

PREFACE

We deal with two short tractates, each containing four chapters of Mishnah. The exercises in connection with the literary and historical aspects of the tractates are carried out exactly as before, although the exegesis is as abbreviated as possible. There are no changes whatsoever, except for including the two in a single part of the project. To be sure, both (and ^עUqṣin as well) are young, essentially Ushan in origin. Furthermore, the fundamental conception in regard to Tebul Yom, the person or object which has immersed and awaits sunset to complete the process of purification, and Yadayim, the hands, is that both deal with uncleanness in the second remove; both the Tebul Yom and the unclean hands therefore impart unfitness to heave-offering. But each of the tractates is occupied with its own problems and conceptions.

Tebul Yom is primarily interested in the aspect of connection, in the theory that what is connected for the transmission of all sorts of uncleanness is not connected for the transmission of the unfitness to heave-offering imparted by the Tebul Yom. Yadayim focuses upon the washing of the hands for the purposes of purification and how hands become unclean, not principally on the transmission, by the hands, of unfitness to heave-offering. Tebul Yom in Tosefta is followed by ^עUqṣin, another tractate on the law of connection, and this is logical. For, as we shall see in Part XX, ^עUqṣin in some measure interests itself in connection, though in the main, its subject is uncleanness of foods in general. Tosefta's Yadayim follows Zabim, and, given the concluding unit of Zabim, M. Zab. 5:12, with its interest in persons and things in the second remove of uncleanness, we may regard it as an equivalently appropriate location. But putting the tractates together here is merely for the sake of convenience, and not because of an intrinsic relationship between them.

Each tractate enjoys its own introduction. Two peculiarities of the translation are to be noted. First, I do not translate *Tebul Yom*. It would have become unwieldy to repeat, "he who has immersed that selfsame day" in every place in which *Tebul Yom* is used. Second, only where the context requires it do I distinguish between NṬL, and NTN in the pouring of water onto the hands. In general both verbs are translated, *pour water* (for purposes of rendering hands clean) or, as the context requires, *rinse*.

This work, covering two tractates, is offered as a token of thanks to my several teachers in the subject of Talmud during my years as a student at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1954 through 1960, including the year, 1957-1958, when I was a Fulbright Scholar in Talmud at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and also studied Talmud with Rabbi Shelomo Schreiber at Mir Yeshiva and, further, with Dr. Hyman Klein. Since I have given my life to the subject first encountered in those years, it is obvious that I had teachers who so interested me that I was moved to do so.

The first was Professor Seymour Siegel, certainly the teacher in my entire education who expressed greatest dedication to the intellectual progress and personal welfare of his students. With saintly patience and complete devotion to his task, Rabbi Siegel taught a small group of beginners in such a way that Talmud became the most challenging and engaging document we had ever studied. His personal commitment to his students, who became his disciples then and thereafter, knew no limits.

Professor Ḥayyim Zalman Dimitrovsky came next in succession. He did not treat us like beginners, but imposed upon us, therefore drew from us, the responsibilities of mature students. As an interpreter of the text, he has no peer.

Third in line was Professor Shraga Abramson, now at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, whose classroom was surely the most pleasant I have ever known. He taught with abundant love both for the Talmud and for the students, a dear and kindly man.

While in Jerusalem I studied every morning with Rabbi Shelomo Schreiber, scion of the famed Ḥatam Sofer, and himself a patient and tolerant interpreter, who allowed me to read and explain, ever so slowly and repetitiously, what in fact he knew by heart.

In Jerusalem, during the last months of his life, I had the privilege of studying with Dr. Hyman Klein, the great master of the Saboraic stratum. Despite his terminal infirmity, he met with me many hours a week, and, through asking questions and seeking answers, tried to show me the logical structure of the Talmudic text. He died at Passover 5718. I think of him year by year at that time. Would that I were a more suitable student and could have given him the pleasure of informed response.

In my last two years at Jewish Theological Seminary of America, I was granted a Fellowship in the Special Program in Talmud, which bestowed both invaluable material benefits and also precious intellectual

ones. Our group was given intensive instruction in Talmud both by Professor Dimitrovsky and by Professor Moshe Zucker. Professor Zucker taught us with great enthusiasm and exceptional pedagogical skill.

In my academic career I have had the good fortune to study diverse subjects with able teachers. But in no subject did I enjoy the remarkable gifts of devotion to the students and their progress, on the one hand, and dedication to competent and careful elucidation of the matter under study, on the other, as I did in my years of Talmud. These were not by any means my last teachers in Talmudic literature. But they undertook the most difficult part of the work, and I know no words to express my thanks for what they have given: *חיי ואורך ימי*.

People who have never studied Talmud cannot imagine what it takes to teach that document in all its density and richness. The tradition of Talmudic learning is carried forward and orally transmitted solely and wholly through patient and truly dedicated teachers. There is no other way. The links of learning are forged generation by generation. Our teachers learned from theirs—not from books alone—as had their teachers from theirs, a truly oral tradition. No one left them, or us, knowledge and understanding as a birthright. These are the gifts of people who give their lives to the task of learning, then teaching, what each generation must both master for itself and then pass onward. We too hope to give over in diverse ways what we have been given, a fundament of learning, an intellectual tradition of the imperatives of a moral community, a tradition confined only in part in the printed book, but in the main in the mode and substance of oral transmission. The tradition itself deems that mode to be its distinctive trait and by faith attributes it to Moses our rabbi, in whom the tradition finds its nexus to Heaven.

I therefore reflect, as the analytical part of this project nears its close, upon those who, in teaching me the several tractates at hand, taught much more. They imparted the lesson that one learns through the help of those who know, therefore approaching the task with a measure of humility; but that one does learn and can master the grand tradition, therefore bringing to the task a measure of confidence and high ambition. They taught me not how to teach in a university—that I had to learn from others—but what a teacher is and can be. By their standard the rabbi in the classical sense is to be defined, and through them the rabbinic tradition, the tradition shaped and handed down by rabbis through the rabbinical mode of shaping and handing on tradi-

tion, is to be described. Each of us in part, but all of us together, form that tradition for our time and in our place. Whatever is authentic to the human meaning of the rabbinic tradition of intellect in what I do in teaching and in learning is true because of the dedication to the work of teaching and devotion to the students' learning of these authentic rabbis. It goes without saying, they now and here stand for many others, a singular band of people who, from age to succeeding age, in good faith and with good will, freely and kindly hand on such truth as they receive. And so do I. And so do my students after me.

J. N.