of friends, my wife... my confidant. My Laurie has been, and will always be, my rock; the one around whom everything else revolves. She is my sounding board and my voice of reason; without Laurie, I would not be typing these words today. Laurie is my *Beshert*.

Lest I forget my greatest of teachers: my *Moshe rabbeinu* (with the lower case *reish*, as I like to say...). Our son, Mose, is the source of my inspiration; every day he offers me a new lesson about myself and the world I wish to give him. During the course of this project I have learned from my teachers, the rabbis of the Reform Movement. During the course of my lifetime, I will continue to learn from Mose, my greatest of teachers. All that is mine has been and will be for him, therefore this thesis is dedicated to Mose.

Michael F. Weinstein, M.A.  
Cincinnati, Ohio

## Introduction

Rabbi Gary Phillip Zola, in his discussion of the founding of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in his monograph on The Americanization of the Jewish Prayer Book, has explained:

[Rabbi] Isaac M. Wise, unanimously selected to serve as the CCAR's founding president in 1880, told his colleagues that the establishment of the Conference was genuinely a watershed event in American Jewish history: "With this Conference," Wise proclaimed, "we enter upon the new phase of American Judaism as *the free messenger of God to a free people*, a kingdom of priests to anoint a holy nation" (emphasis added). As a[n]... American-style rabbinical association, the CCAR was uniquely suited to foster collaboration and issue authoritative decisions that were broadly representative of the American rabbinate at the *fin de siècle*.

Replacing the divergent congregational rituals with one denominational prayer book became one of the CCAR's first priorities. At their first annual convention in 1890, the rabbis noted that "a demand for a Standard Union Prayer-book is prevailing everywhere in the reform synagogue of American Israel." The Conference voted to establish a Ritual Committee that would be responsible for developing "a uniform ritual for public and domestic service." With the publication of the first edition of the *Union Prayer Book* in 1892, the CCAR proved itself to be an effective organizational tool for reconciling the competing points of view of an ideologically diverse membership.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time that first edition of the Union Prayer Book was being printed, the Central Conference of American Rabbis saw a need for a formal digest of occasional liturgy. This digest was designed as a resource for the rabbis of the Conference, to be utilized for lifecycle and unconventional worship.

During the Midwinter convention of the CCAR, December of 1892, in Washington D.C., it was decided unanimously, after heated discussion, "that in all future editions of the Union Prayer-book, the Agendas [of Confirmation and Marriage which had been included by Isaac S. Moses in the first (1892) edition of the Union Prayer Book, without the Conference's explicit authorization,] be eliminated and published in separate

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Phillip Zola, The Americanization of the Jewish Prayer Book and the Liturgical Development of Congregation Ahawath Chesed New York City (New York: Central Synagogue, 2008) 17-18.

form.”<sup>2</sup> At the Fifth Annual Convention, held in Atlantic City, 1894, it was suggested that a committee be assigned and “empowered to formulate an Agenda for a Minister’s Hand-Book, or manual as a guide for various functions of the office of Rabbi.”<sup>3</sup> By the following year, a five-year plan had been established in the budget in order to raise funds for the project. Not long thereafter, a committee had been established and began to undertake the task of compiling a working draft.

By 1905, a draft manuscript had been compiled by the committee and proofs had been distributed to members of the CCAR for review. In 1912, “the Executive Committee... reports that it deems it inadvisable to publish [the Minister’s Handbook]. During the [time] since the Baltimore Convention five members were suspended.”<sup>4</sup> A new committee was then formed.

In late 1913, discussion and correspondence surrounding the Minister’s Handbook resumed. Reverend Dr. (Rabbi) William Rosenau was appointed as the Chairman of the Editorial Committee, and began the undertaking of compiling and editing the volume. This first volume was finalized and published in 1917 by the Bloch Publishing Company of New York City.

In 1927, the rabbis of the Conference circulated a revised draft, Revised Minister’s Handbook, which quickly was adopted under a new name in 1928. The Rabbi’s Manual then went on through further revisions in 1961, and 1988. In 1992, a draft manuscript of a Rabbi’s Manual, Volume II<sup>5</sup>, was prepared but shelved and never

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<sup>2</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 4. Bloch Publishing Company: New York. 1895, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>4</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 33. CCAR: Cincinnati. 1914, 41.

<sup>5</sup> The H. Leonard Poller Manuscript Collection #655, box 8/9,10, of The American Jewish Archives.

published. Each of these revisions is indicative of the growth, and change in, Reform Judaism throughout the century, and the liturgical changes which ensued as a result.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a historical study of the Rabbi's Manual tracing the changes in the Reform Movement through the liturgical insertions and changes which have occurred over the years. The thesis consists of five chapters. Each chapter will offer a look at the historical background, and analysis of each edition of the Rabbi's Manual: 1917, 1928, 1961, 1988, and the draft manuscript of the Rabbi's Manual, Volume II, 1992.

## Chapter 1

### **The Minister's Handbook, 1917**

The 1892 annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis was held in Washington DC. According to the early CCAR Year Book records, upon reviewing the early drafts of the Union Prayer Book, which had been prepared by Isaac S. Moses, the chairman of the Ritual Committee, Dr. Moses Mielziner, recommended that the agendas of Confirmation, marriage, as well as the Seder Haggadah might “be eliminated from the [Union Prayer Book], and in a more suitable form be either published separately, or appended to the proposed second part of the Union prayer-books.”<sup>6</sup> This recommendation became a motion and prevailed. Consequently, that afternoon it was moved and decided that a committee be formed to take on the task of creating these special publications.

During the Chicago, 1893 session of the CCAR, a Revision Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. Mielziner to oversee all suggestions, alterations, and amendments offered by the CCAR members in revision of the yet-to-be published Union Prayer Book, Volume Two; Volume One had been published in 1892, in a limited run.

Upon completing that task, the committee recommended that another committee be created to take on the task of “preparing a ritual for domestic and private worship, suitable for all sacred occasions in life.” It was at the summer of 1894 session, held in Atlantic City, where it was suggested that that committee also take on the task of

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<sup>6</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Bloch Publishing Company: Cincinnati. 1895, 6.



formulating “an agenda for a Ministers’ Hand-book or manual as a guide for the various functions of the office of Rabbi.”<sup>7</sup>

During the course of the coming year, it was decided, by committee, to budget monies over a five-year period, for the creation of a Minister’s Hand Book. Meanwhile the conception and creation of the actual liturgy were shelved.

In 1901, Dr. Mielziner, upon his own initiation, offered his own wedding agenda; and at the 1903 Detroit session of the CCAR, the Committee on Marriage, under the guidance of Joseph Stoltz, recommended that Dr. Mielziner’s wedding agenda be republished and accepted as the standard for Reform Jewish weddings. As a closing recommendation, Rabbi Stoltz recommended “that, for the guidance of the American Rabbinate, some specimen marriage addresses be collected and published by the Conference in its prospective Minister’s Handbook.”<sup>8</sup>

The following year, 1904, showed remarkable advancements in the development of a minister’s handbook. The Committee on Jewish Ministers’ Handbook reported to the Conference on Thursday June 30<sup>th</sup> at the morning meeting:

And yet, largely through the unifying influence of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, it appears as if the time had arrived when... it is... advisable to construct a Ministers’ Handbook out of the many different forms used by the various rabbis in their professional functions outside of the temple.

The object of this Handbook should be:

1. To promote unity in our religious practices, with loyal reverence to the old standards of worship and yet with all due respect for the liberty of the individual— it being especially understood that this Handbook is not intended to be a submission of authoritative mandatory formulas, but rather suggestive material approved by ripened experience and tested by practical use.
2. To add more dignity to all religious functions by obviating an unreadiness of mind and heart on the part of the officiating minister, and by preventing him in the discharge of important duties from deviating from good traditional forms, purely out of ignorance or foolish caprice.

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<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 95

<sup>8</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 14. Lord Baltimore Press: Baltimore. 1905, 45.

3. To give all the benefit of the best forms thus far devised by men of experience.
4. To bring these forms into more perfect shape through more frequent and widespread usage.
5. To suggest to the Jewish minister by means of a carefully prepared bibliography, such modern sources of ritualistic information as will promote religious edification and enhance the appropriateness of every religious service.

The rabbis of the Ministers' Handbook Committee certainly demonstrated an awareness and concern for the future growth and consistency of American Reform Judaism highlighting an earnest desire to create an adhesion and cohesion to the Reform Jewish life-cycle and occasional liturgies, much like that which had been done with the Union Prayer Book. In this report, the rabbis went on to provide a tentative table of contents for the proposed Handbook:

1. Confirmation services
2. Marriage ceremony, including anniversaries such as the silver and golden weddings.
3. Funeral services, with the appropriate Biblical and post-Biblical selections, suitable to the various circumstances and conditions that may arise.
4. Services for the acceptance of proselytes.
5. Services for the laying of corner-stones and the dedication of temples.
6. Special prayers for:
  - Initiation into the Abrahamic Covenant.
  - Sick-room.
  - Confession of sin at death-bed.
  - Tombstone setting.
7. Selection of appropriate readings for services in the house of mourning.
8. Suggestions of appropriate Jewish music and hymns for especial occasions.
9. Bibliography of sources in which material for the above named occasions has already been collected.

These rabbis were focused and ambitious as they set out to create one piece of writing that would encompass the needs of all of the rabbinic duties outside of the synagogue. The Committee on Jewish Ministers' Handbook concluded with the following:

In conclusion, your Committee recommends that:

1. The Committee be increased to three, to be selected by the incoming Executive Board.

2. This Committee be empowered to collect from various sources the necessary material, and to present it, as manuscript, for the approval of the next conference.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore the advancement and development of the Ministers' Handbook appeared to be moving forward on a timeline of one year for a proposed draft. The Executive Board then went about the task of assigning another member to the Committee; whereby the committee would then consist of Tobias Schanfarber, Joseph Stoltz, chairperson, and Isaac Moses.

Apparently, this one-year timeline was a little over-ambitious, as the Committee on Jewish Ministers' Handbook reported in Cleveland, on July 4, 1905, that a circular letter had been sent to every member of the CCAR the December before, soliciting material to be included in the proposed Handbook. The Committee reported that many of the members did not respond, and most who did respond, responded with the promise of future submission; plainly, the project was stalled due to a lack of submissions. The Committee then promised a manuscript for the following meeting, in 1906.<sup>10</sup>

The correspondences between the Committee and the CCAR members continued over the course of the following year, with much of the same struggles. The Committee continually wrote letters to the members of the CCAR, hounding for submissions. The next CCAR convention was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, July of 1906.

Over the course of two years, from July of 1904 until the Indiana meeting in 1906, the Committee on Minister's Hand Book, as it was then being called, changed and grew, as more interest in the project evolved, from the originally-named three members, to eleven members. The committee was as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 14. Lord Baltimore Press: Baltimore. 1905, 138.

<sup>10</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 15. Lord Baltimore Press: Baltimore. 1906, 78.

Tobias Schanfarber, *Chairman*

William Rosenau  
M. H. Harris  
F. DeSola Mendes  
Max Samfield  
E. N. Calisch

Adolph Guttmacher  
Henry Cohen  
Joseph Friedlander  
A. Hirschberg  
Joseph Krauskopf

As the 1906 Committee report tells us, the Committee had further “taken the liberty of adding the names of Doctors Kohler and Deutsch to the committee, to formulate a number of Halakot... which should serve as guidance for Reform Rabbis.”<sup>11</sup> These new Halakot were assigned to be finished in time for the, to be assigned, editorial committee to review and emend the work.

A rather heated discussion ensued, initially questioning what exactly was meant by “Halakot”, and then moreover, what purpose such a text of guidance would serve in the Handbook. This initial course of questioning was initiated by Rabbi Philipson. Rabbi Schanfarber abruptly responded with the following:

It has come to our attention that a number of the younger rabbis, as well as older ones, have frequently been asked for information upon certain mooted ritualistic matters, and they have felt that they were not quite in a position to give the information, and so this committee felt that a certain code of instructions should be formulated for the guidance of the rabbis of this Conference.<sup>12</sup>

Rabbi Schanfarber then continued to explain, offering a few examples surrounding the practical institution of marriages and when they are prohibited, as well as procedures for mourning, burial, and disinterment, as well as questions surrounding more specific mourning practices. Rabbi Kohler continued by arguing:

[In an earlier discussion of the proposed minister’s handbook,] I suggested that for the guidance of young rabbis certain rules should be stated which govern Jewish practice in

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<sup>11</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 16. Tony Rubovits: Chicago. 1907, 58.

<sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 59.

modern Reform Congregations in opposition to the ancient Orthodox or traditional practice.”<sup>13</sup>

The discussion continued to get heated, as comments arguing against “making a new *Shulhan Aruk*” were thrown about, in lieu of “individualisms.”<sup>14</sup> This eventually led to a statement by Rabbi Morgenstern wherein he said:

We all recognize that Dr. Kohler and Dr. Deutsch are proper authorities when they are written to [directly by mail], but it is a different thing for them to formulate the material for this Handbook... I do not think that any two persons should be permitted to formulate the Halakot. They might keep all of their letters and finally publish a Book of Responsa for practical guidance.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, the underlying issue here was the degree of standard promulgated by the Conference; basically, the individual rabbis desired the freedom to do whatever they saw fit.

Following Dr. Morgenstern’s comments, a few more minor comments were offered, and then it was concluded that the notion of the Kohler/Deutsch Halakot be stricken from the report from the Committee on Minister’s Handbook. Furthermore, it was concluded that before the Minister’s Handbook be printed, proof-sheets be sent out to the members of the Conference for review, criticism, and final suggestions.<sup>16</sup> We are talking about a control issue. This was the “old-boys’ club” who were fighting to maintain control of the masses while sustaining individual autonomy and authority; meanwhile, that ‘club’ was also hungering for wide-spread approval, having those ‘masses’ be accepting of their decisions.

It would appear as though the Committee on Minister’s Hand Book was confident in its work and the awaited Handbook was under way. In fact, the Committee

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<sup>13</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 60.

<sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 61.

<sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 62.

<sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 63.

recommended that five hundred copies be published, and one be distributed to each member of the Conference.

Excitingly, in the Committee's report to the Conference at the following meeting, in Frankfort, Michigan, 1907, a proof-form of the text had been printed and sent to members of the Conference. Only a few formal suggestions had been received back, and the Committee was eager to move forward. Their next action was to suggest to the Conference that an Editorial Committee be formed to take on the task of the editing and review of the Minister's Handbook. The final request of this report was to recommend a run of five hundred copies to be printed, reiterating the recommendation made the previous year.<sup>17</sup>

Tobias Scharnfarber spent the latter half of 1907 following up with the other members of the Committee, in the hopes of receiving their assigned materials. He was dedicated to working in consultation with Dr. Stoltz in editing and revising these liturgical entries, working toward the final compilation of the proposed Minister's Hand Book.<sup>18</sup>

By the following July, at the CCAR Conference in Frankfort, Michigan, the Committee reported that they had considered the suggestions and emendations, whereby "13 galleys of manuscript... soliciting further corrections" were sent out to each member of the conference. Only fifteen responses were received by the Committee. The

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<sup>17</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 17. Chicago: Tony Rubovits. 1908, 94.

<sup>18</sup> Established in a letter written to Dr. Morgenstern from Tobias Schanfarber, dated October 29, 1907, "I wish you would ask D. Philipson to put Stoltz on the Minister's Hand Book Committee... [He] was the original chairman of the Hand Book Committee. He knows all about the work."

members were given until the first of the following year to submit the feedback; duly, 750 copies were then scheduled to be formally and finally printed.<sup>19</sup>

In a correspondence of letters<sup>20</sup> between Reverend Dr. H.G. Enelow, the original Rabbi's Manual chairperson, and Julian Morgenstern, CCAR Corresponding Secretary, the original printing plates of the Minister's Handbook manuscript were to be destroyed, under the theory that "it is much better to leave the work in the hands of the one who we know can do it properly, than to give it to someone in whom we cannot have perfect confidence."<sup>21</sup> Basically, unhappy with the progress up to that point, the thought was to scratch everything and start over with someone about whom they were more confident. After all was said and done, that original manuscript was not destroyed, but rather taken into consideration as a resource.

Due to dissatisfaction with the results, process, and perhaps even the personnel, the Committee and its Chairman had been disbanded and restructured. Rabbi Maurice Harris had been assigned as the new chairman of the Committee on Minister's Hand Book.

In June of 1910, at the annual meeting hosted in Charlevoix, Michigan, Rabbi Harris reported that "the printed manuscript... has been handed to us to be used as a basis for completed work." He explains that "it has been recommended... that a plan of revision and amplification of the present [original] manuscript [be executed] rather than a completed work."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 18. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1909, 134.

<sup>20</sup> The CCAR Minister's Handbook files, documented by Julian Morgenstern, 1909, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>21</sup> Julian Morgenstern, in a letter dated April 07, 1909

<sup>22</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 20. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1911, 112.

Fifteen services were identified to be included in the Minister's Hand Book as a matter of recommendation to the Convention by the Committee; upon which they were to be voted:

- a) Marriage Ceremony
- b) Silver and Golden Marriage Service
- c) The Rite of Initiation
- d) Prayer for Naming of the Child in the Synagogue
- e) Service for Confirmation
- f) Prayer for the Sick-room
- g) Prayer at the Death-bed
- h) Funeral Service at the House of Mourning
- i) Burial Service at the Cemetery
- j) Service for the setting of Tomb-stones
- k) Ritual for the Reception of Proselytes
- l) Service for Corner-stone Laying
- m) Service for Temple Dedication
- n) Service for the Dedication of a Home
- o) Service for Consecration at the Cemetery

Reflecting back to the 1906 annual convention, and the discussion of the 'Kohler-Deutsch Halachot', the Committee recommended "a list of Laws (Dinim) for practical use by the Rabbi, which he may utilize as Responsa for various congregational needs."<sup>23</sup>

The following morning, Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1910, the CCAR Convention convened, and the convention launched into a rather lengthy debate over the Minister's Hand Book and the recommendations that the Committee made. On some points the rabbis agreed, and quickly moved on to the next topic, however the dialogue ensued over four of the services being presented in the proposed Minister's Hand Book:

- a) Brit Milah, or as these rabbis identified it, "Initiation into the Abrahamic Covenant"
- b) Confirmation
- c) Mi Shebeirach, or "Prayer for the Sick-room"
- d) Funeral Service

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<sup>23</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 20. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1911, 117.



Rabbi Harris, following up from one recommendation surrounding Brit Milah, proposed to drop the wording “eighth day” from the liturgy. “Do you want that in or out?” he asked.<sup>24</sup> The consensus was to retain the classical formula of the text, opting to change the traditional words of “Bless the parent who here has observed the Covenant of Circumcision”<sup>25</sup> to reflect a more egalitarian view with “Bless *these parents*....”<sup>26</sup>

The rabbis spent the majority of their dedicated time that morning discussing the issues that were brought up surrounding Confirmation. The Committee on Minister’s Hand Book originally proposed that “many rabbis prefer that their confirmants prepare their own themes... The outline... in the Hand Book, should contain as complete a list of themes as possible, which may be utilized by the Rabbi...Following are the recommended themes:”<sup>27</sup>

- (a) Under the heading God, various aspects of Divinity, His Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Providence, Creator, Father, Worship, Faith.
- (b) Man. The Soul, freedom of will, human accountability, conscience, idealism, immortality.
- (c) Ethics. Particularly, such as have received special emphasis in Judaism, such as holiness, peace, hospitality, charity, obedience, patience. Under this heading should come the duties of all social groups; parents, teachers, elders, neighbors strangers, those of other religions. It should also include patriotism and also duty to dumb creatures.
- (d) Institutes in Judaism. The Sabbath, the three Festivals, the two Holy Days, the two minor feasts, the Omer, religious ceremonial, the Hebrew tongue.
- (e) Israel. The Bible, the Prophets, the Law, the Rabbis, the Martyrs, Israel the servant, the Jewish woman Ruth, the Messianic time, the Mission of Israel.

The service should include the outline of the Floral Offering, the symbolic association of the Harvest Festival and the decoration of the synagogue with flowers, with the consecration of youth to the Law of Israel

It should next contain a recommendation that the service of the day be conducted, as far as possible, by the confirmants, and that certainly one of them read the Law from the Scroll.

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<sup>24</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 120

<sup>25</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 113

<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 121

<sup>27</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 113

The confirmation should be incorporated in the service, not introduced at its close.<sup>28</sup>

What followed thereafter was a thorough discussion that led to a valuable stance concerning Confirmation. Highlights from this discussion are as follows:

*Rabbi Philipson*— It seems to me that we have now come to the place where we ought to express ourselves in regard to the character of the confirmation service. The reading of individual essays by confirmants... lends to... the appearance of closing exercises at school. I submit whether it would not be better to draw up a confirmation service that shall be... a religious exercise and not an exhibition... If our committee could draw up a program of confirmation... what it shall consist of... that would be sufficient...

*Rabbi Heller*— This is a point of great importance. We should avoid approving or disapproving of the essay policy...

Agreed

*Rabbi Kohler*— ...the confirmation of the children ought to be a thing in which the congregation should take an active part. It is a mistake to allow the children to do everything with the congregation... looking on...

*Rabbi Harris*— ...what is needed is a certain uniformity in the service...

*Rabbi Schulman*— ...I... agree with Dr. Harris. Disabuse your mind of prejudice against the essay feature. Don't call it essay and the thing will have immediately a different appearance... The idea is that the children reproduce in the form of themes the whole subject matter taught during the confirmation year. By the time the program is completed the congregation has had its memory refreshed as to the principle features of the Jewish religion.

Moved and seconded that a list of themes be printed in the Hand Book.

*Rabbi Stoltz*--- I rise to a point of order. This motion... means that in the manuscript... there will be a list of themes. This does not commit us to anything.

*Rabbi Philipson*— Then I would request that it is recorded that this action does not commit the Conference to the theme-policy for the confirmation.

Carried.<sup>29</sup>

This Confirmation theme debate carried on for a few more minutes. Rabbi Morgenstern summarized and finalized this discussion very well, with the following statement. This statement could also be viewed as a timeless description of the vision of a rabbi's manual:

This Minister's Hand Book must serve as a double purpose. On the one hand, certain prayers and ceremonies will form a Minister's Ritual which the Rabbi should follow; on the other hand, there are certain ceremonies that can serve only as suggestions that the minister may or may not follow.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 113-114

<sup>29</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 121-123.

<sup>30</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. 124.

The rest of that morning's discussion, surrounding the Minister's Hand Book manuscript, addressed the remaining recommendations that the Committee presented to the Conference. The recommendations that were suggested surrounding the Declaration of the Jewish Faith were accepted, as well as the recommendations for a healing service, which included actual prayers that were written out. And lastly, it was decided that a series of rules be established surrounding Kaddish and its length, in regard to usage, i.e. graveside, in the synagogue, etc.

This concluded the Committee report regarding the progress of the Minister's Hand Book at the 1910 meeting.

In a letter from the spring of 1911, leading up to the 1911 meeting in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Maurice Harris in submitting the Committee's report, confides that his efforts have been alone, and the other members of the Committee have demonstrated very little interest in working toward a unified piece of writing. Moreover, no members of the Committee were to be present at the Conference that year. This appears to be a common problem in the progress of this manuscript, and no actions were taken for that year, as the manuscript lay fallow for another year.

Toward the end of 1911, Rabbi Harris resigned as Chairman, remaining as an active member, dedicated to the completion of this project. Rabbi Samuel Schulman would assume the position as Chairman. That position would then transfer to Rabbi Martin Meyer in the early part of 1912.

In April of 1912, at the convention held in Baltimore, Maryland, the Committee on Minister's Hand Book submitted another manuscript, recommending a print run of 500 copies. Martin Meyer and the rest of the committee, identified as Louis J. Kopald,

Samuel Koch, Maurice Harris, and I. L. Leucht, presented a very plausible argument as to the finished product. They thoughtfully addressed all of the issues that arose out of the 1910 recommendations, and even paid credit to those rabbis who put forth extra work and effort toward this manuscript.

A long-winded and deep-hearted discussion ensued surrounding the procedure by which the report and renewed manuscript were to be received; very little discussion of the actual contents of the manuscript took place. The whole manuscript was then referred to the Executive Board to determine the best way to bring the subject before the next Conference for final action.”<sup>31</sup>

At this time in the chronology, it is unclear who the chair of the Committee on the Minister’s Hand Book was, as it continued to change members and chairmanship on an annual basis. As the end of 1912, Charles Levi was the chairman, with Leon Franklin, Solomon Foster and Edward Calisch as members.

The following summer, in July of 1913, the conference convened in Atlantic City, New Jersey. At that meeting it was reported that the Executive Committee had decided that it was inadvisable to publish the existing manuscript. The Conference then instructed a new Hand Book Committee to consider a new manuscript, focused specifically on a ritual for Funeral and Wedding ceremonies, to report in the coming year, 1914.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 22. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1912, 139.

<sup>32</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 23. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1914, 165.

William Rosenau then aggressively assumed the role of Chairman of the new Committee. In a series of letters<sup>33</sup> with Rabbi Joseph S. Kornfeld, Corresponding secretary of the CCAR, all of the previous manuscripts were acquired, as well as any additional materials which might be on file. Rabbi Rosenau worked diligently from February until June, 1914, when his work culminated in an almost completely new manuscript of the Minister's Hand Book. Involved in this project were the following rabbis:

William Rosenau, *Chairman*

Henry Berkowitz  
Edward N. Calisch  
Rudolph Grossman  
David Levy  
Alexander Lyons

Joel Blau  
E. Frisch  
Jacob Klein  
J. Leonard Levy  
Julian H. Miller

By June of 1914, Rabbi Rosenau had compiled the manuscript, in carbon form, and sent it to all of the members of the CCAR Executive Committee, as well as the members of the Minister's Handbook Committee.

The new manuscript contains a table of contents, which was provided to the Conference at the Detroit, Michigan meeting. This table of contents showed the following twenty-five services, in order of appearance:

Service at Circumcision  
Public Service Prayer for Naming of Child  
Consecration of Bar-Mitzvah  
Confirmation Service No. 1  
Confirmation Service No. 2  
Conversion Service  
Marriage Ceremony  
Marriage Ceremony (Appendix)  
Silver and Golden Marriage Ceremony  
Public Service Prayer for Persons Recently Married  
Public Service Prayer for Sick

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<sup>33</sup> Letters from the Letters of William Rosenau, housed in the American Jewish Archives, dated 1914.

Public Service Prayer of Thanksgiving for Recovery from Illness or Rescue from Danger  
Confession of One in Imminent Danger of Death  
Funeral Service  
Public Service Prayer in Memory of One Recently Deceased  
Public Service Prayer for Anniversary of Death  
Dedication of Tombstone  
Public Memorial Service  
Service for the Consecration of a New Home  
Service for Laying of the Cornerstone of a Synagog  
Service for the Dedication of a Synagog  
Service for the Observance of a Congregational Anniversary  
Service for the Consecration of a Cemetery  
Public Thanksgiving Service.<sup>34</sup>

The Committee on Minister's Hand Book, in an effort to conserve on expenditures, took it upon themselves, that year, to unanimously formulate "a subcommittee to read and revise the original contributions presented... said subcommittee to consist of men living close to one another."<sup>35</sup> That subcommittee consisted of Rabbis Berkowitz, Blau, Frisch, Grossman, Lyons, and Rosenau. That autumn, Rabbi Rosenau was assigned to continue in his role, as well as serve as the head of the Editorial Committee of the Minister's Handbook.

In April of 1915, Rabbi Rosenau wrote, in a letter to the members of the Editorial Committee,<sup>36</sup> that a personal meeting was necessary in order to properly edit the manuscript and prepare it for presentation to the Conference at its meeting in June 1915, in Charlevoix, Michigan. Said editorial meeting met the week of May 25-27, 1915, in Baltimore, Maryland.

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<sup>34</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 24. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1915, 55-6.

This text was also found, in draft form, in the files of William Rosenau, housed in the American Jewish Archives, dated 1914.

<sup>35</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 24. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1914, 56.

<sup>36</sup> A letter dated April 29, 1915, in the files of William Rosenau, housed in the American Jewish Archives.

Consequently, we learn from a series of letters dated June 8, 1915, Rabbi Rosenau mailed the typed revised manuscript, which was to be presented that month in Michigan, to all of the members of the Editorial Committee for their review and approval.<sup>37</sup> It should be duly noted that the Editorial Committee made the decision, upon its own accord, to render all biblical translations according to the new soon-to-be published Jewish Publication Society translation; these translations were prepared by some representatives of the CCAR, including Rabbi David Philipson.<sup>38</sup> This was a decision that would carry over to the revisions of the Union Prayer Book, volume I (1918) and volume II (1922).

The following year, 1915-1916, was spent further editing the manuscript of 1913-14, which was presented as a revised draft at the conference in 1915, under the chairmanship of William Rosenau. Each member of the Conference received a copy of the revised manuscript, and it was further revised according to those recommendations.

The Editorial Committee on the Minister's Hand Book met in January and April of 1916; the final revised form of the manuscript for the Minister's Hand Book was finally ready for review by the Executive Committee of the CCAR at the annual convention of 1916. That year, in Wildwood, New Jersey, the Minister's Hand Book officially adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the manuscript was given to the Executive Committee for publication.

The Minister's Hand Book, as a work, may be traced back as early as 1894 in Atlantic City, when "power [was] granted to a committee to formulate an Agenda for a

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<sup>37</sup> These letters were sent to each member of the Editorial Committee, as well as similar letters sent to Rabbi Moses Gries, President of the CCAR, and Rabbi Joseph Kornfeld, Corresponding Secretary. Documents housed in the Rosenau Files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>38</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 25. The Bachrach Press.: Cincinnati. 1915, 79.

Ministers' Handbook.”<sup>39</sup> Later, we find that it “was created in accordance with the recommendation of Rabbi Joseph Silverman, president of the [Central] Conference [of American Rabbis] in 1902. Several groups of... members [had]... reported from time to time. In 1908, the Committee submitted [the first]... manuscript.”<sup>40</sup> Leadership was then virtually lost until 1913, when William Rosenau stepped forward as organizing chairman of the project. The Minister's Hand Book project went through several more revisions and editions, until at last coming to fruition.

Twenty-three years after its original conception and recommendation, the Minister's Hand Book, edited and published by The Central Conference of American Rabbis was published by Bloch Publishing Company, as the sales agents, in 1917; the actual publisher was J. F. Tapley Company of New York. An edition of one thousand copies was printed, five hundred of which were bound.<sup>41</sup> By the following year, it was clear that the Minister's Hand Book would not turn out to be a big seller, but it would be useful for younger rabbis, and stay in use, paying for itself through future rabbis, as well as Christian ministers.

That final manuscript would ultimately be published, differing from the original table of contents discussed during the Detroit, 1914 convention; the final published Table of Contents may be viewed in the Appendix on page 81. The character of the Minister's Hand Book was not entirely different from that of the earlier manuscripts; not so surprisingly, the greatest attention in this Hand Book was spent on the Confirmation

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<sup>39</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 4. S. Bloch Pub. Co.: New York. 1895, 95.

<sup>40</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 22. S. Rosenthal & Co.: Cincinnati. 1912, 134.

<sup>41</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 27. The Bachrach Press.: Cincinnati. 1917, 58.



Service, Conversion Service, Funeral Service and the Service at the Dedication of a Tombstone.

Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the Confirmation Service, in which the Confirmands are to make affirmations in the form of Christian-like creeds and catechisms. On page twenty-three of the Hand Book, the following explanation of the Confirmation was provided:

There are two methods of holding the Confirmation Service. One limits itself entirely to what is indispensable to the Confirmation Service. It consists of prayers, reading of the Torah and Haftarah and the Declaration of the Principles of Faith. The other method, in addition to all of this, provides for a reproduction of the content of instruction in the form of brief essays given by individuals of the Class.

This ceremony is written to echo Protestant Confirmation ceremonies in that there is a formal Processional and Flower Offering followed by the reading of the brief essays, as page 27 notes:

*(Under [the] heading [of Brief Addresses by the Confirmants], it is provided that the children reproduce in the form of... brief essays, the content of instruction given in the Confirmation Class during the year. Each child... is to have something to say. The subjects are to be arranged as follows:)*

The Fundamental Religious Feelings.

The Fundamental Doctrines.

The Duties Based on The Ten Commandments.

The Festivals, Observances and Institutions of Judaism, and general themes as are appropriate.

*(The language is to be simple... essays written by the Rabbi... spoken by the children. The following subjects are suggested... The Rabbi will [decide upon the themes...])*

Suggested Themes

Reverence.

Gratitude.

Faith.

God and God of our Fathers.

Man, the image of God.

Revelation and the Holy Scriptures.

Immortality.

Israel a Priest People.

The Messianic Hope.

The Kingdom of God on Earth.

Confirmation

Surprisingly, the Marriage Ceremony was quite brief and consisted of only one form. This text may be viewed in the Appendix on page 82. This would serve to be an issue for later generations and editions of the text.

Throughout the development of the Minister's Hand Book, several issues arose. First and foremost, there was a practical issue to contend with; looking back with modern, twenty-first century eyes, the rabbis of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were not lucky enough to have email, word processing, scanned images, mobile phones and practical technology. Furthermore, hopping a flight or jumping in the car for a day trip was unheard of.

The rabbis were limited to the United States Postal Service and train rides which could last lengthy hours into days. Correspondence was long and tedious, even for the simplest of questions. Oftentimes, what could take us, today, in 2010, mere minutes to accomplish, would have taken months in 1910 to achieve.

Another more specific liturgical issue which arose was with the Marriage Ceremony. Great discussion occurred surrounding the word usage and tone implied in the manuscript edition, one which closely follows the form of Protestant Christian marriage ceremonies. Rabbi Samuel Cohon, in a letter to Rabbi William Rosenau addressed this specifically, and his recommendations were not taken into consideration. Rabbi Cohon stated:

...the wording in some of the services does not... successfully express our theology. This criticism applies... to the Marriage Ceremony... The traditional "Seven Benedictions"...are nearer in spirit to the modern man, than [that] contained in the Handbook. Do we have to ask our grooms whether they promise to love, honor, and cherish their brides? This is their duty as men and as Jews. Let our Methodist friends continue asking these questions; but we must sound the note of the sanctity of life, the marriage bond and the home.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> In a letter dated October 28, 1915, from Rabbi Samuel Cohon to Rabbi William Rosenau, housed in the Rosenau Files of the American Jewish Archives

## Chapter 2

### **The Rabbi's Manual:** **Revised Minister's Handbook, 1928**

The 1926 Year Book for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the Report of Committee on Publications, notes the following:

#### MINISTER'S HANDBOOK

This book... prepared for the use of the members [of the CCAR], and only a small edition printed, is now... sold out and the question of reprinting comes up. Many complaints have been received about the book and your committee feels... the Conference should decide whether the book should be revised or reprinted in its present form...<sup>43</sup>

Eleven years after the publication of the Minister's Hand Book, the members of the CCAR, upon running out of available copies, realized that it was time to deal with the Hand Book once again. After a decade of use, the members of the Conference acknowledged complaints and challenges in the now outdated text.

The Conference met in Asheville, North Carolina, June 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1926. In a letter dated June 29, 1926, Louis Wolsey, President of the CCAR, thanked Professor Samuel Cohon for accepting the chairmanship of the Committee on the Revision of the Minister's Hand Book. The tenor of the note is one of urgency, wherein Rabbi Wolsey spells out his expectation to see a manuscript sometime during the forthcoming year.<sup>44</sup> The additional members included in that correspondence were: Morris Feuerlicht, Samuel Thurman, Solomon Freehof, Gerson Levi, and Dr. Henry Englander.

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<sup>43</sup>CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 36. S. CCAR Press: [New York]. 1926, 35.

<sup>44</sup> Drawn from the files of the Central Conference of American Rabbis housed at the American Jewish Archives.

The following month, Isaac Marcuson, Recording Secretary, addressed Rabbi Cohon in a letter dated July 13, 1926, wherein he is critical of the original Minister's Handbook, and emphasizes the need for a new manuscript:

At the last meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, it was decided to rewrite the Minister's Hand Book. I purposely say rewrite and not revise. The present book seems to be wholly inadequate and unsatisfactory.

Rabbi Marcuson closes his letter with reinforcing words of encouragement for Rabbi Cohon, as he suggests Cohon plan out what he would like to include in the *new* hand book, "and get [the] committee to work by fall."<sup>45</sup>

By October, the committee was finalized, at the instigation of Rabbi Wolsey. The Committee on the Revision of the Minister's Hand Book was to consist of Louis Mann, Solomon Freehof, Abram Hirschberg, Morris W. Feuerlicht, Gerson B. Levi, Leon Harrison, Henry Englander, Samuel Thurman, and Joseph Rauch.

However, after a handful of Committee personnel changes, the final Committee stood as follows:

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Samuel S. Cohon, <i>Chairman</i> |                      |
| Henry Englander                  | Morris M. Feuerlicht |
| Solomon B. Freehof               | Julian Morgenstern   |
| Joseph Rauch                     | Samuel Thurman       |

According to Rabbi Cohon, the Committee was well under way with its work and its members had already been assigned their respective services and tasks. These services were as follows, in no specific order:

- ✓ Baby Naming and Circumcision
- ✓ Tombstone Dedication
- ✓ Installation of Congregational Officers
- ✓ Congregational Jubilees

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<sup>45</sup> Drawn from the files of the Central Conference of American Rabbis housed at the American Jewish Archives.

- ✓ Conversion Service
- ✓ Service for the Dedication of a Sefer Torah
- ✓ Annual Cemetery Memorial Service
- ✓ Special Memorial Service on the Death of Important Personages
- ✓ Cornerstone Laying of Jewish Public Institutions
- ✓ Prayer for the Sick
- ✓ Prayer for the Dying
- ✓ Funeral Service and Meditations
- ✓ Dedication of a Synagogue
- ✓ Consecration of a Cemetery
- ✓ Silver and Golden Wedding Anniversaries<sup>46</sup>

Some of these initial discussions revealed concerns surrounding a need for a “service for the House of Mourning”, reforms to a service for circumcision, additional readings from rabbinic sources for funerals, as well as work for the Conversion of Proselytes, which was originally intended to be an entirely separate project. In addition, attention was directed not to the content of the hand book, but to the title and physical characteristics of the book itself. From Temple Mt. Sinai, in El Paso Texas, Rabbi Martin Zielonka, in a letter to Rabbi Cohon, stated the following:

First--- A hand book for a Rabbi ought to be designated as “a HAND BOOK FOR RABBIS” and not as a minister’s handbook. I need not go into any argument about this, I believe.

Second--- The book ought to be made smaller than the present one, so that it can fit easily into the pocket of the rabbi.

Third--- It ought to be bound only in leather and flexible and on thin paper so as to make the book as thin as possible.<sup>47</sup>

Zielonka raises a few very important issues which had not come up before. Is this book for rabbis or for ministers? This certainly demonstrates a change in the outward necessity

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<sup>46</sup> According to a series of letters between Louis Wolsey and Samuel Cohon and the other members of the Committee, dated October through December, 1926; housed in the CCAR files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Dated January 26, 1927, from the CCAR files of the American Jewish Archives.

of assimilation; meanwhile these rabbis were trying to further define what it meant to be a Jewish American, let alone a Reform Jew in America.

Rabbi Albert Minda, of Temple Israel, Minneapolis, Minnesota, provided his suggestions to Samuel Cohon. He suggested adding more readings in connection with funeral services, drawn from rabbinic sources, and a few blank pages in the back of the hand book where a rabbi might add his own passages or readings. In addition, Rabbi Minda offers some radical liturgical suggestions:

The Reform Rabbi is often called in to officiate at funerals at which the people ask him to recite the El Male Rachamim.” Is there any objection to having this inserted in the hand book?

I suppose the same might apply to the “Seven Blessings” of the Traditional wedding ceremony. Could these be given in the Hebrew, without insisting they be recited (only when requested)?

I imagine that some of the other men in the field had the same experiences along these lines, as have I.

Minda then continues to suggest various versions of wedding and funeral services, wherein the rabbi may pick and choose what best fits the needs of the occasion. In closing, he adds, “I do not know how much value these suggestions contain; I am interested in seeing that we have a more useful and inspiring Hand book.”<sup>48</sup>

In historical hindsight, Rabbi Minda was a revolutionary in his vision, as all of his suggestions later came into being. At the time, what this demonstrated was a practical change in Reform Judaism, some seventy years after reforms to Judaism began in America. Some more traditional rituals were in demand in the Reform context.

Another suggestion that came from Rabbi Zielonka, complimenting this same idea, was the formal outline of a High Holiday Cemetery Service, for the Sunday between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He stated:

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<sup>48</sup> In a letter dated February 07, 1927, the CCAR files of the American Jewish Archives.

I noticed that so many people went out at that time of the year and that it was a good old Jewish custom... I mentioned this service to a number of our men at the annual meetings of the conference and they seem to have adopted it for I note that they [have it listed] on [their High Holy Day] special calendars...<sup>49</sup>

As progress on the new manuscript moved forward, Rabbi Cohon, at the authorization of President Wolsey, convened the Revision Committee in Indianapolis, May 11, 1927, to review and discuss the drafts of the forthcoming services and Rabbis' Handbook, as they would tentatively call it.<sup>50</sup>

Rabbi Samuel Thurman, of St. Louis, Missouri, was unable to attend the meeting, but graciously forwarded his materials to the committee. Attached to his manuscripts were some personal comments and qualifying rationales. He stated:

I trust that the enclosed manuscripts may prove as acceptable... The prayer for the dying... follows closely to the traditional. ״ו״ו

I am constrained to believe that all... written prayers... lack spontaneity and individuality. It is best... to leave the inspiration and enthusiasm of the occasion the best out-pouring of the heart in prayer.<sup>51</sup>

From these correspondences, it is obvious why the original Minister's Hand Book had quickly become outdated, and was deemed to be in need of serious revision. The necessity for more ritual tradition was prevalent, as well as the concern and desire for more free-form, and free-flowing prayer, including the opportunity for more options in the services provided.

By the end of May, 1927, the manuscript for this new Rabbis' Handbook was already in the hands of the printer, and an edited, finished galley proof was ready for distribution. During the month of June, the manuscript was thoroughly reviewed by members of the Conference, in preparation for the forthcoming annual convention.

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<sup>49</sup> Dated February 12, 1927, from the CCAR files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>50</sup> In a letter dated April 11, 1927, written to Samuel Cohon, from Louis Wolsey; CCAR files, AJA

<sup>51</sup> In a letter dated May 10, 1927, written to Samuel Cohon, from Samuel Thurman; CCAR files, AJA.

Those who reviewed it were critical, encouraging of the project, but less than enthusiastic about the work produced. Isaac Marcuson, the Recording Secretary of the CCAR, commented blatantly, "I... will say to you candidly that I do not like it."<sup>52</sup>

Rabbi Samuel Shulman, of Temple Beth-El, New York City, offered a very decisive fifteen-page critique<sup>53</sup>. On more than one occasion, he argued that he liked the Minister's Hand Book (1917) far more so than this new manuscript. He began with an interesting commentary on the process as a whole, which set a tone that carried through his critique:

Reform Judaism must have an uneasy conscience, or it would not be constantly revising, and re-reforming its rituals. These revisions are taking place now every few years. I suppose it was found necessary to make the revision of the Minister's Handbook... Even if improvements are made, the gain is not a compensation for the loss. The loss, in my opinion, consists in the fact that we, in the Reform Synagogue, do not allow anything to sink into the hearts of our people... In religion, novelty itself is not an advantage. Religion to a great extent, lives by reverence for tradition, by the cherished sentiments towards things endeared to us by age... we Reformers do not allow anything to grow old.... And it is a question whether it is not better to even omit certain things, but keep what has been handed down, than to be constantly tinkering.<sup>54</sup>

Rabbi Shulman's reference to tradition was to traditional Judaism, as much as it was toward creating tradition within the Reform Movement. Tradition in his opinion was the *minhag* created over time, as opposed to the practices dictated by the Rabbis, Shulchan Aruch, or even eastern European traditions of the 'old country'. Shulman was talking about creating and reinforcing a modern Judaism based upon its own traditions and practices, which came about from its own test of time.

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<sup>52</sup> In a letter dated May 31, 1927, written to Samuel Cohon, from Isaac Marcuson; CCAR files, AJA.

<sup>53</sup> Comments and Suggestions in the Matter of the Revised Ministers Handbook, submitted by Rabbi Samuel Shulman to Professor Samuel Cohon, on behalf of the Committee on the Revision of the Minister's Hand Book, dated June 22, 1927; files of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>54</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 1.



Some of his suggestions were: the indefinite pronoun usage in the Prayer for the Naming of a Child<sup>55</sup>, the use of the title “Israel” in lieu of the name “Jacob” in reference to Torah<sup>56</sup>, and Confirmands kissing the Torah, followed by their parents doing the same as a symbol for the “consecration of a child’s heart in love, to that which is in the Torah.”<sup>57</sup>

Oftentimes, Shulman made reference to the fact that he really preferred the text of a specific service as it read in the Minister’s Hand Book (1917). For example, he made mention of the fact that he liked the Service for Circumcision Ritual, specifically the prayer offered at the end of the service; “furthermore, the order in the circumcision ritual in the old book is better”<sup>58</sup>, he said. In addition, Shulman argued that the *Vidui*, Prayer for The Dying, in the “old book” was also better. These sentiments carried over to the Funeral Service as well:

And as to the words provided in this new book, to be read when the coffin is lowered in the grave, I must say that I prefer the wording in the old Ministers’ Handbook. It is more to the point.<sup>59</sup>

Lastly, Rabbi Shulman, in his critique, made a statement of dislike for the Service for the Dedication of a Synagogue. He stated:

The Dedication Prayer in the [Minister’s Hand Book (1917)], is in every respect, superior to the new one, called an “Invocation.” It is superior in thought, in simplicity of diction and in comprehensiveness. This Invocation lacks any reference to the comfort in sorrow, to the purging from sin, to any distinct individual needs that are met by a House of Worship. Considering the classic prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple, where we are told in detail what the worshipper will obtain, it should have been easy to write a prayer modeled on it. Nor is the concluding prayer of much value... Why should we discredit such a beautiful prayer of dedication as found in the old book? That is what I said in the beginning...<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 2.  
<sup>56</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 3.  
<sup>57</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 4.  
<sup>58</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 2.  
<sup>59</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 9.  
<sup>60</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 11.

For a rabbi who was such a proponent of the new tradition of Reform Jewish practice, Shulman certainly argued quite a bit for the traditional practice of Judaism. In his discussion of the Service for Circumcision, Rabbi Shulman, in reference to the blessing over the wine, states that it “should be after the act of circumcision and not before. This is in accordance,” he said, “with the traditional custom.”<sup>61</sup> And more so, in discussing the Marriage Ceremony, “I prefer the traditional welcome... ‘Blessed be ye that come in the name of the Lord.’ That is the way bridegroom and bride have been addressed for at least two thousand years... why should we change it?” Then Rabbi Shulman goes on, in discussing the order of the ceremony, to state that the way it was stated in the Minister’s Hand Book (1917) was “also the traditional order of the Sheva Berachoth.”<sup>62</sup>

Of additional importance, reflecting Rabbi Shulman’s latent traditional attitudes, with just a flare of Reform choice, is his discussion of the Funeral Service:

On [the funeral service] page [in the manuscript], the El Moleh Rachamim should be put in connection with the burial service at the cemetery in accordance with tradition, if you are going to use it at all.<sup>63</sup>

“If you are going to use it at all...” This continues to be a true guiding point to the whole editing process of the Minister’s Hand Book. Furthermore, this was further evident later in Rabbi Shulman’s “Comments and Suggestions”, where he discussed a service of Conversion:

I miss in this revised Ministers’ Handbook, a Conversion Service. I know that Rabbi Rauch’s committee is preparing a Minister’s Manual for Proselytes. But this manuscript also contains no provision for the Conversion Service as such... I call your

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<sup>61</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 2.  
<sup>62</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 5.  
<sup>63</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 9.

attention to this, because it may happen that both... will be published without the Conversion Service.<sup>64</sup>

The Conversion Service did ultimately find its way into this new manual, in much the same form as that of the Minister's Hand Book. Interestingly, the Shema, which originally appeared only in transliteration, now appeared, in the revision, in Hebrew with transliteration and translation to follow, which included the second line of the Shema, with ... ברוך שם כבוד. Overall, the use of Hebrew in the text began to appear more and more.

Some of the more constructive and profession-specific feedback that Samuel Shulman offered, related to the title including 'rabbi' and not 'minister', and at one point in his discourse, he even challenged why there would be a scripted "Opening Prayer at a meeting in Behalf of Charitable Institutions". He argued:

Why should such a prayer be included at all? For whom is this Handbook written? For Hazanim and storekeepers, or for Rabbis? A Minister who cannot make up a prayer of his own, when he is invited to open up a meeting... does not deserve to be in the ministry.<sup>65</sup>

Interestingly, this 'prayer' was eliminated from the final manuscript, and was not included in the final, printed volume.

Many of Rabbi Shulman's sentiments were echoed by some of the other rabbis who offered their own feedback. Rabbi Clifton Harby Levy, of New York City, stated, "We want the best we can give the profession, and I do not think we have it in [this manuscript]. The prayers are not sufficiently smooth and flowing, much too theological,

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<sup>64</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 14

<sup>65</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 13.

instead of simple.... [Much of the services included in the manuscript are] much too formal—and at least in one point, a joke.”<sup>66</sup>

Many more comments regarding the lack of prayerfulness of the text were received by Rabbi Cohon in the weeks leading up to the next convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Resulting from the vast variety of feedback that he received, Rabbi Cohon reported the following words to the CCAR, June 23-27, in Cape May, New Jersey, 1927.

The work falls into two parts. Its liturgical section contains (a) services which a rabbi is asked to conduct... The second section is in the nature of an appendix, presenting history and explanatory notes on marriage and funeral agenda... These notes aim to satisfy the requests that have been made by several rabbis at a number of our sessions for a compilation of the Conference Responsa in a brief and handy form.

As the book will in all likelihood be used by lay leaders, full details of directions were added. For a number of occasions, alternative services were supplied...

A considerable portion of the old Handbook has been retained. And in preparation of the new material, much of the traditional liturgy and some devotional productions of the pioneers of the Reform Movement have been utilized.

...the Committee asks (1) for authorization to receive suggestions from the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis for the final revision of the book.... (2) The Committee recommends that the name of the book be changed to “Rabbi’s Manual.” (3) The Committee further recommends that the Committee on Publications be instructed to issue the book in pocket size in leather or imitation leather covers.<sup>67</sup>

Following Rabbi Cohon’s report, the Conference moved and adopted that the name of the book be changed to Rabbi’s Manual, to be published in leather-bound pocket size, and then pending the revision resulting from members’ suggestions, the Executive board was authorized to publish.

Over the course of the next six months, the Committee received feedback from several more rabbis, who all made positive comments, with further recommendations. The Committee was then scheduled to meet in Chicago, December 6, 1927, where they

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<sup>66</sup> In a letter to Samuel Cohon, dated June 13, 1927; CCAR records of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>67</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 37. S. CCAR Press: [New York]. 1927, 163.

edited, emended and finalized the manuscript of the Revised Minister's Hand Book: The Rabbi's Manual. By March, 1928, the manuscript was sent to the printer. Isaac Marcuson reported awaiting the galleys to return.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, by April of the same year, Marcuson reported mailing printed manuscripts of the Rabbi's Manual to Samuel Cohon, with the intention of receiving an edited draft in return.<sup>69</sup>

In another letter, dated a few weeks later, Rabbi Marcuson returns a rather salty response to Rabbi Cohon's final edits:

I received the returned galleys of the Rabbi's Manual and I am amazed at the numerous changes which you have made. I fear that these corrections will run up the price of the book several hundred dollars...

The extra expense would not be so serious on a book like the Union Prayer Book where we sell thousands of copies, but with a book like this where we give most of the copies free to our members, it is a dead loss to the Conference.

You seem to forget that this book was intended for Rabbis... I feel that a whole lot of material which you included could have been omitted and left to the judgment of our colleagues... it seems as though we are preparing a primer for a kindergarten class rather than a handbook for Rabbis...<sup>70</sup>

From the cataloged correspondences from the Recording Secretary, Isaac Marcuson, we learn that as of May 16, 1928, the members of the conference were to submit a formal request for their new and improved Rabbi's Manual. The new handbook was scheduled to be ready for distribution by June of that year. As part of this correspondence, the rabbis were to request whether they wanted to receive either of the following:

CLOTH BINDING ON HEAVY PAPER  
FLEXIBLE LEATHER ON THIN BIBLE PAPER

Under the rules of the Conference, a cloth copy will be furnished to each member free. Some of the members expressed a preference to have one of the flexible leather thin

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<sup>68</sup> A letter dated March 23, 1928, from Isaac Marcuson, written to Samuel Cohon; CCAR records in the AJA.

<sup>69</sup> A letter dated April 23, 1928, from Isaac Marcuson, written to Samuel Cohon; CCAR records in the AJA.

<sup>70</sup> A letter dated May 8, 1928, from Isaac Marcuson, written to Samuel Cohon; CCAR records in the AJA.

paper edition. There will be an additional charge of \$1.00 for this special edition to the members.

The cloth binding on heavy paper became the standard for most copies sold.

By the end of June, 1928 the Rabbi's Manual had come from the printers, and was in distribution. The following was reported to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, at the annual meeting in June, that year in Chicago, Illinois.

... the Committee on Rabbi's Manual proceeded with the revision of the proposed draft. Communications and suggestions were received from [several]... members of the Conference... In addition, [several other] Rabbis offered new material... The Committee was in the fortunate position to be able to incorporate most of the suggestions into the revised text.

Upon completion of its task, the Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the Conference for the opportunity to compile this work. <sup>71</sup>

As to the character of this Manual, the services which ended up gaining the most attention and expansion over the previous volume were the Service of Conversion, as previously discussed; the Marriage Ceremony was a new creation, including much of the traditional Hebrew text; Prayers for the Dying, which was completely reworked with two options, one being modern, and one in traditional Hebrew; the new Funeral Service contained multiple options of readings which provided for different scenarios; a new rather lengthy Service for the Dedication of a Synagogue was included, as well as an annual Cemetery Memorial Service, and the Service for the Installation of a Rabbi. Obviously the needs of the Manual have grown beyond the basic lifecycle and daily life necessities. We will continue to see this change and growth in the revisions to come.

Two years from its inception, almost to the day, the Revised Minister's Hand Book, the Rabbi's Manual, was completed with mixed public reviews. In July, 1928, *The American Israelite* ran an article of review on the Rabbi's Manual. The article spoke of

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<sup>71</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 38. S. CCAR Press: [New York]. 1928, 72.

some of the liturgical choices included as well as some of the liturgical changes which had occurred. Toward the end of the article, the new Rabbi's Manual is praised, yet challenged for its lack of ingenuity; the exact thing that the Committee debated and discussed over that two-year time period:

... It contains forms of services for all matters of concern in Jewish Life...

The character of the book is substantially changed from that of its predecessor. If it is possible to describe it one should say that it is a retrogression. This term is used in the sense of reintroduction of the more conservative forms in the various private and public religious ceremonials of the modern Jew.... Unquestionably the reintroduction of prayers and the rearrangement and modification of form... point backward to custom, rather than forward toward character. In the marriage agenda for instance practically all of the seven blessings are included... The funeral service has also returned to a decidedly more archaic form, with its inclusions of the El-Moleh Rachamim and other prayers which Reform Judaism had long ago set aside...

The Volume concludes with an appendix which contains essays and discussions of various conferences and authorities on such matters [that would serve as relevant in a rabbi's manual].

The book will be found handy both by rabbis and laymen... It contains the material which is necessary for the performing of those ritual services to the living which men find so important. Religion has a place here which can hardly be taken by any other social development. This manual is a conservative but interesting guide to the rabbi and a useful guide to the minister... [On a side note,] it would be very helpful if Jewish ritual makers were recruited from poets, instead of professors. This is no reflection upon the professors, but a weeping over the lack of poets.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Quoted from *The American Israelite*, as found in the records of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, American Jewish Archives.

## Chapter 3

### Rabbi's Manual, 1961

Eighteen years passed, and in 1946, the year after the Union Prayer Book, Volume II, Newly Revised, was published, “the President [of the Central Conference of American Rabbis] was authorized to appoint a committee to go over the Rabbi’s Manual and see if it should be revised before a new printing is authorized.”<sup>73</sup> “The Executive Board appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof to go over the volume and see if it needs any possible revision.”<sup>74</sup> This committee effectively became the Committee on Liturgy.

Following the second revision of the Union Prayer Book, volume II, as the CCAR became more organized and formal, the committee structure was reformatted to better encompass these larger responsibilities. By doing so, the committees were then to create subcommittees for the individual tasks that came up.

In the case of the new Committee on Liturgy, in regard to the subcommittee on the Rabbi’s Manual, “The chairman of the former committee [on Rabbi’s Manual,] which prepared the manual, Rabbi Solomon S. Cohon, was to be a member of the committee [on Liturgy].”<sup>75</sup> Apparently there was great interest in serving on this committee; the members were as follows:

Solomon B. Freehof, *Chairman*

Isaac E. Marcuson, *Secretary*

Bernard J. Bamberger

Louis Witt

Israel Bettan

M. J. Bloom

Samuel S. Cohon

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<sup>73</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 56. S. Press of the Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia. 1947, 29.

<sup>74</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 58.

<sup>75</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 29.



Abraham J. Feldman  
Robert I. Kahn  
Theodore Ross

James G. Heller  
Ahron Opher  
John J. Tepfer

For however much interest there may have been in this project, the Committee on Liturgy stalled until 1950, when Rabbi Freehof resigned from his position as chairman of the Committee. In November of 1950, Rabbi Bernard J. Bamberger received notice of his “appointment as Chairman of the Committee on Liturgy[;] Freehof [remained] on the Committee, but [felt] that he [wanted] to give up the Chairmanship.”<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, the Committee on Liturgy worked on and completed the Union Home Prayer Book, published in 1951; Rabbi Freehof guided this project to completion.

In his letter of appointment, Rabbi Marcuson recommended to Bamberger to create subcommittees of “five or six men to be the working committee and then refer the result of their work to the general committee, for criticism and suggestions.” These subcommittees were to be established on specific topics, i.e. the revision of the Haggadah and Rabbi’s Manual. And the following year, Rabbis Sidney Lefkowitz and Milton Grafman joined the Committee on Liturgy.

By the annual meeting of 1952, in Buffalo New York, the Committee reported that subcommittees had been formed to study and decide upon the possible revision of the Union Haggadah and the Rabbi’s Manual. Moreover, suggestions were welcomed.<sup>77</sup> That autumn, Rabbi Grafman addressed Rabbi Lefkowitz in a letter, wherein he stated:

Berney [Bamberger] asked me to make an analysis of the Manual and present a report at the next meeting of the Committee....

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<sup>76</sup> From a letter dated November 08, 1950, from Rabbi Isaac E. Marcuson, written to Rabbi Bernard J. Bamberger. Found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1950, from the Papers of Bernard Bamberger, housed in the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>77</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 62. S. Press of the Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia. 1952, 258-9.

It was agreed upon at the [last] Committee Meeting that a general questionnaire would not be advisable, as it might encourage general dissatisfaction with the Manual. It was decided... that I could use my discretion in communicating with a few of our colleagues regarding this suggestion... [I have received some] immediate responses... [which] indicate a genuine desire for a revision and at an early date. Some of the replies have been lengthy and have included many suggestions...<sup>78</sup>

On September 2, 1952, Rabbi Isaac Marcuson, of Macon, Georgia, for many years the Administrative Secretary of the CCAR, passed away at his desk. He had served as rabbi and leader of Beth Israel for nearly forty years, all the while serving in many capacities for the CCAR. At the time of his death, he had been serving as the Secretary of the Committee on Liturgy, having worked closely with Rabbi Cohon on the 1928 Rabbi's Manual. In his letter of response to Rabbi Grafman, Rabbi Bamberger mentioned his confusion and disorganization following Rabbi Marcuson's death:

I do not recall whether the job of the Rabbi's Manual was officially assigned to you, or to Sidney. I am no doubt had a record, but now that he has passed away, we can no longer use him as an authority. I shall be very grateful if you and Sidney will make a study together, dividing the work in any way you see fit. I hope you will forgive whatever error of administration I have committed.<sup>79</sup>

On a side note to the development of the Rabbi's Manual and its history, Rabbi Robert Kahn, of Congregation Emanu El, Houston, Texas, made a creative suggestion "that a 'king size' Rabbi's Manual would be very much in order. There are times... when a large size print would be... convenient..." He then went on to comment that "the new Conservative Rabbi's Manual has some very lovely meditations... that make me think we could use additional materials... for our manual."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> From a letter dated September 5, 1952, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1952", of the Bernard Bamberger Papers, housed in the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>79</sup> From a letter dated September 12, 1952, from Bernard Bamberger, written to Milton Gafman, and copied to Sidney Lefkowitz. This letter was found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1952", of the Bernard Bamberger Papers, housed in the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>80</sup> A letter dated June 17, 1952, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1953, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

After mourning the great loss that the Committee on Liturgy, as well as the CCAR, suffered in the passing of Isaac Marcuson, the Committee carefully assessed and reviewed the Rabbi's Manual (1928). The Committee stated the following in its annual report to the Conference, that year in Estes Park, Colorado:

[The Rabbi's Manual] has been a most useful publication. [The] Committee feels that it could be made even more useful by revision and enlargement, and asks approval by the Conference of this undertaking. We suggest that, when the revision is complete, the new Manual be published in loose leaf form, so that each rabbi may insert materials of his own choice, as well as those which the Conference may from time to time produce.

We... request our colleagues to send us both materials and suggestions for... the Manual.<sup>81</sup>

This recommendation to the Conference was accepted and the revision of the Rabbi's Manual was assumed.

On November 18, 1953, the Liturgy Committee met at the West End Synagogue, New York City. The members of the Liturgy Committee who were in attendance were:

Bernard Bamberger, *Chairman*

Milton L. Grafman

Sidney M. Lefkowitz

Sidney L. Regner

Joseph Klein

Jerome R. Malino

Solomon E. Starrels

The majority of time that day was dedicated to the Rabbi's Manual. Initially, Rabbi Grafman offered a report on the questionnaire, which ultimately did end up being circulated. "The response was good," he said, "133 men having replied, and many suggestions made."<sup>82</sup>

The minutes from the meeting that day stated the following:

The Committee went over the Table of Contents of the present [Rabbi's] Manual [from 1928] and decided to eliminate from the new Manual the Confirmation Service and the

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<sup>81</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 63. Press of the Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia. 1953, 134-5.

<sup>82</sup> *Minutes of Meeting of Liturgy Committee*, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1953, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

High School Graduation Exercises, and to provide a service for the dedication of Jewish Community Institutions in the place of the prayer at the Dedication of a Community Center. The question of whether to retain the service of Consecration of a New Home was left open, as was also the question of retaining the Afternoon Service at a House of Mourning. It was decided to add a service for Dedication of Memorials. The question of adding a service for the naming of a child at home was discussed and left open.

The following assignments were made to get materials and prepare drafts:

For marriages— Sidney Lefkowitz  
For funerals— Milton Grafman  
Conversion— Bernard Bamberger  
Circumcision— Joseph Klein<sup>83</sup>

The meeting concluded with the decision to have the next meeting of the Liturgy Committee on April 05, 1954, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Bernard Bamberger reported to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, at the Annual Meeting, June 22<sup>nd</sup> through June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1954, in Pike, New Hampshire. He informed the members of the Conference of the two meetings that the Committee had that year, and stated that a “sub-committee consisting of Rabbis Milton Grafman and Sidney Lefkowitz [were] at work on the *Rabbi’s Manual*.”<sup>84</sup> The members were informed of the results of the questionnaire, and requests for submission were again sent out.

This plea for submissions was repeatedly sent out to the members of the Conference. Rabbi Grafman, in a letter addressed to Rabbi Bamberger, confessed to his frustrations and lack of progress on the Rabbi’s Manual, due to the insufficient submissions. He stated that, “suggestions were plentiful at... the Conference, but very little assistance has been forth coming from the men to date. I plan,” he said, “to have

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

<sup>84</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 64. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1955, 58.

Sidney Regner send a letter to the entire membership of the Conference requesting various rituals and services.”<sup>85</sup>

Progress dragged well into the winter, when Rabbi Grafman, in another letter to Rabbi Bamberger, petitioned for help getting submissions:

Polish, Steinbach, and Opher are all good men and could certainly be of assistance. I will greatly appreciate it if you will suggest to Polish and Opher that they prepare marriage services, one each, and that you ask Steinbach to prepare a funeral service.<sup>86</sup>

David Polish and Ahron Opher cordially and happily agreed to the task set before them.<sup>87</sup>

In fact, the two agreed to also work in conjunction with one another,<sup>88</sup> serving as a virtual Marriage subcommittee of the Rabbi’s Manual subcommittee of the Liturgy Committee.

Simultaneously, Milton Grafman and Sidney Lefkowitz met in Jacksonville to confer on the Rabbi’s Manual.<sup>89</sup> On Tuesday, March 8, 1955, Grafman and Lefkowitz met and spent two days dedicated to compiling the Manual. Rabbi Grafman reported to Rabbi Bamberger:

The trip was very worthwhile and... very fruitful. We worked out several marriage ceremonies, and we have that... to present to the Liturgy committee. We are under no illusions about the ceremonies... they will be dissected, but at least we have something to show for our labors... if we could get together again for several days, we could really accomplish a great deal.

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<sup>85</sup> A letter dated November 24, 1954, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1954, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>86</sup> A letter dated January 24, 1955, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>87</sup> In letters dated February 9, 1955, addressed to Bernard Bamberger, the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>88</sup> A letter dated March 8, 1955, from Rabbi Ahron Opher to Rabbi Bernard Bamberger, “I spoke to David Polish and we agree to exchange our outlines for comment, and then submit to you two separate ones.” Found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>89</sup> A letter dated March 7, 1955, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

And then later in the letter Rabbi Grafman asks Rabbi Bamberger, once again, to “have Regner mail a letter to the entire membership of the Conference asking for material for the Manual.”<sup>90</sup>

Soon thereafter in this correspondence between Rabbis Grafman and Bamberger their letters were no longer getting crossed in the mail, and Grafman agreed with the recruitment of Rabbis Steinbach, Polish and Ophner. Furthermore, Rabbi Grafman was elated by the news that there were to be two additional marriage ceremonies drafted; Rabbi Grafman reported that he and Sidney Lefkowitz had prepared three marriage ceremonies while they were meeting in Jacksonville. In his letter, he did express his desire for approval from the Liturgy Committee at large because, as he stated, “if we are on the wrong track, it might be just as well for us to know about it sooner than later. When we finished our day’s work [in Jacksonville], Sidney and I realized that the Committee might even disapprove of everything we had done.”<sup>91</sup>

Rabbi Lefkowitz, in his own letter to Bernard Bamberger, reinforced much of what was already reported, and then added the following in regard to requesting materials from the Conference:

Mickie [a.k.a. Milton] has suggested that it might be wise if another letter would go out over your signature to the members of the Conference asking for their created services for: marriage, funeral, naming of child in synagogue, naming of daughter in home ritual, circumcision, service for Temple dedication, and conversion ceremony.<sup>92</sup>

Quickly thereafter, Rabbi Bamberger set a date for the Liturgy Committee’s next meeting, scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> of that year. Following that meeting, which focused

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<sup>90</sup> A letter dated March 10, 1955, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>91</sup> A letter dated March 11, 1955, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>92</sup> A letter dated March 11, 1955, written by Sidney Lefkowitz to Bernard Bamberger; found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

specifically upon the Rabbi's Manual work, Solomon Freehof "heartily" endorsed the Liturgy Committee report which was sent out; in response to an earlier report, regarding the marriage service and the translation of the Sheva Brachot specifically, he stated:

I am strongly opposed to [translating the Sheva Brachot]. When we modified the Sheva [Brachot] in all of our Reform rituals it was not for the purpose of brevity exclusively... the text of the prayers were unacceptable to us... For us to translate [these Blessings] would either make us ridiculous or compel us to falsify the translation.<sup>93</sup>

Obviously, as a Reform rabbi, Freehof was quite concerned with authenticity, as well as ritual and only lastly, I believe, was his concern about brevity.

That June, in Asbury Park, New Jersey, the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis met. Regarding the Rabbi's Manual, the Liturgy Committee was truly quite brief and straight to the point, recapitulating precisely the sentiments of the subcommittee members over the previous months:

The revision of the *Rabbi's Manual* is now quite under way; but we still have much work to do, and shall be glad to receive marriage, funeral, and other materials from members of the Conference.<sup>94</sup>

And progress they did see. By the following October, Rabbi Grafman reported to Rabbi Bamberger that "the material... [he] had on hand consists of two marriage ceremonies, two funeral services, [additional readings for] funeral services, a naming prayer, and [Bamberger's] conversion ceremony".<sup>95</sup>

The following January, Alan Steinbach, following up with Rabbi Bamberger, forwarded some funeral service materials. In his attached letter, Steinbach offers the following concept:

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<sup>93</sup> A letter dated May 19, 1955, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>94</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 65. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1955, 67.

<sup>95</sup> A letter dated October 27, 1955, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1955, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

It occurs to me[, Bernard,] that what we need is not so much a formalized Service, but appropriate materials that will fit into whatever Service our men now use. What I have in mind is actually “chomer lidrush” which can be used as needed.<sup>96</sup>

Rabbi Steinbach was on to an interesting idea. He provided a few vague examples such as a “Talmud story with Rabbi Chiya, which has a comforting note when a young person is being buried,” or “a story from Midrash Rabbah... for an aged person who has passed away.” Basically, Rabbi Steinbach suggested creating a Manual which is not necessarily a line-for-line script as much as an all-encompassing resource for readings and the like, which may be used in the ritual itself.

A couple of weeks later, Rabbi Steinbach forwarded an additional cemetery service to Bamberger; one that he found, “with occasional interpolations and additions from the [1928] Rabbi’s Manual... to bring a bit of comfort to families in the most difficult hour of their bereavement.”<sup>97</sup>

With the liturgical submissions slowly rolling in, the Liturgy Committee held a meeting at the Hotel Sheraton-Gibson, Cincinnati, Ohio, on January 24, 1956. The members of the Liturgy Committee who were in attendance were:

Bernard Bamberger, *Chairman*

Israel Bettan  
Abraham J. Feldman  
Sidney M. Lefkowitz  
Ahron Opher  
Dudley Weinberg

Samuel S. Cohon  
Milton L. Grafman  
Joseph Klein  
David Polish  
Sidney L. Regner

That day was spent looking at the many projects that the Liturgy Committee was involved with, including a Shivah Minyan Service based on the Union Prayer Book, the

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<sup>96</sup> A letter dated January 05, 1956, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>97</sup> A letter dated January 17, 1956, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.



proposed revision of the Union Hagaddah, an Anthology of Readings manuscript project and the revision of the Rabbi's Manual.

That day, Rabbi Grafman reported that he had “several funeral services and it was decided that there should be a set pattern for the service with variant psalms and prayers.” It was decided that Rabbis Grafman and Lefkowitz would meet to work on the service, while Rabbis Bettan and Cohon would meet to work on the notes. Meanwhile, the Circumcision service was reviewed and Rabbi Opher was assigned the task of writing a prayer ending with a Kiddush. After this meeting, it would appear that the new Rabbi's Manual was well under way to be compiled and completed. In closing the meeting, the rabbis decided that the next meeting of the Liturgy Committee would be in May, 1956, in New York City.<sup>98</sup>

Moving along with the progress of the revisions, Rabbis Lefkowitz and Grafman met March 13, 1956, in Jacksonville, where they “reworked the Circumcision ceremony, [and] worked on several marriage and funeral services.” All of this work was then forwarded on to Sidney Regner,<sup>99</sup> and reported upon at the Liturgy Committee meeting in New York City, May 29, 1956.<sup>100</sup>

The Liturgy Committee meeting served as a productive precursor to the Annual Convention, June 25<sup>th</sup> to June 28<sup>th</sup>, held in Atlantic City. In reference to all of their running projects, Rabbi Bamberger made the following statement:

Our progress has been admittedly slow; but we are convinced that we should not present anything to the Conference which does not represent a substantial improvement

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<sup>98</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: January 24, 1956*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>99</sup> A letter dated March 16, 1956, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>100</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: May 29, 1956*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

on what we now have, and the creation of really good prayer materials takes much time.<sup>101</sup>

The following November, the Liturgy Committee met in New York City for two days. A large portion of the first day was spent “reviewing materials submitted for marriage services. [Furthermore,] a motion was passed that the Marriage Service contain the full Sheva [Brachot] with a paraphrase in English.”<sup>102</sup> This obviously reflected Rabbi Freehof’s comments from May of 1955. And, the following day, the Committee dedicated their energy and attention to funeral liturgy, as well as reviewing the already revised liturgies. Finally, it was decided that Professor Cohon would review the notes for the Manual.<sup>103</sup>

These meetings continued now with regularity, consistency, and purpose. The following April, 1957, the Liturgy Committee convened once again in New York City. During the months that had passed, the Rabbi’s Manual subcommittees worked on their respective assignments. The members of the Liturgy Committee who were in attendance that April were:

Bernard Bamberger, *Chairman*  
Milton L. Grafman  
Sidney M. Lefkowitz  
Albert G. Minda  
Solomon E. Starrels

Sidney L. Regner  
Joseph Klein  
Jerome R. Malino  
Ahron Opher  
Alexander E. Steinbach

The Committee spent much of April 9 working on the Manual manuscript. The funeral subcommittee presented the work that had been done on the additional meditational readings for the funeral service. The Committee had previously decided that there were

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<sup>101</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 66. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1957, 83.

<sup>102</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: November 27-28, 1956*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1956, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

to be multiple funeral services. This day, the Committee reviewed “Funeral Service IV [and they] did not accept any of the material in it.” This discussion did inspire the idea “that in the notes there be suggestions regarding procedure in cremation.”<sup>104</sup>

“The members of the Committee were asked to go over the wedding service of Rabbi Minda in the CCAR Journal and send their evaluation and comments to Rabbi Grafman.”<sup>105</sup>

The Committee concluded their discussion on the Rabbi’s Manual that day with a review of the circumcision liturgy, agreeing that “work still to be done in the Manual includes completion of the circumcision ceremony, the conversion ceremony and the notes.”<sup>106</sup>

Rabbi Albert Minda’s Wedding Service was published in the CCAR Journal of that year,<sup>107</sup> wherein he offered some interesting commentary. In regard to the marriage ceremony and service, Rabbi Minda assumed the following stance:

Shall we revise the marriage service as found in the *CCAR Rabbi’s Manual* [1928]? A number of our colleagues hold that the uniformity of the service for all weddings gives it a classic and authoritative respect which would be impaired by variations. The service must contain those rubrics set forth by Jewish tradition and modified by the practices of Liberal Judaism. Within this context, it is proposed that the present marriage service be embellished, that variations be introduced to make it more inspiring.

...the service [should] make special provisions for the weddings of older couples, those previously married... [and] for the religious consecration of marriages performed by civil authorities...

The bridal pair might be asked to attend the Sabbath Service preceding the wedding ceremony, at which time they would be asked to share in the service. The present *Rabbis Manual* [1928] gives us a public prayer for the betrothed which might be used for this occasion. As a modification of an ancient tradition, perhaps the bridal pair might be asked to share in the Torah Service. A revised manual should give us suggestions for participation and variations in the prayers for the occasion.

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<sup>104</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: April 9—10, 1957*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1957, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> CCAR. CCAR Journal. Vol. 16. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1957, 22-28.

It is also suggested that a prayer might be recited at the ceremony rehearsal to make the wedding party conscious of the religious aspect of the service. It is also suggested that a prayer be recited by the parents of the bride and bridegroom on the day of the wedding.<sup>108</sup>

These suggestions, presented in Rabbi Minda's introduction, were valid in their time as a means of creating meaning in a religious moment, which may also be viewed as a civil or secular event in the lifecycle of the "bridal couple", as he phrased it.

A few months after the New York Liturgy Committee meeting, the Conference held their annual convention, that year in sunny Miami Beach, Florida. In the Report of the Committee on Liturgy, Chairman Bamberger offered encouraging and exciting news. He stated, "We are confident that the manuscript of the new Rabbi's Manual will be completed during the coming year, and will be in the hands of the members of our Conference well before the 1958 convention."<sup>109</sup>

With that ambitious goal established, the Liturgy Committee, and more specifically, the subcommittee(s) on the Rabbi's Manual revision, set out to achieve it. On December 10 and 11 of 1957, the Liturgy Committee met, once again at Rabbi Bamberger's congregation, on West 68<sup>th</sup> Street, in New York City. In attendance were the Rabbis:

Bernard J. Bamberger, *Chairman*

Abraham J. Feldman

Milton L. Grafman

Sidney M. Lefkowitz

Albert G. Minda

Ahron Opher

David Polish

Solomon E. Starrels

Sidney L. Regner

At the beginning of that meeting, the Committee paused "in remembrance of Rabbi Israel Bettan and in tribute to him for the contributions he had made during his

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<sup>108</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 22.

<sup>109</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 67. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1958, 67.

lifetime to the work of the Committee.<sup>110</sup> Following that meaningful moment, the Committee spent the majority of the two days engaged in the editing, writing and redacting of the Rabbi's Manual.

The Committee worked on material for the Rabbi's Manual, presented by Rabbi Grafman, as follows:

- (1) The marriage service in the present [Rabbi's Manual (1928)] (Service #1) was approved with verbal changes— but see below item 7.
- (2) Two prayers for use at the marriage of persons previously married were revised and adopted.
- (3) Marriage services #2 and #3 were adopted as revised.
- (4) The private prayers for the bridegroom and bride, and for their parents, now in the Union Home Prayer Book, are to be included in the Manual.
- (5) Rabbi Minda is to select and prepare material for use at synagogue weddings.
- (6) An introductory prayer for funerals, and a committal prayer were adopted as revised.<sup>111</sup>

What is quite impressive is that most of the issues that Rabbi Minda addressed in the introduction to his wedding ceremony, published in the CCAR Journal, were addressed and adopted at this Liturgy Committee meeting. In fact, the Rabbis went so far as to acknowledge that there must be uniformity among all of the CCAR-adopted Reform wedding ceremonies:

- (7) The Committee adopted the following standard forms for all Marriage services:

Whenever [ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך] appears, it is to be translated “Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.”

The questions asked the bridegroom and bride are to be (To bridegroom) “Do you \_\_\_\_ take \_\_\_\_ to be your wife, promising to cherish and protect her, whether in good fortune or in adversity, and to seek together with her a life hallowed by the faith of Israel? The same question to the bride with the [the appropriate titles and pronouns].

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<sup>110</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: December 10-11, 1957*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1957, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

The ring formula is to be “With this ring, be thou consecrated unto me as my wife according to the law of God and the faith of Israel.”

The declaration is to be “In the presence of this company as witnesses you have spoken the words and performed the ritual which unite your lives. I, therefore, declare you \_\_\_\_ and you \_\_\_\_, husband and wife, married in accordance with the state of \_\_\_\_ and according to the tradition of our Jewish faith.”<sup>112</sup>

The rabbis of the Committee further agreed to adopt the order of the marriage service with “the ring ceremony following the wine ceremony.”<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, over those days in December of 1957, the Committee established a need for more meditational funeral readings, as well as a bit more refining of the funeral services. Lastly, the Committee adopted the Circumcision Service, pending revisions. It would appear as though the new Manual would be completed in time for the next CCAR convention, as Bamberger stated.

The following March, in the spring of 1958, the Liturgy Committee met again in New York. On March 18, the Committee worked on materials for the revision of the Manual:<sup>114</sup>

- (1) The Circumcision Service as previously revised by the Committee was adopted.
- (2) The Prayer After Circumcision as contained in the present Manual [(1928)] was adopted.
- (3) The Prayer for Naming a Child as revised by the Committee was adopted. It was decided to include an additional prayer...
- (4) It was decided not to have a Confirmation Service in the Manual.
- (5) It was decided to omit from the Manual the High School Graduation Exercises.
- (6) The Conversion Service... was adopted as revised
- (7) The Public Prayer for the Betrothed was adopted and revised...
- (8) The decision at the last meeting to retain in all the Marriage Services the present order... was reconsidered... it was decided that one of the services be re-arranged to have the wine ceremony after the ring ceremony.

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: March 18-19, 1958*, found in the “CCAR Correspondence Files, 1958, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

In addition, three marriage services were approved by the committee on that day. The following day, March 19, 1958, the Liturgy Committee focused on the smaller services and prayers that were to be included in the revised Rabbi's Manual. These liturgies which were approved were:

- ✓ The Public Prayer for Persons Recently Married
- ✓ Silver or Golden Wedding Anniversary Ceremonies
- ✓ The Prayers for Notable Birthday/ Anniversary<sup>115</sup>
- ✓ Funeral Service IV

Furthermore, the subcommittees looked to draft a Traveler's Prayer, a Public Prayer of Thanksgiving, as well as several prayers and readings for the sick.

Bernard Bamberger, as the Chairman of the Liturgy Committee, submitted a letter to the Executive Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, on June 3, 1958. In this letter, Rabbi Bamberger transmitted "a substantial part of the newly revised [Rabbi's Manual] for [the Executive Committee's] consideration;"<sup>116</sup> unfortunately the ambitious goal of completing the Rabbi's Manual revision before the next meeting, which was set the year before, was not to be achieved. Rabbi Bamberger did, however, briefly explain that "this revision differs from the present [1928] Manual in the following ways:

- 1) ... We have added a... variety of materials for use at marriage and funerals.
- 2) The service for the Consecration of a New Home given in the [UPB] will be substituted for the version in the present [1928 Rabbi's Manual].
- 3) [Omitted items]: Confirmation Service, High School Graduation Exercise, [Shivah Minyan]...
- 4) Materials... which have been retained [from the Rabbi's Manual (1928)] have been carefully examined and... revised.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> A letter dated June 03, 1958, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1958, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

A few weeks later, the rabbis of the Conference convened in Chicago, Illinois, for the annual meeting, the week of June 24<sup>th</sup> through 29th. That year the following rabbis served on the Liturgy Committee:

Bernard J. Bamberger, *Chairman*

Samuel S. Cohon  
Abraham J. Feldman  
Sidney M. Lefkowitz  
Ahron Opher  
Solomon E. Starrels  
W. Gunther Plaut  
Jerome B. Malino

Joseph R. Narot  
Milton L. Grafman  
Albert G. Minda  
David Polish  
Sidney L. Regner  
Joseph Klein  
Dudley Weinberg

At the meeting, Rabbi Bamberger formally reported that they “had hoped to present a completed manuscript... but were not able to do so. [Due to expressed interest, the Liturgy Committee] submitted the work thus far finished, representing the larger part of the proposed new Manual.”<sup>118</sup> He then asked for reactions, suggestions and feedback, before one more final meeting for revision. Additionally, Rabbi Bamberger asked permission from the Conference to go ahead and approve the printing of the manuscript before the next annual meeting, in 1959; “a motion was passed to postpone action until the rest of the material which has not yet been presented to the Conference [is received].”<sup>119</sup>

December 16<sup>th</sup>, the Liturgy Committee met in New York City. Priority was given to the Rabbi’s Manual, with the anticipation of finalizing the manuscript, gaining approval, and getting the text to print. On that day in December, the rabbis discussed, reviewed and approved the following liturgies for the revision of the Manual:

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<sup>118</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 68. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1959, 102.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*



- ✓ Circumcision notes
- ✓ Family Ceremony for the Consecration of a New Home
- ✓ Public Prayer for a Sick Child
- ✓ Funeral Service: In the Cemetery
- ✓ Prayer for Cremation
- ✓ Service at the dedication of a Tombstone
- ✓ Prayer at the Dedication of a Tombstone of a Child<sup>120</sup>

In addition, special attention was paid to creating consistency between the revisions to the Rabbi's Manual and those prayers in the Union Prayer Book. This was specifically done in reference to the practice of Kaddish, wherein, "the Kaddish is to be printed on one page, printed across the page, with the "Al Yisroel" paragraph indented. The English translation will follow the Hebrew."<sup>121</sup>

The last part of that day, "Rabbis Feldman and Klein reported on the 'Revision of Historical and Explanatory Notes' [that were] to be included in the Revised Rabbi's Manual."<sup>122</sup> This discussion led to a series of halakhic issues, in the form of twenty questions, drafted by the Committee, which Rabbi Bamberger submitted to Rabbi Solomon Freehof for review and response.

The following month, Rabbi Freehof returned his comments to the Committee through Dr. Bamberger. "I went over your twenty questions for the Manual on which you asked me to comment" he wrote, "Some of the questions are not matters of halacha, but of ordinary judgment and do not require much judgment."<sup>123</sup> Freehof then went on to explain that some of the halakhic issues in question were already discussed in the "Conference Yearbooks" while "some I have already dealt with in 'Reform Jewish

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<sup>120</sup> *Minutes of Liturgy Committee Meeting: December 16, 1958*, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1958, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> A letter dated January 26, 1959, found in the "CCAR Correspondence Files, 1959, of the Bernard Bamberger Papers; the American Jewish Archives.

Practice,’... [while] some are discussed in my forthcoming book, ‘Reform Responsa’.”<sup>124</sup> Seven pages of responses followed. The issues in question surrounded mixed marriage and matrilineal as opposed to patrilineal dissent; the question of circumcision before the eighth day out of convenience; wedding ceremonies; civil and religious; as well as wedding locations, et al. These questions, among others presented to Dr. Freehof, remain timely to today.

From a series of correspondences between Bernard Bamberger, Joseph Klein, and Milton Grafman, we learn that by the middle of February, the Historical and Explanatory Notes, the *Tziduk Ha-Din* translation, as well as the Home Dedication Ceremony were also completed.

These final, completed liturgies for the revised Rabbi’s Manual were then sent out to the Executive Committee for approval. In its report of the previous year, at the annual Convention in June, the Liturgy Committee noted, that “we shall again be happy to receive comments and suggestions for use in preparing the final draft...”

During that 1959 meeting, a discussion ensued surrounding the reasoning behind the additional notes in the back of the Manual. Rabbi Bamberger stated:

Let me say, gentlemen, with reference to the notes... The Liturgy Committee has no legislative authority, what we have done in the notes was to bring up to date the material available to us... what could be documented by reference to resolutions of this conference or other famous Reform Conferences or of passages in the writings of men like Kohler, Deutsch, and Lauterbach, whom we regarded as more or less of authorities... There are many questions we have left unanswered, because there is no answer available...

...one of the purposes that we had in mind was this: That we wanted to put into print things that would be helpful to members of the... Conference.... for example... The question of circumcision on the 8th day is a live issue today. I don’t believe that a rabbi who is willing to officiate at a circumcision of the fifth day or on the fourth day— it is getting to the point where before long they are going to be so prompt they are going to be doing these circumcisions prenatally... that a rabbi who is willing to be a latitudinarian in

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<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

this way is going to need much backing from the Conference. The parents whose convenience or whose wishes he is meeting will be very well satisfied. A rabbi... who feels that it is wrong to do this and wants, whether rightly or wrongly, to insist on the traditional procedure, should have in print available the responsum on the subject which sustains that position.

... we want to provide as much material in the Manual for those rabbis who may need to be [sus]tained in a certain situation, and this was one of the principles that governed our selection.<sup>125</sup>

Following that discussion, there were talks of the review of the manuscript, the insertion of a more proper *Vidui*, and further discussions over the editing. Back and forth these rabbis argued, attacking Rabbi Bamberger and the Committee on Liturgy. Finally the Conference agreed that not everyone will be pleased all of the time, and more than likely there would be another revision done in another “fifteen or so years.”

Following the report by Rabbi Bamberger in the Year Book, we learn that “publication of the revised Rabbi’s Manual was authorized subject to such further revisions which may come in from members of the conference.”<sup>126</sup>

The character of this Manual, as it developed, continued to expand in the area of “occasional use” with dramatically updated Notes. The liturgies which were noticeably changed from the 1928 edition were Funeral and Unveiling Services, Consecration of a Cemetery, Dedication of Community Institutions and Public Prayer for a Sick Child, while other services were updated as necessary, according to the Committee on Liturgy. While liturgically moving forward and progressing with the changing need of American Jewry, we also witness a reclaiming of tradition with this Manual. The Reformers saw Judaism as ‘at one’ with modern religious sensibilities, while at the same time affirming

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<sup>125</sup> From the minutes to the Seventieth Annual Convention, Central Conference of American Rabbis held at The Mt. Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, June 23-28, 1959, from the Bernard Bamberger Papers; of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>126</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 69. Press of Maurice Jacobs, Inc.: Philadelphia. 1960, 97.

aspects where Judaism differed. For example, Confirmation, which was such a dramatic focus of the first two manuals, virtually disappeared from this Manual altogether.

From the first mention of a revision of the Rabbi's Manual (1928) in 1946, until the formal printing in 1960, fourteen years had passed. Leadership in the CCAR had changed a few times, but in a broader sense, the world had changed. During the 1920's, into the 1930's, our country had recovered from the Depression, and then the tides shifted as Eastern Europe suffered at the hand of Nazi rule, and the Second World War took its toll on America as well as the Jewish world with the loss of seven million in the Holocaust. Through the 1940's American Jewry looked to healing, the creation of the Jewish State, and a new face to Judaism in America and throughout the world. America then faced a great time of war with the Korean War of the 1950s, when, once again, our communities saw the need to pull together, while at the same time being at odds.

It is no surprise that the revision of this Rabbi's Manual faced so many challenges and took as long as it did. With so many trials and tribulations happening at home, in hindsight it only seems natural that this was happening on the religious and institutional front as well.

## Chapter 4

### **Rabbi's Manual: Maaglei Zedek, 1988**

The Rabbi's Manual (1961) was accepted and received well; it fell into dedicated use by most rabbis 'in the field' for many years to follow. It was not until the Eighty-Sixth annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, on the one-hundredth anniversary of the Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati, Ohio, that the discussion of the Rabbis Manual came up again.

It was the week of June fifteenth through nineteenth, 1975. In the annual report to the Conference on the work of the Liturgy Committee, the chairman, Rabbi A. Stanley Dreyfus, in one brief sentence, stated that "we contemplate a revision of the *Rabbi's Manual*, and we invite your suggestions and comments, especially in regard to marriage and funeral rituals."<sup>127</sup> Interestingly, these topics and themes never seem to grow old in the development of the Rabbi's Manual, as one may recall from the developments of the Minister's Hand Book (1917), the Rabbi's Manual (1928) and the revised Rabbi's Manual (1961).

The country was at the end of the Vietnam conflict, civil rights and feminism were taking hold; Sally Priesand had been ordained in 1972 as the first woman rabbi, and the memory of the 1972 Munich massacre of eleven Israeli Olympians was still fresh in the world's vision of Judaism and Jewish life.

It had been nearly twenty years and the generations had rolled over. There was new leadership in the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and there was certainly a

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<sup>127</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 85. The Watkins Printing Company: Columbus. 1976, 43.

different tone to the American Jewish world. Gates of Prayer, the newest Reform Jewish prayer book, was only a few years old, and Chaim Stern was leading the movement in liturgical innovation. Every so often, over the next five years, the topic of a Rabbi's Manual project came up with little action to follow.

In the spring of 1980, at the annual convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman was serving as the chairman of the Liturgy Committee. Rabbi Hoffman was very straightforward in the agenda of his report. He had no intention of reporting on numbers and figures. His intention was to stimulate a conversation surrounding the design of the future revisions of the Rabbi's Manual.

...we meet (together with the Practices Committee) intent on eliciting some sorely needed guidance from you regarding our proposed revision of the *Rabbi's Manual*. Wanting to reserve as much time as possible for that, I have determined to give but a short overview of our committee's proceedings, and then turn the meeting over to you [, the Conference] so that you may tell us what you think a *Rabbi's Manual* should contain.<sup>128</sup>

After his rather lengthy and involved 'overview' of the Committee's proceedings, Rabbi Hoffman opened the floor to discussion, looking for suggestions for the new manuscript.<sup>129</sup> Rabbi Louis Sigel set about the task of collecting all of the submitted materials which came in during the course of that coming year; it was reported that he was "weeding through considerable material already submitted." Meanwhile, Rabbi Gunther Plaut was chosen to "provide suitable background material of an historic/halachic and explanatory nature."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 90. [CCAR Press]: [New York]. 1981, 54.

<sup>129</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 90. [CCAR Press]: [New York]. 1981, 56.

<sup>130</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 91. [CCAR Press]: [New York]. 1982, 44.

Interestingly, as this is another repeated theme which continues to surface with every edition of the Rabbi's Manual, "the idea of fascicles with a small loose-leaf binder was endorsed. It was suggested that a big binder edition be prepared as well, capable of holding all of the contents at once."<sup>131</sup>

Progress of this nature continued until the spring of 1983, when Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, now chairman of the Liturgy Committee reported that "substantial progress was... made on the Rabbi's Manual, edited by Rabbi David Polish, with notes by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, as a first draft manuscript was nearing completion for circulation to the membership at the end of the summer of 1983."<sup>132</sup>

The following year, in the summer of 1984, Herbert Bronstein presented his annual report to the Conference at Grossinger's, in New York. In his report, he explained that the project had grown immensely, requiring more time and energy than originally anticipated:

Much progress was made during the year in completing a manuscript for a new Rabbi's Manual, to be edited by David Polish. A sub-committee has met several times to review materials submitted and drafted for the volume and has come to the conclusion that the Manual, when complete, would be better as a two-volume set, sold together, the second containing additional source materials of a liturgical or midrashic nature; guides for completing various ritual documents (and their texts), and the historical and explanatory notes prepared by Gunther Plaut. The first full length manuscript should be in the hands of our colleagues, by the end of 1984, for the purpose of review and critique before making the manuscript final for publication.<sup>133</sup>

As we quickly learn, the vast corpus of material collected by Rabbis Polish and Plaut was quite thorough and complete. This was the first mention of a second volume to

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<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 93. Special Edition: Columbus. 1984, 138.

<sup>133</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 94. [CCAR Press]: [New York]. 1985, 112.

the Rabbi's Manual; this will be the focus of Chapter Five, and we shall return to this date, in 1984, in that chapter.

The following February, in a letter from Rabbi H. Leonard Poller, now the chair of the Committee on Liturgy, to Rabbi David Polish, we learn that a draft version of the new Rabbi's Manual manuscript had been distributed. Regarding the manuscript, Rabbi Poller stated in his remarks:

The draft version of the Rabbi's Manual which you edited is most welcome... We applaud the way in which you have organized the material, utilized non-sexist language, engaged the translations of the new JPS Bible, and given clear instructions to [those persons] who will be using the manual.

The Rabbi's Manual should help and guide the rabbi to provide our faith's traditional words and practices at the most sacred and momentous occasions in the lives of our people... it should not violate the spirit of the traditional words and practices at peak or crisis moments lest the ideas of Judaism be inhibited.<sup>134</sup>

Rabbi Poller sought to offer “suggestions to offset apparent faults in the work”:

- a. All Bible translations... should be taken from the new JPS translation of the Bible... How else can we establish a liturgical tradition with which our congregants can become familiar? Further, the draft contains... passages where no translations are provided, others where translations should be placed, and still other instances where there is no Hebrew when a Hebrew rendition is in order.
- b. Procedural instructions are not always clearly stated, at other times they seem contrived.
- c. The use of the Shoah is at times “forced” or gratuitous, thus diminishing the awesome quality of the Holocaust.<sup>135</sup>

As the manuscript was being thoroughly reviewed by members of the Conference, Rabbi Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, in May of 1985, wrote a letter of suggestion to the Liturgy Committee. In his letter, he commented not on the specific liturgy or even layout of the liturgy to be included in the new Manual. Rabbi Hoffman was more concerned with the actual format of the book itself:

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<sup>134</sup> In a letter dated February 20, 1985, from the manuscript files of H. Leonard Poller, housed in the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*



I write to share with you... my strongest possible feeling that the Manual be printed in fascicle manner, each fascicle being a specific life cycle event, all of which fit into a loose leaf format. The book need not be a huge loose leaf one, but can be designed in a small pocket way to look equally as attractive and dignified as a hard cover book... I argue this for two reasons.

First, I think it is evident that in our day and age, we can never expect the full conference to approve... any given service. We must... allow for alternatives in choice... A loose leaf format would also allow room for the insertion of one's own choice of poetry and readings... every rabbi inserts this material in his or her own life cycle choices.

Secondly, I believe that our time is witness not only to vast differences of opinion horizontally—across the rabbinate of the country—but vertically as well. We need a book that can change as new levels of consciousness overtake us... With a fascicle system, we can update old liturgy and add new services without replacing the whole book; and we can assure that our book is not outdated in a year or two.<sup>136</sup>

Furthermore, these manuscript reviews made their way to the Executive Committee. In a letter written in October of 1985, Rabbi Elliot Stevens, the Administrative Secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, reported the results of the Executive Board meeting to Rabbi Polish.

I am writing to you on... our discussion of the Rabbi's Manual... you will see that the comments which I... summarize are often contradictory as happens with the written critiques that we received following the mailing of the draft manuscripts.

... I can report that Herb Bronstein's proposal to retain or restore archaic English to our liturgical publications was defeated... It was also voted that all liturgies published by the CCAR... use non-sexist language...

A motion was made that we proceed directly to production of the Manual, but this was defeated in favor of an additional process of review, given the difficulty that some of the Board members expressed... the motion finally adopted called for a sequence of further consideration, including the return of the manuscript to the editorial committee, review of the full manuscript by a stylist, and further consideration by the Board...

... points raised by those not wanting immediate production: a desire for life cycle liturgies to take cognizance of the existence of converts and non-Jewish parents [including additional optional readings]; inclusion of teaching materials along the way; aufruf before the wedding services... a desire to see the first service in each rubric be more traditional, with a counter desire for more creative materials—often suggested for a separate volume— but most of the negative comments did point to a “lack of a sense of the sacred” in style...”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> A letter dated May 2, 1985, written by Lawrence Hoffman to Joseph Glaser; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>137</sup> A letter dated October 28, 1985, written by Elliot Stevens to David Polish; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

Apparently the rabbis of the Executive Committee, as much as those rabbis who offered their own feedback, could not agree upon any consistencies, much as Lawrence Hoffman mentioned a few months earlier. The ongoing themes of non-sexist language and consistency in translation were, however, becoming more apparent as the editing process continued. Consequently, the rest of the Liturgy Committee on the Rabbi's Manual was carbon copied on this letter, which included Rabbis Glaser, Stern, Bronstein, Knobel, Maslin, and Poller.

Resulting from Rabbi Stevens' letter, David Polish, rather insulted and dismayed by the commentary, withdrew "from all further involvement with the proposed Rabbi's Manual... for two reasons."<sup>138</sup>

First, the rules for the editing process were changed without consulting me, although I had requested... that I be called in the event an issue were to arise. Second, I take issue with the CCAR Board's request that at life-cycle events we should "take cognizance of the existence of... non Jewish parents." I object both in principle and on the grounds that since my views on intermarriage are known, such a request could only be expected to be declined. In fact, I had already refused prior proposals of this sort...

... to include this in an official Rabbinic document is for me unacceptable... This "chiddush" is gratuitous. The presence of non-Jews is noted and need not be stressed... There are other ways of acknowledging or making non-Jews feel at home... To insist... that we turn a courtesy into an official part of our service is demeaning to all concerned, especially to Judaism.

I have acquiesced to a vast spectrum of requests for changes... including requests to soften or reduce references to the Shoah AND TO Israel, but I shall go no further.

I request that nothing [that I have done for the Manual in writing] be used by the CCAR in any way...

[Furthermore,...] I pass over the reference to the "lack of the sense of the sacred" in reverent silence...<sup>139</sup>

Correspondence became a bit heated at this point and we obviously see that Rabbi Polish was not at all pleased with what had transpired. A couple of weeks later, a letter

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<sup>138</sup> A letter dated November 21, 1985, written by David Polish to Jack Stern; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

of response was written to Rabbi Polish from Rabbi Jack Stern, now President of the CCAR.

I had expressed the hope following our... meeting... that there would be no letter to you at all but that the matter could wait until Joe Glaser and I would speak to you personally... However Elliot [Stevens] told me that you wanted to receive a letter immediately and thus did he proceed to comply with your request.

I... ask you, David, to stand on my original ground and to postpone all decisions until Joe and I have the opportunity to speak with you in person. There are specific items in relation to the editorial process and to the Manual itself that would benefit from such a discussion...

I hope that you will agree to this personal request that I ask of you.

This letter was also copied to Rabbi Joseph Glaser.<sup>140</sup> As the archival letters have indicated and the final publication would show, Rabbi Polish did honor Rabbi Stern's request, and agreed to a meeting with his colleagues.

At the same time, during the late autumn of 1985, Elliot Stevens was in contact with Beth Joselow, a contracted professional style editor, with whom he reported that there were heated discussions at the Executive Board Meeting regarding the Rabbi's Manual. The decision, as he reported it, was to have the editorial committee finalize the content. Then Ms. Joselow was to "intercede between the committee and the Board, so that the Executive Board this time can see the very best manuscript possible."<sup>141</sup>

The following May, 1986, Ms. Joselow returned a manuscript to Rabbi Stevens for the proposed Rabbi's Manual, with the editorial changes which were conveyed to her. In her attached letter to Rabbi Stevens, she reported:

I have found the manuscript to be in very good shape... Changes... reflect musicality and clarity, parallel structure, and substitutions for words which are often repeated or which we have become too accustomed to hearing.

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<sup>140</sup> A letter dated December 10, 1985, written by Jack Stern to David Polish; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>141</sup> A letter dated November 27, 1985, written by Elliot Stevens to Beth Joselow; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

On the whole, I find the contents of the manuscript to be well expressed, easy to interpret, contemporary in feeling and use of language.<sup>142</sup>

According to a letter from Jack Stern, dated May of that year, the small editorial committee consisted of the following:

|                  |                             |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
|                  | David Polish, <i>editor</i> |                   |
| Simeon J. Maslin |                             | Herbert Bronstein |
| Peter S. Knobel  |                             | Elliot Stevens    |

According to this letter of update, written to Leonard Poller, after two separate revisions for the Executive Committee, as we have seen, a professional stylist reviewed the manuscript and “an expanded editorial committee with a broader point of view... [should] have a go at making... revisions as would find favor in the eyes of the Board.”<sup>143</sup>

[Furthermore, this letter stated that] the Executive Board also voted to divide the Manual into two volumes: the first would contain only essential life-cycle functions based on the existing manuscript, of birth, marriage and divorce, sickness, death and mourning, and giur; the second volume which would under the editorship of someone else, yet to be named... contain the supplementary liturgies, such as the materials used less often than annually, as well as a full list of other materials appropriate for supplementary treatment. The notes by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, may be in either volume, or, for that matter, perhaps both.<sup>144</sup>

Consequently, this letter was drafted not only as an update, but also an appointment of Leonard Poller to the Rabbi's Manual Committee. This letter was also copied to Rabbis Knobel, Bronstein, Maslin, and Polish, informing them of the addition to the committee. In addition, Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, the only woman on the committee, was also added to the “Final Draft” Committee, as she called it.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> A letter dated May 8, 1986, written by Beth Joselow to Elliot Stevens; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>143</sup> A letter dated May 12, 1986, written by Jack Stern to Leonard Poller; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> A letter dated May 28, 1986, written by Elyse Goldstein to Elliot Stevens; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

The following month, the Central Conference of American Rabbis met for their annual convention, June 26<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1986, in Snowmass, Colorado. At the meeting Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, the chairman of the Liturgy Committee, explained the circumstances which led the Executive Board to recruit an expanded editorial committee, which would provide a wider and varying point of view, to gain a different perspective on the Manual. Furthermore, he disclosed a deadline for this committee of “December 31, 1986, for submitting its revisions to the Executive Board.”<sup>146</sup>

The Committee on Rabbi’s Manual later met in October of 1986 when they further revised and edited the text. By the following April, 1987, Rabbi Stevens reported to the Committee on Rabbi’s Manual:

...the voting copy of our manuscript was sent to the Executive Board several weeks ago, and the votes have been coming in since then... I am pleased to report that so far the Board has voted unanimously that we accept this manuscript and move into production...

...it is my hope that we can have our books before the end of the year...<sup>147</sup>

We learn in a letter from Edward Graham, that Jack Stern and Elliot Stevens “guesstimate’ January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1988” as a release date for the printing of the new Rabbi’s Manual. Needless to say, this estimate was not far off. And, in February of 1988:

[The CCAR received] a magnificent contribution of \$50,000... for the purpose of publishing [the new Manual] in loving memory of Rabbi Jacob Shankman... an appropriate memorial [for a rabbi who was such] the quintessential pastor, scholar, and man of faith.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 96. Special Edition: Columbus. 1987, 186.

<sup>147</sup> A memo dated April 1, 1987, from Elliot Stevens to the Committee on Rabbi’s Manual; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>148</sup> Joseph B. Glaser wrote a letter of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. John H. Wishnick of Scarsdale, New York. The letter was dated February 24, 1988, and carbon-copied to Mrs. Jacob K. Shankman and Rabbi Douglas E. Krantz. From the Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

Twelve years after its first discussion, and who knows how many actual manuscript drafts, Rabbi's Manual: Maaglei Zedek (1988) was published. This is the Rabbi's Manual which is currently used by most Reform Rabbis and laity to this day.

## Chapter 5

### **Rabbi's Manual: Volume II, 1992 manuscript**

We recall that in the spring of 1984, Rabbis David Polish and W. Gunther Plaut had accomplished a massive task in creating a possible two-volume Rabbi's Manual. This dialogue continued early on, in 1986, during the revision and editing of Rabbi's Manual: Maaglei Zedek. It was determined at this time, as we noted in the previous chapter, that the second volume would not be under David Polish's editorship, but rather under the aegis of someone else. In fact, the Publications Committee reported in the 1986 CCAR Year Book that "the other material [is] to be deferred to a later, second volume, under a different editor. The placement of notes by Rabbi Plaut was left open."<sup>149</sup> The task of the project and the focus of a second volume continued well into the mid 1990's.

In the spring of 1987, Rabbi Eric Hoffman, of Brookline, Massachusetts, agreed to chair the project and serve as editor. In a letter to Elliot Stevens, Rabbi Hoffman stated the following:

Enclosed... find my... working list for contents of Rabbi's Manual Volume II. It is... an unedited compilation... of all the ideas passed along to me... This is not the Table of Contents which I shall propose...

Soon I plan to send around a proposed Table of Contents, edited down from the enclosed, to the following: Herb Bronstein for Liturgy, Peter Knobel for Practices, and Lenny Poller for Publications... Based upon the reactions of these colleagues, I will proceed to implement such a table... Once the work has been completed or once I have been asked to report to a deliberative committee... the contents may be adjusted further.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 96. Special Edition: Columbus. 1987, 301.

<sup>150</sup> A letter dated April 8, 1987, from Eric Hoffman to Elliot Stevens on Rabbi's Manual Volume II; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

Rabbi Hoffman's "working list" was hand written and scrawled on lined paper. Its contents may be found in the attached Appendix on page 85.

May third through May seventh, 1987, the Central Conference of American Rabbis met for the annual convention in Tarpon Springs, Florida. At that meeting, Herbert Bronstein, the Chair of the Committee on Liturgy reported that "the new *Rabbi's Manual*, Volume I, was completed. This culminated years of planning and preparation. At the same time," Rabbi Bronstein stated, "the outlines of Volume II of the *Rabbi's Manual* were agreed upon, and Eric Hoffman agreed to chair the work on Volume II."<sup>151</sup>

Before Rabbi Hoffman could release that aforementioned Table of Contents, Rabbis Poller and Knobel exchanged a correspondence wherein they acknowledged a need to "talk about the Table of Contents for the second Rabbi's Manual and exactly how [they and their] two committees are going to work together on that... project."<sup>152</sup>

Simultaneously, the Executive Committee decided that "as far as committee work on Volume II... is concerned, [they would] do without a committee altogether... Instead, [Eric Hoffman, instead of serving as chair to a committee, was to be] designated 'editor' and [would] work together with Peter Knobel, as Chairman of the Committee on Reform Jewish Practice, and Leonard Poller, as Chairman of the Liturgy Committee."<sup>153</sup>

This project began to build steam, as the Executive Committee and Leonard Poller were anxious to see a more formal Table of Contents from Rabbi Hoffman.

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<sup>151</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 97. Special Edition: Columbus. 1988, 158.

<sup>152</sup> A memo dated May 13, 1987, from Peter Knobel to Leonard Poller; from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>153</sup> A letter dated May 15, 1987, from Joseph Glaser, the Executive Vice President of the CCAR to Rabbi Eric Hoffman. This letter was carbon-copied to the rest of the Executive Committee: Rabbis Lipman, Stevens, Knobel, Poller, and Pearce. Rabbi Hoffman obliged with a letter of thanks, dated May 27, 1987. From the files of H. Leonard Poller, housed in the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.



Furthermore, the recommendation was made to have Rabbi Hoffman resource David Polish; the thought was that there may have been some leftover material from Volume I:

In the meantime: [Eric,] Leonard suggested that it would be very helpful for us to receive a more vigorous presentation of your proposed table of contents for volume II of the Rabbi's Manual, and he is very much hoping we can have this by Labor Day, so that it may be circulated to the Committee for its review. I am sure that David Polish would welcome your contacting him, for consultation or if you think it would be helpful to review what was left out of volume I.<sup>154</sup>

The following month, for reasons that remain ambiguous, in August of 1987, Eric Hoffman resigned from his commitment as editor of Volume II of the Rabbi's Manual. What we do know is that “domestic and congregational difficulties [had] forced this [resignation] on him.” Initially, Leonard Poller recommended that Rabbi Dov Taylor, of Highland Park, Illinois, serve as the new editor. Poller believed that “Dov is a first rank Hebraist and scholar.”<sup>155</sup> Peter Knobel agreed with Leonard Poller’s recommendation “of Dov Taylor as a possible replacement”.<sup>156</sup>

Elliot Stevens wrote a formal letter of invitation to Rabbi Dov Taylor, providing him with an update of the progress which had been made on the second volume. In that letter he stated, “...your proposed appointment as editor of Volume II of the Rabbi's Manual has met with enthusiasm by all those who will have something to do with the project... and that your appointment can therefore be confirmed.”<sup>157</sup>

In a follow-up correspondence from Rabbi Hoffman, he informs Leonard Poller that he had “submitted to Joe Glaser a Second Draft Outline, offered as an improvement

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<sup>154</sup> A letter from Elliot Stevens, dated July 8, 1987, written to Eric Hoffman; from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>155</sup> A letter from Leonard Poller to Roy Walter, dated August 31, 1987, from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>156</sup> A letter from Peter Knobel to the Reform Practices Committee dated September 17, 1987, housed in the American Jewish Archives as part of the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection.

<sup>157</sup> A letter from Elliot Stevens to Dov Taylor, October 22, 1987, the H. Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

upon the first working list for the Table of Contents.” In his closing, Rabbi Hoffman offered to be of any additional help, as a resource, to his successor.<sup>158</sup> That Second Draft Outline is included as an Appendix on page 88.

From a review of the outline, we learn that Rabbi Hoffman’s Second Draft refined the original brainstorm list. He appeared to have been quite meticulous regarding the categories and topics included. In the letter that he originally sent to Joseph Glaser attached to this Table of Contents, Rabbi Hoffman stated the following about the organization of the proposed future manuscript:

The first draft should be retained and kept with the second draft because it contains some specific suggestions that were received... these outlines include virtually all suggestions received...

Regarding the first four sections, there was considerable call for complete ceremonies with detailed instructions or choreography. I have labeled the first three sections “Prayers” because I feel it would be pointless to try to present a universally adaptable ceremony for such unique occasions....

...I am holding all the material that Elliot [Stevens] has provided me and am prepared to forward it to you or top my successor upon your request...

The next step planned was for the Editor to submit to the *CCAR News Letter* a call for colleagues’ submissions of materials that would relate to the first five sections...<sup>159</sup>

By the end of 1987, a tentative outline had been established for Volume II of the Rabbi’s Manual, and a proposed new editor had been chosen, yet no confirmation, nor denial, has been found, in this research surrounding the editorship. By the beginning of 1988, it had become clear that a new editor still had not been found. Apparently, the editorship went to a vote by committee chosen to elect this new editor. The rabbis chosen to serve on this committee were Rabbis Glaser, Pearce, Poller, Knobel, and

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<sup>158</sup> A letter written to Leonard Poller from Eric Hoffman, September 30, 1987, from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>159</sup> A letter dated September 30, 1987 from Eric Hoffman to Joseph Glaser, from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

Lipman. They were all issued a list from which they were to vote. That list may be found included in the Appendix on page 90.

At the end of January, 1988, Elliot Stevens tallied the votes, informing the committee that:

We have now received all the votes necessary to select the new editor of Rabbi's Manual, Vol. II.

First Choice: Barton Lee

Second Choice: Jonathan Brown

Addition Choices in descending sequence: Marc Saperstein, Morrison Bial, Marc Gellman.

I would like to suggest that Bart and Jonathan be named co-editor, since Bart may have done more liturgy but Jonathan is a congregational rabbi.<sup>160</sup>

Leonard Poller immediately responded to Rabbi Stevens, whereby he stated:

I prefer a single rather than co-editorship. Peter Knobel agrees. Since Bart Lee is the preference of those surveyed, I'm contacting him and suggesting he consider Jonathan Brown as a collaborator. By having a single editor, we have the assurance that everything will be done quickly, without delay, and without material "falling between the cracks."<sup>161</sup>

The following day, Rabbi Poller wrote a letter to Rabbi Barton Lee, inviting him "to serve as editor of Volume II of the Rabbi's Manual... in process of being published by [the] Conference." In this letter, Rabbi Lee was informed of the following:

Some materials have already been gathered for the volume. Rabbi Eric Hoffman had made a very good beginning and outline of the things that he would have done... It serves as a guideline for you, if you're so disposed...

You may wish to work with a collaborator in this and the name of Rabbi Jonathan Brown comes quickly to mind.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> A memo from Elliot Stevens to Rabbis Glaser, Poller, Pearce, Knobel and Lipman, dated January 22, 1988, from the files of H. Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>161</sup> A letter dated January 26, 1988, from Leonard Poller to Elliot Stevens, from the Poller Manuscript collection, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>162</sup> A letter written to Rabbi Barton Lee, January 27, 1988, from H. Leonard Poller, Poller manuscript collection, American Jewish Archives.

In early February, Rabbi Lee accepted the “responsibility to be Chair of Volume II of the Rabbi’s Manual.” Apparently Rabbi Roy Walter would “be of help... in the process of producing the volume.”<sup>163</sup>

By this time, in February of 1988, some materials had already been collected for the future volume. Morrison Bial, the autumn before, had submitted “The Names of Our Children”,<sup>164</sup> and Rabbi Norman Hirsch submitted “Blessings of Enjoyment” and “Blessings of Gratitude”, liturgy which the Liturgy Committee believed might be a good fit for Volume II.<sup>165</sup>

The week of March seventh through thirteenth of 1988, the Central Conference of American Rabbis met for their annual convention in Jerusalem, Israel. Rabbis Lee and Walter spent the year following, after the Jerusalem meeting, working through the pre-existing material, further organizing and refining it. In March of 1989, Barton Lee reported to Rabbis Poller, Knobel, Stevens and Glaser about the progress that he and Rabbi Walter had made. Included in the letter of progress were a few questions that arose in their work:

...we categorized the materials and ideas we had in some rough form, representing our thoughts about what might be handy to include in Volume II.

We do have one major query: Are some of these prayer occasions better dealt with in a book for laypeople, a kind of Gates of the House Volume II? An example of this might be prayers on learning of pregnancy, prayer for weaning, prayer after childbirth.

The Proposed Categories of Materials and their Contents that Rabbi Lee spoke of, may be found in the Appendix on page 91.

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<sup>163</sup> Leonard Poller wrote a letter of congratulations and thanksgiving to Barton Lee upon his agreeing to take on the task of editing the Volume II. This letter was dated February 18, 1988, from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>164</sup> A letter from Elliot Stevens from September 30, 1987, addressed to Joseph Glaser, American Jewish Archives H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection.

<sup>165</sup> February 18, 1988 letter from H. Leonard Poller to Rabbi Hirsch, American Jewish Archives, Poller manuscript collection.

We also reviewed and eliminated lots of material that was sent to me... and have selected some to work over...for use in the volume.

What we need now is CCAR committee guidance as to which of the material... should... be included... for example, a Pidyon Ha-Ben service, if there is the consensus that the conference does not want such material included.

Another question: should I write a blurb for the CCAR Newsletter calling for submission of materials... or will one of you do it?<sup>166</sup>

At the end of June, the week of the 21<sup>st</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup>, the CCAR held its one hundredth annual convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. At the convention, Volume II was discussed in great detail. Rabbi Lee's 'Proposed Categories' were discussed, and the concerns expressed in his letter were addressed. As a result of the discussions at the conference, the following suggestions were made:

It was suggested that invocations and blessings at governmental agency sessions be deleted, as not in keeping with the CCAR's stands on separation of Church and State. It was suggested that a section of benedictions be added. Rather than providing complete sets of materials for each occasion, it was suggested that a single generic dedication... would suffice... The committee voted that the ritual Pidyon Ha-Ben should be deleted, but that a substitute, "Prayers on Becoming a Parent," should be included. It was suggested that a prayer on the occurrence of a natural or man-made disaster be included. It was suggested that... classic texts of the Jewish past be used within appropriate rubrics. It was decided that the Orthodox Ketuba and instructions for completing it should be included. It was suggested that "Installation" be called "Consecration." The committee felt no need for a separate set of notes. It was suggested finally that a section for ideas for eulogies be added.<sup>167</sup>

Shortly thereafter, in August, Rabbi Constance Golden submitted the liturgies for a "Graveside Service for Infant Death (Under 30 Days)" and a "Home Service Following Infant Death or Miscarriage."<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> A letter dated March 1, 1989, from Rabbi Barton G. Lee, from the files of the H. Leonard Poller manuscript collection, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>167</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 99. Special Edition: Columbus. 1990, 201-2.

<sup>168</sup> A hand written letter sent to Peter Kobel, dated August, 1989. This letter, and accompanying liturgy, was forwarded to Roy Walter, Barton Lee, and Leonard Poller. From the Leonard Poller manuscript collection of the American Jewish Archives.

Rabbis Lee and Walter continued to compile the makings of a manuscript for Volume II. Again, they were unclear as to what was expected not only from them, but from the manuscript as well.

In November of 1989, following the High Holy Days, Leonard Poller addressed a letter to Rabbi Lee, enquiring as to the progress of Volume II: “I’d be grateful if you’d give me an update on what that progress consists of.”<sup>169</sup> Come February of 1990, Barton Lee, in his delayed response to Leonard Poller, admittedly states:

I have spoken with Roy [Walter] and we are planning to meet later in the Spring to go over some texts to deliver to the committee in Seattle. But both of us would like some clarification of just what the scope of the volume is to be.<sup>170</sup>

The next week, Elliot Stevens received a letter from Barton Lee, wherein Rabbi Lee asked Rabbi Stevens to petition for submissions from the Conference in the next CCAR Newsletter. That petition was to read something like the following:

We are anticipating that work on Volume 2 of the CCAR Rabbi’s Manual will be moving into high gear. We would be delighted to hear from those of you who have ideas as to what the volume should include and especially those who could share texts of prayers or other materials which you have used and which you feel you would like to share with your colleagues through Volume 2.

Included in that letter was a plea from Barton Lee to Rabbi Stevens:

I am prepared to get things moving [following Leonard Poller’s “ootzing”], but I really would like some clearer direction... Would you be good enough to look... over [my Proposed Categories previously distributed] and jot down some comments about what is and what is not deemed appropriate for inclusion[?]<sup>171</sup>

At that time, a petition for input on material to be included in the volume was sent out.

Through a series of correspondences, Rabbis Lee, Poller, and Stevens worked through the suggestions from the CCAR annual meeting of the previous year, the Liturgy

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<sup>169</sup> A letter from Leonard Poller to Barton Lee, dated November 15, 1989, from the Poller files of the AJA.

<sup>170</sup> A letter dated February 13, 1990 from Barton Lee to Leonard Poller, from the Poller manuscript files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>171</sup> A letter dated February 20, 1990 from Barton Lee to Elliot Stevens, from the Poller manuscript files of the American Jewish Archives.

and Publications Committees meeting, as well as some additional recommendations that Leonard Poller and Elliot Stevens had regarding the Rabbi's Manual, Volume II.

Apparently, the lack of rapid activity on the part of the Editor raised concern on the part of the Conference. At the annual conference in Seattle, June of 1990, "the committee [on Liturgy] decided to defer a discussion until the receipt of manuscript materials from... Barton Lee. In the event that materials were not forthcoming, other names were suggested as possible editors." Furthermore, the liturgical submissions that Norman Hirsch lent, namely "Blessings of Enjoyment" and "Blessings of Gratitude", were referred to the Commission on Religious Living, not necessarily to be utilized in Volume II.<sup>172</sup>

According to Rabbi Lee, some of the major issues that arose during this project were as follows: Rabbis Lee and Walter were not given adequate guidance or instruction as to what was expected from the volume. Resulting from the lack of proper direction, personal life and extended work expectations on the parts of Rabbis Lee and Walter, the project tended to stall out, start up, and then once again sputter out. Rabbi Lee explained that one of the frustrations that he experienced was a lack of dedication and input from the Conference at large and the Rabbis in the field. It seemed there was interest in the project, as long as someone else was handling it. Rabbi Lee explained that due to the ebb and flow of the demonstrated interest in the project from the CCAR, he tended to "get behind and then get caught up again." The cycle continued for years as interest would pop up and then disperse again.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 100. Special Edition: Columbus. 1991, 134-5.

<sup>173</sup> Derived from a telephone interview between Michael Weinstein and Rabbi Barton Lee, February 15, 2010.

According to the 1991 CCAR Yearbook, “future projects and works include... the *Rabbi’s Manual* Volume II; in December of 1991, in the minutes to the Liturgy Committee meeting, Elliot Stevens reported that Rabbi Lee had “committed to submit a completed entire manuscript [of Volume II] by March 1, 1992.”<sup>174</sup>

Consequently, in a letter written to Barton Lee, written March 12, 1992, Elliot Stevens stated, “I am writing... to follow up on your work on the Rabbi’s Manual [Volume II], [the Committees on Reform Jewish Practice and Publications met, and] both were hoping to see your work, which we have thought would be complete by the first of March.”<sup>175</sup>

In early 1993, Barton Lee submitted a “final” draft manuscript. The Table of Contents for that manuscript may be found in the Appendix on page 99. According to a memo from Elliot Stevens to Leonard Poller, editorial committees had reviewed the manuscript, and “these pages have been reviewed now fairly adequately and we ought to be able to proceed to the design stage.”<sup>176</sup> Accordingly, Siah Siftoteinu<sup>177</sup>, as Volume II became known, appeared on the Committee on Publications Agenda for February 10, 1993, as well as on the agenda of the Committee on Liturgy for March 16, 1993.<sup>178</sup> And furthermore, individual comments on the manuscript were submitted and only positive

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<sup>174</sup> From the manuscript files of Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>175</sup> From the manuscript files of Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>176</sup> A memorandum from Elliot Stevens to Leonard Poller, dated February 8, 1993; from the H. Leonard Poller manuscript files at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>177</sup> Rabbi Barton Lee, in a phone conversation with Michael Weinstein, on Monday, February 15, 2010, explained that this name came from an expression of liturgy described by Rabbi Dr. Jakob Petuchowski, in an article that he wrote for the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, entitled Contributions to the Scientific Study of Jewish Liturgy, 1970.

<sup>178</sup> From the manuscript files of Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.



reactions were returned, such as as “Barton and his editorial committee should be encouraged to finish things up.”<sup>179</sup>

The minutes from that March 16<sup>th</sup> Liturgy Committee meeting read as follows:

The committee considered a manuscript submitted by Rabbi Barton Lee, to be published in loose-leaf format. An editorial committee has been appointed which will have to meet to review this manuscript in detail. The committee agreed that differences in style were acceptable... although editorial work toward a standard of elegance is still necessary...<sup>180</sup>

After this meeting, it appeared as though *Siah Siftotenu: Rabbi's Manual, Volume II* was well underway to publication, with only some minor editing remaining. Rabbi Lee reported that initial discussions had planned for Volume II to be printed in a loose-leaf format, providing more flexibility for usage by the rabbis in the field;<sup>181</sup> an idea which was by no means a new concept, reflecting back to discussions as early as the 1961 Rabbi's Manual. In a letter from Leonard Poller to Rabbi Lee, from May of 1994, Rabbi Poller states, “It was good to talk with you and to know that you and your colleagues will get together soon as an editorial committee to put the final touches on [Volume II] for its final run through.”<sup>182</sup>

After these committee meetings of 1994, the Rabbi's Manual, Volume II appeared to be shelved, for reasons unknown; however Barton Lee speculated that interest just ran dry, as other projects and interests began to take shape.<sup>183</sup> It was during this time that prayer book revision based on the feminist critique and gender-neutral language was coming to the foreground. Gates of Prayer for Shabbat, also known as “Gates of Grey” was in the midst of being published and the movement was responding more and more to

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<sup>179</sup> A letter from Michael Signer, to Leonard Poller, dated March 9, 1993, from the files of Leonard Poller of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>180</sup> From the manuscript files of Leonard Poller, American Jewish Archives.

<sup>181</sup> From a telephone conversation with Michael Weinstein on Monday, February 15, 2010.

<sup>182</sup> A letter dated May 10, 1994, written by Leonard Poller to Barton Lee, from the Poller manuscript files of the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>183</sup> From a telephone conversation with Michael Weinstein on Monday, February 15, 2010.

women's needs. Rabbi Lee reported that some suggestions that came in from the field were focused around purity and menstruation; a realm in which he admittedly, as a man, had little expertise out of which to write liturgy. Moreover, the suggestions were submitted from feminist leaders in the field, such as Debra Orenstein or Susan Grossman, but the actual liturgical pieces failed to be supplied. Barton Lee did make mention of one piece in particular which left quite an impression upon him: Constance Golden's "Graveside Service for Infant Death (Under 30 Days)".<sup>184</sup>

Rabbi Lee explained that his goal in compiling *Siah Siftotenu* was not to replace Maagle Zedek, but rather to reinforce the liturgy already present.<sup>185</sup> The character of Volume II provided for some interesting liturgy which had yet to be published formally. Serving as an adjunct to Volume I, we find some interesting additions. Under the topic heading of Birth we find liturgies such as a Blessing of a Newborn Child, A Prayer of a Birth of a Girl, A Piyyut on the Birth of a Girl, and even a Parent's Prayer. Under the heading of Marriage, we find a Bedeken Ceremony, Vows, and even an Egalitarian Sheva B'rachot. Certainly showing a changing time, some of the more traditional rituals that appear to have returned to Reform Judaism with this volume were Tashlich, Counting of the Omer, and multiple prayers for the State of Israel and Jerusalem.

There was a brief mention in the 1994 CCAR Year Book that "Alternatives were discussed to move toward the completion of the *Rabbi's Manual, Volume II*."<sup>186</sup>

In the 1995 Year Book, in the report from the Committee on Publication, we read:

Rabbi [Elliot] Stevens... reported on *Siah Siftoteinu*, a second volume of the Rabbi's Manual, and noted that there had been no new developments for at least the last year and

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<sup>184</sup> From a telephone conversation with Michael Weinstein on Monday, February 15, 2010.

<sup>185</sup> From a telephone conversation with Michael Weinstein on Monday, February 15, 2010.

<sup>186</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 104. Special Edition: Columbus. 1995, 159.

a half. Rabbi Knobel stated that the manuscript was very out of date, and that many rabbis were producing new materials all the time. Discussion was deferred...<sup>187</sup>

Meanwhile, in the 1996 Year Book, in the report of the Liturgy Committee, “Rabbi [Jack] Stern moved that the material prepared for Volume II of the Rabbi’s Manual not be published in book form, but that dissemination in other forms, be explored [in] clearinghouse-fashion.”<sup>188</sup>

Nothing further happened with *Siah Siftotenu: Rabbi’s Manual, Volume II*, and fourteen years later, the volume has never made it to publication. As there were some manuscript copies that were copied and circulated, Rabbi Lee reports that “Sam Stahl and Rifat Soncino have used parts of it and Chaim Stern adapted a piece from it and used it in [On the Doorposts of Your House].”<sup>189</sup>

Furthermore, Rabbi Lee reported that in the early 2000s, a new joint project between the CCAR and the American Conference of Cantors was started in which some of the liturgy from *Siah Siftotenu* was considered. In 2001 it was decided to create a CCAR/ACC Life Cycle Manual; liturgies to be included mostly surrounded sickness, death, loss and mourning.<sup>190</sup> After several years of collaborating, this project, too, found itself going nowhere, interest was lost, and it was dissolved.<sup>191</sup>

Rabbis throughout the Reform Movement continually use the liturgies of *Siah Siftotenu*, and as Volume II is a fabulous corpus of writings, I anticipate that this liturgy will continue to pop up in one form or another for generations to come.

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<sup>187</sup> CCAR. Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Vol 105-6. Special Edition: Columbus. 1997, 175.

<sup>188</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 346.

<sup>189</sup> An email from Barton Lee to Michael Weinstein dated January 26, 2010.

<sup>190</sup> According to a Table of Contents from Barton Lee’s personal files, to be submitted to the American Jewish Archives.

<sup>191</sup> From a telephone conversation with Michael Weinstein on Monday, February 15, 2010.

## Conclusion

In 1904 the CCAR Committee of Rabbi's Manual came up with the objective "to promote unity in [their] religious practices, with... reverence to the old standards... with all due respect for the liberty of the individual." Our predecessors in the Reform rabbinate were interested in establishing consistency in their practice, while revering tradition and respecting the individual. I don't believe this could sound any more Reform in nature. The Committee went on to argue for "more dignity to all religious functions" while paying attention to "the benefit of best forms" providing for "a more perfect shape through... widespread usage."

I am reminded of what Leonard Poller stated in 1988, wherein "The Rabbi's Manual should... guide the rabbi to provide our faith's traditional... practices at the most sacred... occasions in the lives of our people..." Over the course of the last century, the rabbis of Reform Judaism were searching for consistency and credibility in the development of modern Judaism, working to preserve tradition, in whatever form it may be; that is precisely what they have done.

The time period really did not matter, whether the 1890s or the 1990s; the ideas, concerns and issues that arose then are constant even today. The marriage and funeral agendas which were on Isaac Moses' table in 1892 are still on the 'computer desktops' of rabbis today. From the late 1950s through today, rabbis talk about the idea of having a Rabbi's Manual in loose-leaf format, enabling for more flexibility and freedoms.

Some consistencies that came up as early as 1917, with the first Jewish Publication Society Hebrew Bible translation, are that of like translations and formulaic blessings. That continues to build and enhance credibility. This was evidenced with the

revised Rabbi's Manual, the revised Union Prayer Book, all subsequent revisions of both, as well as the *Gates of...* series and even the most recent addition to the Reform Movement's arsenal of publications, Mishkan Tefilah.

Furthermore, a consistent problem that continued to come up with each generation was the unexpected length of time that the planning, writing, compiling, and revising always appeared to require. Another constant has been the lack of submissions to the committees and editors; time and again, the requests went out for rabbis to share their treasured liturgies, and time and again, we learn of how few the responses were and how slow this process became.

There are a couple of things that I may conclude from a historical perspective. First off, by following one thread through Reform Judaism's history, I was able watch the evolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis from the early days of the 'all boys club' to the organized hierarchical corporate entity that it is today.

Tied into this idea of following one thread, I was able to gain a modern understanding of talking across generations. As I have been reading mail and correspondences from some of the greatest minds and leaders in Reform Judaism, I have come to understand some of their wants and fears, their colloquialisms and intonation, their families, friends, and even the occasional vacation. These great leaders were fathers and brothers, friends and even lovers; they had bills and mortgages, felt pain and joy. I imagine that this experience, this understanding, may be compared to a lesson in talmudic study, as one reads the discussions from across the centuries: not knowing what is right or what is wrong, only honoring what it is that they believe. This has been the true lesson in my study of the Rabbi's Manual.

## Appendix A

### Minister's Hand Book— Table of Contents

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## Appendix B

### Minister's Hand Book— The Marriage Ceremony

#### The Marriage Ceremony

**Rabbi:**

ברוכים הבאים:

**"B**LESSED be ye that come in the name of the Lord."

*(Here follows an address.)*

*(Name of Bridegroom)* do you of your own free will and consent take \_\_\_\_\_ to be your wife and do you promise to love, honor and cherish her throughout life? If so, you will affirm by saying "Yes."

*(Name of Bride)* do you of your own free will and consent take \_\_\_\_\_ to be your husband and do you promise to love, honor and cherish him throughout life? If so, you will affirm by saying "Yes."

*The Rabbi takes the wedding ring and says to the groom:*

"Will you the bridegroom, while placing this ring upon the finger of your bride, repeat after me the following words:

"Be thou consecrated unto me with this ring as my wife according to the faith of Israel and the law of God."

*Then the Rabbi, turning to the bride, whether there is an exchange of rings or not, says:*

"Repeat after me these words:

"Be thou consecrated unto me with this ring as my husband according to the faith of Israel and the law of God."

*The Rabbi lifts a goblet of wine and says:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

"Praised art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who hast created the fruit of the vine."

*The bride and groom here drink from the goblet.*

*The Rabbi then says:*

"Be praised, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe Who hast sanctified us by Thy law, and hast instituted the sacred relationship of marriage, so that by the union of husband and wife, the welfare and happiness of mankind are furthered and consecrated. Praised art Thou, O Lord, our God, Who sanctifiest life by the holy covenant of marriage."

You have spoken the words and pronounced the ceremony that bind for life. Therefore, in accordance with the rites and usages of Judaism and in accordance with the laws of the State of \_\_\_\_\_, I declare you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ man and wife, and with this declaration I invoke upon you the three-fold benediction:



יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְיָ וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּהּ :

יְאֵר יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ :

יֵשָׂא יְיָ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם :

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and  
be gracious unto thee;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,  
and give thee peace—peace with yourselves, peace  
with your fellow-men and peace with your God,  
now and forever. AMEN!”

## Appendix C

### Rabbi's Manual, Volume II— Working Table of Contents

①

CCAR RM II Working List for Table of Contents

Pidyon Habsen

Tashlich

Ornament Ketubah

Cross-referencing to Conserv./Ortho. compendia

Dedications: Peter Torah

Synagogue

Facility within Synagogue

Groundbreaking / Cornerstone laying

Cemetery

Memorials

Communal Institutions: Jewish

Non-Jewish

Undedications: Leaving Synagogue (renovating mezuza?)

Leaving home (renovating mezuza from home?)

Burial of books

Congregational Events: Installation of Officers/Leaders

Installation of Rabbi: Senior Rabbi

Assistant Rabbi

Associate Rabbi

Conclusion of Rabbi's Tenure: Senior

Asst./Assoc.

Appreciation of Rabbi Emeritus/Retirement

(Phardol's House?)

DA Cemetery Service (Mincha)

Notable anniversaries of Congregation

Installation of Cantor

Welcome/consec. of New Members

Prayer in Crisis: Individual or couple/Family  
Domestic or business

On Aliyah to Israel

Thanksgiving after public danger averted

Prayer after public attack or disaster

Halachic/explanatory notes - W. GROSSMAN Plant

development } Reform practice from synagogues?

Names: Equivalent Yiddish/Hebrew names - ELL PILCHIK

Guidance: Power of names MORRISON BIAL

English names to avoid (Christological)

Rel. btm. Heb. & Civil names

Naming after: Meaning, Sound, Gender

Position paper on Patrilineal Descent - presented in historical

context and w/ previous positions - compare need w/

Plant's contrib. to Vol. I

Documents: CCAR Ketubah Revised H&C

Traditional (Orthodox) ketubah

Conservative (re pat) ketubah - Copyright? 1st Amendment

Guide to Heb spelling of numbers & months & how to fill in

Separation (divorce) - 1 party or 2 parties

Instructions on nature of service & how fill out

Received M/F Heb. & ENG

Conversion male/female versions (new Reform act.)

Received promises and

Chavrut (pa'olot Teshuvah)

Special Barachot occasional benedictions - DAVID POLICH & KENNEDY

Complete Birkat Hamazon w/ special inserts (weddings brit milah, etc.)

Texts for memorial/gravesite markers

Practical checklist - HERMAN SCHWARTZ (Family & Health Quotes)

Code of Rabbis Ethics

Convention Protocol

Statement on B/M decorum which Reform Practice Comm. is preparing

Invocations

Alternate readings / references omitted from RAI I: Weddings; Funerals

Halacha lemoses for all life-cycle & communal functions

Coordinate w/ GMS

Role of non-Jews in certain ceremonies, e.g. Havdala, etc.

Brief texts ("Lepti") received Oliver & Pearson

Musical references (?) see 675 letter 2/11/87

## Appendix D

### Rabbi's Manual, Volume II— Second Draft Outline

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#### CCAR RABBI'S MANUAL VOLUME II

##### Second Draft Outline

Prepared by Rabbi Eric H. Hoffman, September 28, 1987

#### 1. Prayers of Installation and Consecration

Senior Rabbi  
Associate/Assistant Rabbi  
Cantor  
Temple Officers and Trustees  
New Members

#### 2. Prayers of Dedication

Sefer Torah  
Temple, Sanctuary and other Facilities  
Jewish communal institutions  
General communal institutions

#### 3. Prayers of Transition

Leaving the Temple  
Moving from Home  
Conclusion of Rabbi's Tenure  
Appreciation of Retiring Rabbi

#### 4. Memorial Ceremonies

Dedication of Cemetery  
Dedication of Temple Memorials  
Burial of Books  
Days of Awe Memorial Service at Cemetery

#### 5. Special Prayers

Congregational Anniversary  
Public Thanksgiving for Joyous Event  
Public Thanksgiving for Danger Averted  
Following Attack or Disaster  
Personal Crisis  
Aliyah to Israel

#### 6. Codes of Practice

Rabbinic Ethics  
Conversion  
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Decorum  
Premarital Checklist  
Life-Cycle Ceremonies  
Communal Functions  
Role of Non-Jews in Life-Cycle Ceremonies  
Hebrew and Civil Names

CCAR Rabbi's Manual Volume II/Second Draft Outline

7. Documents (including instructions on completion)

- Ketubah
- Separation/Divorce
- Conversion
- Chaveirut

8. Texts

- Benedictions
- Lessons
- Invocations
- Memorial Markers
- Birkat Hamazon with occasional insertions

9. Traditional References (each preceded by statement on Reform practice and reason for its inclusion)

- Pidyon Haben
- Orthodox Ketubah (including instructions on completion)
- Tashlich
- Tevilah for Conversion

10. Notes

- Halachic/Scholarly Background

## Appendix E

### Rabbi's Manual, Volume II— List of Potential Editors

1889 CCAH Centennial 1989

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016 6801

(212) 684-4990

2 Henry Lamberger

Jack Benporad

4 Irwin Blank

Richard Block

Jonathan Brown

Steven Chaitinover

Norman Cohen

Israel Dresner

Ellen Dreyfus

Helene Ferris

Stephen Fuchs

Marc Gellman

Joshua Haberman

Jon Hadden

Richard Israel

Robert Kahn

Stephen Kleis

Leonard S. Kravitz

Jerome Malino

Jonathan Miller

Kerry Olitzky

Amy Rudin

James Ponnert

David Posner

Sally Prjesand

James Prossitt

Kenneth Rusevan

Herman Schatzman

Francis B. Silberberg

Daniel Silver

Rav Soloff

Malcolm Stern

David Wucher

Sheldon Zimmerman

5 Morrison David Bial

Maurice Davis

Jonathan Malino

Bernard Melman

1 Marc Superszteln

3 Barton Line

TO: Rabbi Gliner, Pearce, Peller, Knobel,  
and Lipman

Dear Joe, Stephen, Leonard, Peter and Eugene,

We constitute a committee which is supposed to be choosing the new editor of the Rabbi's Manual, Volume II. All of us have suggested names, which I believe should all be listed at the left.

I would like to move the process of selection off dead center, so that an appointment can perhaps be conveyed in time for said new editor to be invited to and be part of the next meeting of the Liturgy Committee.

Therefore, I would appreciate your doing the following: Please indicate your top five choices, in sequence (first - 1), and return the sheet to me. I will then perform a weighted tally, and we should have our editor.

Please let me know if you have any objections to this procedure. Otherwise, I look forward to completing this little piece of administration, so that the project itself may proceed.

Thank you, and best wishes.

Sincerely,

*Elliot L. Stevens*  
Elliot L. Stevens

12/30

*And the winner is ————  
Thanks, Elliot ————*

#### OFFICERS:

Robert C. Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Paul S. Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Robert Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

David M. S. Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Robert Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Robert Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Elliot L. Stevens, Administrative Secretary  
New York, NY

Paul S. Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

Paul S. Gliner, Executive Director  
New York, NY

## **Appendix F**

### **Rabbi's Manual, Volume II— Proposed Categories of Materials**

#### **PROPOSED CATEGORIES OF MATERIALS AND THEIR CONTENTS**



*Love deep & true is a preference*

1

# PRAYERS FOR PUBLIC OCCASIONS

Dedication of a Library

Dedication of a Civic Building

Dedication of an Educational Facility

Dedication of a Medical Facility

Dedication of a Business

Dedication of a Creative Arts Complex

Dedication of a Recreational Facility

Dedication of a Social Work Agency

Swearing-in-Ceremony for a Public Official

Invocation Before a Governmental Session

*sp/ch & state*

*GRADUATION :*

*Uga / FIPs*

*Belmont back on benediction  
as recommended.*

## PRAYERS FOR SYNAGOGUE OCCASIONS

Synagogue Groundbreaking  
 Synagogue Dedication  
 Congregational Anniversary  
 Rabbinic Installation  
 Prayer Welcoming a New Rabbi to a Congregation  
 Cantorial Installation  
 Rabbinic Anniversary  
 Installation of Officers  
 Welcoming of New Members  
 Burial of Holy Books  
 Changing Torah Covers to White (for High Holidays) *(or Festival)*  
 Prayer for Thanksgiving Day  
 Dedication of a Torah Scroll  
 Dedication of a Ritual Object  
 Dedication of a Cemetery  
 Dedication of a Memorial Tablet  
 Dedication of a Holocaust Memorial  
 Dedication of a Religious School Building  
 Dedication of a Sanctuary or Chapel  
 A Prayer For Israel in Time of Crisis  
 A Prayer For Jerusalem (before entering Jerusalem)  
 A Prayer in Time or Situation of Public Danger  
 Congregational Prayer For Those Who Have Recovered  
 From Illness  
 Burial of Torahs and Torah Decorations

PERSONAL AND FAMILY PRAYERS

- On Learning of Pregnancy
- After a Miscarriage
- On Weaning of Child
- On Nursing a Baby For the First Time
- Purification From Rape
- Before Entering Childbirth
- On Bringing the Newborn Child Home
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Kids' Prayer
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parents' Prayer
- Rabbi's Blessing of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Prayer for Hatafat Dam
- Prayer Affirming Jewishness of Patrilineal Jews
- Some blessings of gratitude
- Prayer for people seeking forgiveness for some wrong(s) they have done
- Tefillah in place or situation of danger or crisis
- Tefillat Ha-derekh
- Mezuzzah
- Pidyon Ha-Ben/Dat or Kiddush Peter Rechem
- On Making Aliyah
- On Arriving in Israel
- Prayer for a Special Birthday
- Prayer before a child goes off to college
- Havdalah
- Bricat Ha Mazon
- Prayer for use on Thanksgiving

Some maybe for GofH

Prayer to be shown to persons in the moment of need!

adopted child

N. Hirsch's work?

see Traveler's

OK

7 victims of NATI (ATP) 1977

PRAYERS FOR JEWISH COMMUNAL OCCASIONS

Dedication of a Jewish Communal Building

Dedication of a Jewish Educational Facility

Dedication of a Jewish Geriatric Facility

## SUGGESTED CLASSICAL TEXTS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

Birth

Marriage

Death

Honoring Community Leaders

For Dedication Occasions *(already on P. 4.)**Naming Texts*

## DOCUMENTS

Reform Ketubah

Document of Gerut

Document of Peturin

Orthodox Ketubah

Prohibited Marriages

NOTE: Some prayers like Havdalah, Mezuzah, and Bircat Ha-Mazon are in Gates of the House or on cards. Some rabbis, however, have felt it useful to have them handy in the Rabbi's Manual. I certainly think Mezuzah belongs in the book and personally would opt for Havdalah and Bircat Ha-Mazon. I also would like Katafat Dam and Pidyon Ha-Ben. Roy feels strongly that A Traditional Ketubah and instructions for filling it out should be in the book.

OK Peter Lechman

## Appendix G

### Siah Siftotenu Table of Contents

MASTER COPY

#### Siah Siftotenu:

#### RABBI'S MANUAL - VOLUME TWO TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### INTRODUCTION

#### I. LIFE CYCLE CEREMONY PRAYERS (Supplementary to Volume I)

##### BIRTH

A Prayer for a Child and His Parents After  
Brit Milah  
Blessing a Newborn Child  
An Alternative Translation of the Priestly Blessing  
Naming Prayer on the Birth of a Girl  
A Prayer of the Birth of a Girl  
Elijah's Chair  
Prayers for Grandparents on the Birth of a  
Grandchild (1 and 2)  
A Pivvut on the Birth of a Girl  
May Joys Increase in Israel (For a Boy, For a Girl)  
Blessings for a Ceremony Celebrating the Birth of a  
Child  
The Spirit of Your Son, The Soul of Your Daughter  
Poems (1 & 2)  
A Parent's Prayer

##### MARRIAGE

A Bodeken Ceremony  
Begamin: A Wedding Custom  
Wedding Prayers  
Wedding Vows  
Prayers for Bride and Groom (1 and 2)  
A Wedding Pivvut  
Ketubah: A Poem  
A Concluding Prayer for a Wedding  
A Revised, Egalitarian Sheva B'rachot  
Prayers for a Special Anniversary

##### DEATH

When Memory Comes  
On Unity  
Yizkor  
My Dead  
Blessed Are They That Sow  
Plucked From Eternity  
Do You Remember?  
A Service of Grieving on the Death of an Infant



CONVERSION

Prayers from Hatafat Dam Brit  
Prayers for Immersion in The Mikveh For Conversion

II. PRAYERS AND SOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS

Prayers for Consecrating a New Torah Scroll  
Sources for Welcoming a New Rabbi to a Congregation  
Sources for Celebrating a Special Anniversary of  
Rabbinic Service  
Confirming the Election of Congregational Officers and  
Trustees  
A Prayer for the Dedication of Memorial Gifts  
A Prayer for Welcoming New Members  
— Sources for a Service for the Burial of Sacred Books  
Sources for a Synagogue Groundbreaking  
Sources for the Dedication of a Synagogue Building  
Prayers for Changing the Torah Covers to White for the  
High Holidays

III. PRAYERS FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Prayers when Israel is in Danger (1 and 2)  
A Prayer when Israel Confronts Foes  
A Prayer when Israel is Beset by Enemies  
Prayers for Jerusalem (1 and 2)  
A Prayer for the State of Israel  
Invocation or Benediction for a Jewish Event (1 - 5)  
A Prayer for Parents and Teachers  
A Prayer in Recovery from Illness or Escape from Danger  
A Prayer for Those Making Aliyah  
A Prayer for Jews in Captivity or Danger (1 & 2)  
Tashlich  
Counting of the Omer  
A Ceremony For A Person Returning To Judaism

IV. PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS PUBLIC OCCASIONS

A Prayer for an Invocation or Benediction  
A Prayer for a Civic Occasion  
A Prayer for Secular or Interfaith Occasions  
A Prayer for a Business Occasion  
A Prayer for the Dedication of a Business  
A Prayer for the Fourth of July  
A Prayer for Thanksgiving Day  
A Prayer for Martin Luther King Day

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V. PRAYERS FOR PERSONAL AND FAMILY OCCASIONS

Tefillat ha-derekh: A Prayer Before a Journey (1 and 2)  
A Prayer for a Special Occasion  
A Blessing From the Talmud  
A Prayer for Blessings  
A Prayer for Hope  
A Prayer for Honesty  
A Prayer for Inspiration  
A Prayer for Help  
A Prayer for One Experiencing Pain or Distress  
A Prayer at a Time of Disappointment  
Thoughts on Adversity  
Confession Prayers  
A Prayer on Learning of Pregnancy  
A Prayer on the Birth of a Child  
A Prayer on Bringing a New Child Home  
Parents' Prayers on the Birth of a Child  
A Prayer for Those Seeking to Adopt a Child  
A Prayer for Couples Coping with Infertility  
A Prayer for a Birthday  
Hatavat Halom: A Prayer After a Bad Dream  
Mikveh Ceremony of Purification after Rape

VI. DOCUMENTS

Certificate of Gerut  
COAR Keruvah  
Teudat Pitturin  
Report of the Committee on Patrilineal Descent  
Certificate of Mikveh Hatafat Dam

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