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## THE PRAYER AT THE CONCLUSION OF A TRACT.

*"Abayi said: "May it be reckoned to me (for my reward in the world to come), that whenever I noticed a young scholar (of my college) had finished a tract of the Talmud, I gave a feast to all the sages of the day." (Pages 250 and 251 of this tract.)*

[Bearing the above motto in mind and as a matter of peculiar interest, we shall translate below the laudatory prayer published in every edition of the ancient Talmud at the conclusion of each tract, and in justification of this our digression from the actual text would state the following:

With all pious Israelites who were exclusively engaged in the study of the Talmud, and even with those who made it an incidental feature of their lives, it has since time immemorial been the custom to celebrate as a happy event the completion of the study of each tract. So marked was the degree of gratification at this frequent occurrence, that it became customary for the first-born sons in Israel, who in commemoration of one of the plagues sent by the Lord upon the Egyptians were in the habit of fasting on the eve of Passover, to complete the study of a tract of the Talmud on that day, and, thanks to the feast given in honor of the occasion, escape the rather onerous duty of fasting; and even in the nine days of penance occurring before the Fast of the Ninth of Abh, when the Temple was destroyed, when meat was not to be eaten and wine was not to be drunk, the same subterfuge would be resorted to, in order that a feast might be given and thus break the fast of the nine days. Apart from this, the prayer is rich in sentiment, and deserves to be rendered at the end of this volume once for all.]

We shall return to thee, Tract Sabbath, [1](#) and mayest thou return to us! We shall bear thee in mind, Tract Sabbath, and mayest thou bear us in mind! May we not be forgotten by thee, Tract Sabbath! and thou shalt not be forgotten by us on this earth nor in the world to come!

[This is to be repeated three times, when the following is to be recited:]

May it be Thy will, O Lord, our God and God of our fathers, that Thy Law may be our pursuit in this world and in the world to come! May there be together with us, in the world to come, Haninah bar Papa, Rami bar Papa, Na'hman bar Papa, Ahayi bar Papa, Abba Mari bar Papa, Raphram bar Papa, Rakhesh bar Papa, Sur'hab bar Papa, Ada bar Papa, and Doro bar Papa. [2](#)

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Make sweet, O Lord, our God, the words of Thy Law in our mouths, and in the mouth of Thy people the house of Israel; and may we, our children, and the children of Thy people the house of Israel, all know Thy Name and learn Thy Law.

Wiser than my enemy doth Thy commandment make me; for it is perpetually with me. Let my

heart be entire in the statutes, that I may not be put to shame. Never will I forget Thy precepts; for with them Thou hast kept me alive. Blessed art Thou, O Lord! teach me Thy statutes. Amen, Amen, Amen. Selah, Vaed (Forever)!

We thank Thee, O Lord, our God and God of our fathers, that thou hast cast our lot amongst those that dwell in the houses of learning, and not amongst the occupants of the markets. For we arise early, and they arise early. We arise to the words of Law, and they arise to words of vanity. We strive, and they strive. We strive and receive our reward, while they strive in vain. We run, and they run. We run towards everlasting life, and they run towards death, as it is written: "But Thou, O God! Thou wilt bring them down into the pit of destruction; let not the men of blood and deceit live out half their days; but I will indeed trust in Thee!"

May it be Thy will, O Lord my God, that as Thou hast assisted me in the conclusion of Tract Sabbath, so mayest Thou assist me in the commencement of other tracts and books of Law, and in their conclusion: that I may live to learn and teach, to observe and to do and to keep all the words of the teachings of Thy Law with affection. And may the merits of all the Tanaim and Amoraim and other scholars uphold me and my children, in order that the Law may not escape from my mouth, from the mouths of my children and children's children forever, and may it be verified in me (all that is written): "When thou walkest, it shall lead thee; when thou liest down, it shall watch over thee; and when thou art awake, it shall converse with thee. For through me shall thy days be multiplied and the years of thy life shall be increased unto thee. Length of days are in her right hand, in her left are riches and honor. The Lord shall give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace."

[Revised July 22, 1896, and found all correct.--ISAAC M. WISE.]

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## Footnotes

[379:1](#) At the conclusion of another tract, name it instead of Tract Sabbath.

[379:2](#) At the close of a learned work, entitled "Answers and Questions," by Rabbi Moses Iserles, and also in the work entitled "Sea of Solomon," by Solomon Lurie, Tract Baba Kamah, may be found the reasons why the above ten names must be mentioned in the prayer.

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