

Creating Lively Passover Seders – A Sourcebook of Engaging tales, Texts and Activities by David Arnow.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2004.

The Women's Haftarah Commentary, edited by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2004.

Shabbat At Home, Volume 7, My People's Prayer Book,
edited by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman.
Jewish Lights Publishing 2004.

David Arnow's Creating Lively Seders is a 21 chapter plan, with four appendices, for giving an extra zing to the Seder ritual. Bursting with ideas, it offers a range of activities, source material and discussion topics to revivify a ritual that may, for some, have become rather tired. If all of the ideas in Creating Lively Seders were tried at once the Seder would last all week, possibly longer, but one or two at a time, sensitively introduced may well achieve the author's avowed purpose.

The back cover of The Women's Haftarah Commentary contains the bald sentence: Women rabbis are changing the face of Judaism. Reading this new volume, a companion to The Woman's Torah Commentary, it would be hard to disagree; it would be even harder to fail to be impressed by the fact that no less than 83 women rabbis have written commentaries on the 54 weekly haftarot, the five megillot, haftarot for special Sabbaths, and nine 'extras', including the 23rd Psalm and Proverbs 31, Eyshet Chayil. This collection will appeal to Jews of both genders, and while some of the commentaries will be more persuasive than others, the total is a powerful reminder of the intellectual and spiritual vigour of the American women's rabbinate.

Shabbat At Home, volume 7 of My People's Prayer Book, is, in this reviewer's opinion, the best so far. Following the tried and tested format of the previous six volumes, Shabbat At Home analyses the prayers, rituals and songs that contribute to making the welcome and enjoyment of Shabbat at home a highpoint of every Jewish life. This volume will be of interest to any Jews who wish to enrich their celebration of Shabbat at home, but it will be of incalculable value to prospective Jews by choice who wish to accustom themselves to the spirit of Shabbat and embrace its rituals as comprehensively as possible. In addition, Rabbi Hoffman's three introductory chapters are gems.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh