

TO THE
VENERABLE PRESIDENT OF THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
AND OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN RABBIS' CONFERENCE
THE REV. DR. ISAAC M. WISE
AT HIS
EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY
THIS VOLUME WITH THE ENTIRE SECTION MOED, IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND
MICHAEL L. RODKINSON
NEW YORK, 1899.

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MOST HONORED RABBI:

When, five years ago, in the month of October, I had the honor to visit you, and then expressed my sorrow in not being able to attend your seventy-fifth birthday, I promised you that I would write a work and dedicate it to you for your eightieth birthday. Now, after the lapse of five years, I praise God that He has preserved us both. I have fulfilled my promise, and written a work on the History of the Talmud, which I believe to be of some value, with the intention of dedicating it to you, but my circumstances do not allow me to publish it in time for your celebration. However, I redeem my promise in dedicating to you the Section Moed, which at that time I had no intention of translating into English.

I hope to see your ninetieth birthday, when, among all your disciples and admirers who will celebrate it, I also may take part.

M. L. R

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TRACT YOMAH (DAY OF ATONEMENT)

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EXPRESSION OF THANKS.

WITH the issue of this volume this section is almost complete (the last two volumes being in press), and I deem it my duty to express my heartfelt thanks to my patrons and supporters during the last three years, ever since my work was undertaken. Through their support I have been enabled to reach my present position. This is the first time in the history of the Talmud that an entire section of it was translated into a living and comprehensible language, making it easily understood even to a layman. The synopsis of each tract indicates where the most interesting ethical and folkloristic portions may be found, thereby rendering the various tracts readily understood, even by one who is not a student.

Three years ago, when I made up my mind to begin this work, I scarcely dared hope that thirteen 1 tracts of the most difficult part of the Talmud would be translated, more especially that seven of them, the most voluminous, would be published in the course of two years. Notwithstanding all the obstacles that were laid in my way by personal enemies, and notwithstanding all the financial difficulties 2 which I had to surmount, I have succeeded in accomplishing the work mentioned above, chiefly through the aid of the few gentlemen who have encouraged me by enlisting their sympathy and interest in my work, and who also supported me financially, 3 not as a matter of charity, but

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in the form of a subscription and payment in advance for the forthcoming volumes, for the issue of which in due time they have reposed their confidence in me.

Many friends have assured me that this work is destined to become historical, and as the Talmud has indeed a great history, the first translation of it in a foreign tongue cannot fail to attract attention, and therefore I trust that my work will add somewhat in demonstrating its value and importance. In that event all the names of my supporters and sympathizers who will be known to the future historian (which may be after my death) will be mentioned with honor.

With this view in mind, I enumerate herewith with grateful acknowledgment the names of my supporters since this work began, and especially those who aided me during the last two months of the past year, and enabled me to publish the present volume by paying for from twenty-seven to ten forthcoming volumes, at the rate of \$2.50 each, in advance. May God bless and prosper them in all their undertakings!

I also extend my thanks to all my subscribers, far and near, for their kindness in the past, hoping at the same time that it will be extended in the future. I am also grateful to the rabbis of the city of New York, who, with very few exceptions, sympathize with my work, and have assisted me with their influence and subscriptions.

The list of patrons is arranged alphabetically. The asterisk indicates that the volumes already delivered and paid for are NOT included. Asterisk and dagger indicate also the subscription for two sets. The list of names on page ix shows those added during the last two months of the past year.

Cowen, Newman	20 Volumes.
Hirsch, Baroness Clara de	30
Lewisohn, Leonard	20
Rothschild, Baron Edmond de (through the Grand Rabbin de France, Zadoc Kahn, <u>1</u> who is himself a subscriber)	25
Seligman, Prof. Edwin R. A. * +	20
Sulzberger, Judge Mayer	24

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Abraham, A.,* Brooklyn	20 volumes.
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Adler, Prof. Felix *	10
Borg, Simon	10
Friedlander, Albert	10
Gans, Louis *	10
Greenbaum, Samuel *	10
Hays, Daniel P	20
Hirsch, Nathan,* of Joseph Hirsch & Son	10
Isaacs, Bendet *	20
Josephi, Isaiah	20
Knopf, Samuel *	10
Lehman, Emanuel*	10
Marshall, Louis *	20
Platzek, M. Warley * +	20
Plaut, Louis, * Newark	10
Rice, Isaac L. *	10

I have to thank once more the following gentlemen and lady, who, besides their subscriptions, have also exerted their influence in insuring me a considerable number of subscribers:

Messrs. Samuel Greenbaum, Daniel P. Hays, Isaiah Josephi, Andrew Saks, and Miss Annette Kohn.

I trust that in the last volume of this section this list of supporters will be greatly increased, as I still need further assistance, till the section is completed, when I am confident that I will derive good financial returns from its sale to booksellers and general agents, who are awaiting the completion of the section, to be sold *en masse* as a complete work by itself.

I am hopeful that the coming generation will be grateful to all those who took part in opening a scaled book to the eyes of the world.

Finally, I express my thanks to my printer, ex-Congressman Hon. Joseph J. Little, who has granted me considerable credit in his establishment, thereby greatly lightening the burden of my work; also to his proofreader for calling my attention to many matters which seemed to him imperfect, and whose assistance I value greatly, and last, but not least, to Mr. A. S. Freidus of the New York Public Library, for many valuable suggestions in bibliographical and other matters.

MICHAEL L. RODKINSON.

Footnotes

[vii:1](#) The translation of one tract of section Jurisprudence is also already completed.

[vii:2](#) It must be borne in mind that the cost of publishing one volume is \$700 or more.

[vii:3](#) In my "History of the Talmud" I take notice of the writers who complain that the Jewish people were always opposed to the translation of Jewish lore into foreign languages. They, moreover, assert that all the translations of the Bible, and all the collections of Hebrew manuscripts, as also the Massorah, were supported by different governments and private Gentiles. Zunz ("Ges. Schr.," vol. i., p. 296), in recommending a translation of the Talmud, also relates (p. 273) that the Russian Government, in July, 1829, paid 12,000 thalers to the Abbé Chiarini for a translation of the Talmud in the French language. In one of his works, issued at Paris, the latter complains that the Hebrews opposed and prevented him from accomplishing his commission. See also Wolfsohn's "Jeschurun," p. 242, Breslau, p. [viii](#)1604. it is also a well-known fact that Emperor Nicholas I. of Russia assigned 100,000 rubles for a translation of the Talmud; and that Dr. Pinner, who translated tract Berachoth into German, a work considered of little merit by all scholars, nevertheless received 10,000 rubles from him. A German translation of the Talmud is now being published through the effort of Gentiles. I am proud to say that I am the first who has not sought the support of Gentiles, and that all that I have done was brought about by my coreligionists.

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