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MENTAL HEALING IN JUDAISM

ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CHRISTIAN
SCIENCE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

BY

S. FELIX MENDELSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

DR. FELIX A. LEVY



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CHICAGO
JEWISH GIFT SHOP
PUBLISHERS

By the Same Author

**The Jew Laughs: Humorous Stories
and Anecdotes (1935)**

BM 536
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TO THE MEMORY OF MY REVERED
PARENTS

HAYYIM LEIB BEN MENAHEM
Heshvan 19, 5696

AND NEHAMAH WAXMAN
MENDELSON

Tishri 24, 5690

“And He said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His eyes, and wilt give ear to His commandments, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”—*Exodus* 15:26.

“Heal us, O Lord, and we shall be healed; save us and we shall be saved; for Thou art our praise. Vouchsafe a perfect healing to all our wounds; for Thou, almighty King, art a faithful and merciful Physician.”—*Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (Singer’s translation).

“Said the Holy One, blessed be He, If thou wilt come to My house (the synagogue) I shall come to thy house, but if thou wilt not come to My house, I shall not come to thy house.”—*Talmud, Tractate Succah*.

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PREFATORY NOTE

The following pages represent outlines of a series of sermons which I preached in the fall of 1935. Their delivery aroused much favorable comment and their publication is prompted by numerous requests for copies. For sentimental reasons I am publishing these sermons in their original form.

The problem of mental healing is today of unusual interest particularly to American Jews. Unfortunately there is a dearth especially of simply written material on this subject. If these sermons will in a small way help crystallize the issue involved and lead to further study, their publication will be justified.

S. FELIX MENDELSON

Temple Beth Israel
Chicago

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INTRODUCTION

By DR. FELIX A. LEVY

*President, Central Conference of
American Rabbis*

Spiritual healing is as old as Jewish tradition itself and plays a rather prominent part in our life. No period of our history has been free of the practice of "mind cure" or of the dangers of magic and superstition that lurk in this custom. To guard against the latter eventuality in our own day and to give our Jewish valetudinarians a Jewish way by which "psychoses" and "neuroses" may be dissolved, and health, spiritual and physical, may be gained Rabbi Mendelsohn has published the following discourses.

INTRODUCTION

These sermons fill, as every rabbi knows, a distinct need. Our people are driven frequently to strange altars in order to find relief from some real or imaginary malady that will not yield to medical knowledge or skill. They will read strange literatures and pray alien thoughts because they are unaware of what their own religion offers them or find its ideas inaccessible because of the lack of popular literature on this topic. In simple almost childlike language the author has expounded the views of Judaism on mental healing and many will be grateful to learn, from the Jewish point of view, about the relation and inter-relation of mind and body, of the therapeutic functions of prayer and of the spiritual attitude as a cure for physical ills. The rabbi of today has rarely the time and even more seldom the inclination to serve as "healer." Perhaps we ought have practitioners

INTRODUCTION

(there are a few), deeply religious men and women, who by their ministrations aid the physician and nature in effecting the patient's recovery.

A study of this little volume and a following of its suggestions can help the divided mind and restore confidence to shattered nerves. Faith does move mountains but is not a cure-all nor can religion with its call to prayer and communion claim to be an infallible panacea. Judaism, as our writer indicates, steers a middle course, and makes neither extravagant claims nor the unintelligible (to us) denials of Christian Science. Our religion recognizes as real all the factors of human personality, does not negate body or call pain and evil illusions.

May the book achieve its author's purpose, to stimulate further discussion of an important problem. May it also brighten the lives of many readers which it deserves and bring to a nerv-

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