

The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash

From Schocken Books Inc



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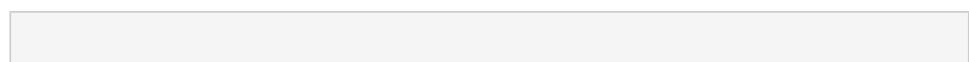
The first complete English translation of the Hebrew classic Sefer Ha-Aggadah brings to the English-speaking world the greatest and best-loved anthology of classical Rabbinic literature ever compiled. First published in Odessa in 1908-11, it was recognized immediately as a masterwork in its own right, and reprinted numerous times in Israel.

The Hebrew poet Hayim Nahman Bialik and the renowned editor Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, the architects of this masterful compendium, selected hundreds of texts from the Talmud and midrashic literature and arranged them thematically, in order to provide their contemporaries with easy access to the national literary heritage of the Jewish people -- the texts of Rabbinic Judaism that remain at the heart of Jewish literacy today.


Bialik and Ravnitzky chose Aggadah -- the non-legal portions of the Talmud and Midrash -- for their anthology. Loosely translated as "legends", Aggadah includes the genres of biblical exegesis, stories about biblical characters, the lives of the Talmudic era sages and their contemporary history, parables, proverbs, and folklore. A captivating melange of wisdom and piety, fantasy and satire, Aggadah is the expressive medium of the Jewish creative genius.

The arrangement of this compendium reflects the theological concerns of the Rabbinic sages: the role of Israel and the nations; God, good and evil; human relations; the world of nature; and the art of healing. Here, the reader who wants to explore traditional Jewish views on a particular subject is treated to a selection of relevant texts at his fingertips but will soon become immersed in a way of thinking, exploring, and questioning that is the hallmark of Jewish inquiry.

"Whatever the imagination can invent is found in the Aggadah," wrote the historian Leopold Zunz, "its purpose always being to teach man the ways of God." The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah, now available in William Braude's superbly annotated translation, enables modern Jews to experience firsthand the richness and excitement of their cultural inheritance.



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The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash From Schocken Books Inc Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The publication of the complete Book of Legends in English is a landmark event in Jewish learning. Since its original compilation (1908-11) by Bialik and Ravnitzky, two commanding figures in Hebrew literature, this work has been a classic text of rabbinic legend and lore. It is a thematic anthology of nonlegal rabbinic literature on all aspects of human life (e.g., creation, redemption, wisdom, clothing, folk medicine studied through Jewish stories, parables, sayings, homilies, and anecdotes). The translation by Braude is clear, lucid, and readable and includes interpolations that increase the sense and comprehension of the text. The introduction by David Stern analyzes both the volume's place in Rabbinic Judaism and the achievement of the compilers, noting both strengths and weaknesses. This volume is recommended to all libraries with an interest in Judaism, folklore, and religion.

- *Maurice Tuchman, Hebrew Coll. Lib., Brookline, Mass.*

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Review

To have Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah available in English is to open to the entire English-reading world -- Jew, non-Jew, religionist, secularist -- one of the very great creations of humankind: a rich and intricately woven tapestry of tales, homilies, legends and dreams that come to us from the very roots of the imagination. What a treasure!"

-- Chaim Potok

"Bialik and Ravnitzky's great compendium of Rabbinic legend and homily has been an indispensable resource ever since its publication in Hebrew eight decades ago....English readers are very fortunate to be able at last to avail themselves of this extraordinary compilation."

-- Robert Alter

"In translating Bialik and Ravnitzky's incomparable thematic anthology into very readable English, William Braude, master translator of Rabbinic texts, has provided the English reader with a wonderful access to the wealth of Rabbinic interpretation and lore. This book should be a fixture in the library of every serious Jew."

-- Norman J. Cohen, Dean, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

"Sefer Ha-Aggadah has long been one of my favorite volumes of Jewish literature. Bialik and Ravnitzky arranged topically a vast collection of Talmudic and midrashic material. Whatever one is looking for, be it stories about biblical characters or reflections on love, evil, childrearing, or healing; it is there A most welcome addition to the growing collection of Jewish classics now available in English translation."

-- Judith Hauptman, Associate Professor of Talmud, Jewish Theological Seminary

"Sefer Ha-Aggadah restored the prestige of the non-legal sections of the Talmud and nurtured aesthetic appreciation for one of the world's most creative and colorful literatures. I fully endorse this marvelous translation by William Braude."

-- David Weiss-Halivni, Columbia University

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Hebrew

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ruth Haakenson:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite book and reading a publication. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the reserve entitled The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash. Try to make book The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah: Legends from the Talmud and Midrash as your good friend. It means that it can being your friend when you truly feel alone and beside those of course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortunated in your case. The book makes you considerably more confidence because you can know every little thing by the book. So , we should make new experience and knowledge with this book.

Patricia Welling:

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Sarah Heath:

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