

My People's Prayer Book, vols. 3-6, ed. Rabbi Lawrence A Hoffman,
Jewish Lights. P'sukei d'Zimrah, Seder K'riat Hatorah, Birchot
Hashachar, Tachanun and Concluding Prayers.

The four volumes under review cover the Morning Psalms, The Torah Service, Morning Blessings, Tachanun (Penitential Prayer) and Concluding Prayers including Kaddish and Aleynu.

The style is the same as in the first two volumes, with introductory essays and a running commentary on the text from a variety of perspectives, including the historical, theological, mystical and feminist. The high standard set in the first two volumes is maintained throughout and the ongoing comparison between the approach in a range of modern liturgies as against the content and framework of the traditional liturgy is always fascinating.

For this reviewer the triumph of My People's Prayer Book is that it is an easy way for anyone to learn a great deal more about the Jewish liturgy, regardless of the level of knowledge that they bring to the subject: all that is required of the reader is interest, the text then does the rest – stimulating, challenging, informing, explaining. If this was all it did My People's Prayer Book would be a fine work, but the individual essays in each volume give it yet further quality, and are a wonderful tool for teaching and study.

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