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Yashar Books is continuing its mission to give Open Access to the world of Jewish inquiry by distributing an analysis of the philosophy behind Orthodox Jewish biographies by the eminent scholar Rabbi Nathan Kamenetsky.

Should history be looked at through rose-colored eyeglasses, skipping over misjudgments or foibles and merely reporting the positive achievements of Jewish leaders? Yashar Books does not believe so.

There is a vast difference between the jaundiced historical perspective of a Graetz and the view of *Hazal* and the *Rishonim* who took even the *Avos* to task for minor frailties. Otherwise, we could not learn from them.

To paraphrase George Santayana, we can only learn from history if we study it accurately. The time has come to retell the story of Jewish history, this time with the rigorous use of historical methodologies. What did Jewish leaders of various eras say, as opposed to what we *want* them to have said?

This is the theme behind Yashar Books' series of biographies, beginning with our biography of [Rabbi Israel Salanter](#) and continuing with our forthcoming biography of [Rabbi Joel Sirkes](#), "The Bach," and future books.

The following is an excerpt from Rabbi Nathan Kamenetsky's foreword to his controversial biography of his illustrious father, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky: *The Making of a Godol*. In this passage, Rabbi Kamenetsky discusses the issues involved in writing a biography and cites rabbinic precedents for his approach of completely honest history.

The book, *The Making of a Godol*, has currently been withdrawn from circulation and is being revised by the author. This particular excerpt may also be revised and, as such, does not necessarily represent the final view or wording of the author. Despite that, it still merits study as a serious contribution to Jewish scholarship. This online publication of the excerpt is unofficial. It is not authorized by Rabbi Kamenetsky. All questions regarding this release should be directed to Yashar Books.

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truly know if the effect of a mitzvah he performs will be of lasting duration? *Rashi*, however, in paraphrasing the Midrash broadens the scope of commendable mitzvot when he writes, “Doing good deeds even insatiably is of no *value* unless one of them is specified and distinctive [מסויימת וניכרת].” *Rashi* makes it easier for us to attain the “mitzvah of value” because, unlike the Midrash, he sets no stipulation as to the good deed’s durability; it is enough that the mitzvah be specified and distinctive at the time of its performance. I hope and pray that if it so happens that this book does not meet the standard of the Midrash and will not be “established for generations”, it will at least be “specified and distinctive” in our day and age, and will provide as much spiritual “pleasure” to its contemporary reading public as it does to its author.

B. Contents

In composing this book, I have generally accepted as authentic stories about earlier generations even when they were not conveyed by my father or some other unusually reliable individual. I was reluctant, of course, to rely on reports that emanated from people whom I considered unable to judge events properly, but I did not suspect anyone of prevaricating intentionally. Similarly, unless the writer was blatantly tendentious, I assumed that printed facts were credible. (I have this faith in people despite a report by R’ Velvel Kerker^g that Rebbitzin Feigel Zaks, the Chafetz-Chaim’s youngest daughter, told him, “Eighty percent of what they tell about [my father] is not true.” I cannot help but assume that in order to bring out bluntly the idea that *not everything* told about R’ Yisrael-Meir Kagan, author of *Chafetz Chaim*, is true, his daughter exaggerated the percentage of untruths.) The reason I have consistently cited the origin of reports of events and episodes is to give the reader the prerogative of questioning my judgment and deciding for himself whether a story is credible or not.

^g March 19, 1994

Let the reader not be surprised that in my research for a book of this kind I have also used and quoted the works of irreligious writers – even non-Jews^h. I have abided by the rule of the *Rambam*ⁱ, “שמע האמת ממי שאמרה” [Listen to the truth from whoever says it].^j I trust the reader will also bear with me when I quote an interviewee citing another individual without my having gotten back to that individual for confirmation. This, too, is part and parcel of my trusting nature.

There may be some stories in this book that are known to some readers – and family members of the principals – of which this author may have a different understanding than they. For example, I was told by my son R’ Yoseph^k that R’ Shlomo Fisher told him how R’ Yitzhaq Kulitz, Rav of Jerusalem, was incensed with the reaction of a “present-day *rosh yeshiva*” to a story he was told about how R’ Isser-Zalman Meltzer was going up the steps to his house and overheard the cleaning lady singing to herself while washing the floor. R’ Isser-Zalman went back down to the street and paced the ground for a long while until she had finished her work, and then he returned home. The *rosh yeshiva* understood R’ Isser-Zalman’s action as indicative of how careful he was in avoiding the sound of a singing woman (קול באשה) for the time it would have taken him to walk from mid-staircase until entering his home – when the woman would certainly have stopped singing. “In actuality,” said R’ Kulitz, “R’ Isser-Zalman was concerned that when he would walk into the house, the woman, who enjoyed singing while on the job, would be inconvenienced by having to stop

^h The ועיין שרי חמר, מערכת האלף כללים אוה / מסכת אבות / האומר כל האומר דבר חכמה אפי' באוה"ע נקרא חכם. ⁱ ס"ד, שרבה של העיר שאוול, ר' יהוסף זכריה שטרן, בעל שו"ת זכר יהוסף, כתב שהאיסור לומר שמועה מפי אדם רשע שהובא בשו"ת הדולב"ז עיקרו הוא מפיהם ולא מפי כתבם עיי"ש. (ובענין זה ע' בחנועת המוסר, כרך ראשון, עמ' רפא-רפב ובהערות י"ב וט"ו שם, שבשנת תר"ה הדפיס ר' ישראל סלנטר ספר לתיקון המידות שחובר ע"י הנוכרי בנגימין פרנקלין [ותורגם לעברית ע"י מנדל לפין מקסגוב]. ספר זה שימש גם כספר לימוד והדרכה בישיבות המוסריות בליטא ונדפס שם בפעם האחרונה ע"י הסתדרות תלמידי סלבודקה בשנת תרצ"ז.) ^k Circa November 18, 1993

singing for the rest of her working time.” Also cf. the definitive biography of R’ Isser-Zalman Meltzer, *בדרק עץ החיים*^l, where that *tzaddiq*’s grandson records the story as it occurred – and that his grandfather himself explained his action without any reference to *קול באשה*; it even has R’ Isser-Zalman pacing *on the porch* just outside the door to his house – where he could likely still hear the singing (if he chose to listen)^m! R’ Yitzhaq Kulitz was fuming about that *rosh yeshiva*’s misinterpretation of R’ Isser-Zalman’s motive because through his wrong interpretation, he had missed out on R’ Isser-Zalman’s extraordinary consideration for people. In this case, one man’s understanding of an event clashed with another’s significantly. In other instances varying interpretations may be of negligible importance, but nonetheless present. Naturally, a reader, too, may have an alternate assessment of events to this

^l תשמ"ו – הוצאת "ארוי החן", תשמ"ו – p. 272 ^m Cf. *The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, by Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff (KTAV Publishing House, New York, 1999), Vol. I, pp. 178-179, for a similar story regarding R’ Yosheh-Ber of Brisk, related by R’ Levi-Yitzhaq Horowitz. The same point was brought out by R’ Yaakov-Yitzchok Ruderman in an interview with some Torah educators, graduates of Yeshivath Rabbenu Yisrael Meir Hakohen. He noted the special stress Slabodka Yeshiva put on interpersonal relations and told the following story. (It was apparent in his tone that he was unsure whether to tell the story to his interviewers – but he did.) In the 5690’s (1930’s), he was once invited to spend a *Shabbath* at the home of the Rav of Elizabeth, New Jersey. Before the arrival of the Sabbath, the *rav* took him aside for a confidential exchange of words. He told his guest that he had several daughters eating at the Sabbath table who enjoyed *Shabbos* by singing the *zemiroth* along with him. (At this point in the narrative, R’ Ruderman interjected that there were no Bais Yaakov schools in America at the time – indicating that Bais Yaakov graduates would know better than to do this.) The *rav* told him that R’ Baruch-Ber Leibowitz had been a guest at his home sometime earlier, and when the girls began singing, he stood up and ran out of the room – perturbing the *Shabbath* for the girls and humiliating their father. The host then asked whether R’ Ruderman would do the same. The guest replied that with his Slabodka background, he would not destroy the family’s Sabbath spirit or embarrass his host; he would remain sitting and not listen to the girls. “My *frumkeit* does not have to hurt others,” he concluded. Also see Ch. 1, end of Exc. F; Ch. 3, the second paragraph of Exc. Z; and fn. *w* on p. 650.

author’s, but I feel that having been raised in the home of a distinguished Torah scholar and leader (גדול בישראל), my credentials for proposing extrapolations of stories of *gedolim* are at least as good as anyone else’s. I have not only devoted much thought to a lucid understanding of the episodes I have set down, but whenever I considered my interpretations moot and open to the reader’s own explication, I sprinkled my conclusions freely with various forms of such verbs as “suggest”, “offer”, “propose”, and “conjecture”.

In his introduction to *מקור ברך*, R’ Barukh Epstein declares, “My thought has always been that not everything which comes to mind should be spoken; and not everything spoken should be written; and not everything written should be printed.” R’ Epstein claims that he abided by this dictum in compiling his book. This aphorism is also listed among the sayings of R’ Yisrael Salanter^o. I have found an earlier source for this maxim: in *כל כתבי חפץ חיים*, the son of the Chafetz-Chaim introduces the biography of his father by quoting him as repeating this aphorism “seemingly in the name of R’ Rephael of Hamburg”, the *talmid* of the אריה. The Chafetz-Chaim’s son, too, claims to have been guided by this principle when omitting “some of the few stories about (his) father’s youth which occasionally slipped out of (his) father’s mouth, all of which are *impossible* (emphasis added) to carry out into the public domain”. I suppose that the reason for being selective in what to publish stems from the concern lest someone’s feelings be hurt by uncensored revelations. The Chafetz-Chaim’s son likely alluded to this concern when he wrote that certain stories are *impossible* to publish. With regard to my book, however, I must say that insofar as this first volume, which deals in matters that transpired a century ago, I did not give much consideration to concealing

ברך ראשון (*The Musar movement*), תנועת המוסר^o – p. 14 הוצאת ח"י"ל, ניו יארק, תשי"ד " (מהדורה שנית, ירושלים, תשמ"ב), pp. 300-310, #7.21. Also see *ibid.*, p. 346, where an example of how R’ Yisrael followed this rule in his writings is set down. ח"א – p. 2

then-sensitive matters for the reason that when my father talked about these long-past episodes he specifically applied the verse⁹ גם שנאתם גם קנאתם כבר אבדה (Both their [the principals'] enmity and their envy are already bygone)⁷ – see p. 792 in this volume. In fact, my father considered the passage of only 50 years – יובל (which the Torah labels “לעולם [forever]”) – to have enough of a cumulative effect to erase one world and bring a new society in its stead⁸. In that vein, I saw no need to repress my thoughts; and rather than allowing R' Rephael Hamburger's slogan to block my path, I utilized the Biblical verse to clear the way for interesting, learned and educational disclosures about a world gone-by. Undoubtedly the readership of this book includes some descendants of those greats of yore, of blessed memory, mentioned herein. I pray that they are intelligent enough to appreciate their progenitors' human frailty along with their greatness: stemming from great ancestors, they should be⁶.

I came across a striking disagreement between two famous brothers on the subject of stories about great men of previous generations. R' Shimon Schwab in his *Selected Writings*¹⁰ defines the difference between history and “storytelling” in that the first must be “truthful, and unsparing of even the failings of the righteous”. R' Schwab asserts eloquently that “a realistic historic picture” will reveal “inadequacies” which will “rightfully make a lot of people angry” and that “no ethical purpose is served by preserving” such a picture; he contends that we must “put a veil over the human failings of our forebears and glorify all the rest which is great and beautiful (emphasis added)”. In other words, he favors “storytelling” over “history”. He coins an adage: “We do not need realism: we need *inspiration* from our forefathers.”¹¹ That author's brother,

⁹ ועיין בדש"י⁶ See n. 1 on p. 20 in this volume. ⁷ קהלת ט:ו. ⁸ בראשית (מז:כט) ובמדרש רבה (צו:ה) שיעקב אבינו ביקש שלא יעשו אותו ע"ז. Lakewood, 1988 – pp. 233-234 ⁹ He is consistent when stating in an earlier paragraph of his essay, “Only a prophet mandated by his Divine calling has the ability to report

R' Mordkhai Schwab, however, had a negative view of “storytelling” when he told me¹², “The Satmarer Rav, R' Yoilish Teitelbaum, never told stories [מעשיות] because he said, ‘You cannot educate through lies [שקר].’” R' Mordkhai agreed with R' Yoilish in reference to stories intended to glorify their principals while dehumanizing them. R' Yoilish echoed a statement by R' Yehoshua'-Yoseph Preil, Rav of the Lithuanian town of Krok. In a 5656 (1896) review of *תולדות ישראל ח"ב זאב יעבץ*'s review, published a year earlier in Warsaw, R' Preil set down the following ethic: “To create stories that never happened and present them as facts for the sake of teaching morals – woe is to the *musar* precept built on as brittle a foundation as a lie!”¹³ Even *hasidim*, the celebrated storytellers who are more suspect than others in creating legends about their leaders (from whom the Satmarer Rav was evidently trying to distance himself by his statement), are careful in separating fact from fiction. I was told by R' Shimon Deutch¹⁴ that he had asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Menahem-Mendel Schneerson, whether when writing about the arrest and release of his father-in-law, R' Yoseph-Yitzhaq Schneerson, he should mention or omit the fact that R' Yoseph-Yitzhaq's secretary, R' Hayyim Lieberman, was arrested and released with him. (R' Lieberman was opposed to R' Menahem-Mendel's ascendancy to the Lubavitch throne and did not recognize him as Rebbe after he assumed the position.) R' Menahem-Mendel responded, “History must be written לאמתה [true to its truth]” – and explained his redundancy: “This includes not polishing up any word [ניט צופוצען קיין ווארט]”¹⁵ Also cf. פולמוס

history as it really happened, unbiased and without prejudice”; he thus recommends that our non-prophetic writing of “history” be biased and prejudiced. ¹² January 14, 1988 ¹³ He refuted thereby the hypothesis of some Jewish historians that the Talmudic Sages invented the story of a failed revolt by the tribe of Ephraim during the Egyptian exile in order to discourage rebellion against the Romans of their own day. See *כתבים נבחרים מאת הרב יהושע יוסף פרייל* (ניו יארק, תרפ"ד), p. 248. ¹⁴ November 26, 1997 ¹⁵ R' Deutch offered a poignant example of how the Rebbe himself followed this guideline when he funded the publication of the memorial book for the city of

המוסר (*The Musar Controversy*)^a, a book about the dispute in the late 5650's (1890's) in which most of the great Torah figures came out publicly *against* the Musar movement. The author, Musar adherent R' Dov Katz, tells how "many opinions were heard" by him "that we should avoid the entire affair (פרשה)"; but "several Musar personalities" including R' Yehiel-Yankev Weinberg^b and R' Hatzqel Sarna insisted not only that he should write about the controversy, but – as R' Sarna put it – that "he set down in writing the full affair without omitting any detail, be what it may."

I concede humbly that I have followed not R' Shimon Schwab's prescription but R' Sarna's, and have portrayed events and people fully and honestly. I cannot subscribe to R' Schwab's assignation to anyone of a "right" to become "angry" with my revelations, because in no way do I consider the stature of the great *rabbanim* and *rashei yeshiva* of yore diminished by describing them as they were. If, due to my untinted description, some reader views some great man or another as having a slight failing or imperfection – did not the wisest of men declare with Divine guidance (רוח הקודש): כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא (For there is no saintly man on earth who does good and never fails)^c, a pronouncement upon which the Gemara bases the halakhah that צדיקי צריכי כפרה (saints [too] require atonement)^d? I personally see all the great Torah figures as the *Amora* רב זירא was described when he received his

Yekaterinoslav-Dnepropetrovsk where his father had been *rav* – in spite of the book divulging that one of the Rebbe's brothers "the youngest, Yisrael-Aryeh-Laib, a *iluy*, was caught up in the *Haskalah*, Marxism and Trotskyism, and then moved to Palestine while far from Torah and *Habad*", and the other, Dober, was confined in an insane asylum "and, unmarried, died in his depression in Kazakhstan" – see *ספר יקאטרינוסלב* p. 119, in an article by the editor, הרב ד"ר צבי הרכבי, called "שלשה רבנים".^a Published in *דנפרופטרובסק* (הוצאת יוצאי יקאטרינוסלב-דנפרופטרובסק בישראל, ירושלים תל-אביב, תשל"ג) pp. 19-20 and n. 5. ^b R' Weinberg wrote to him, "It is proper for a historian-author not to conceal the opposing side, its opinions and outlooks." Also cf. *סנהדרין מ"ו ע"ב*^d קהלת זכ, ובתפלתו במלכים א' ח:מו, "כי אין אדם אשר לא יחטא"^c שבת על תורה ארבעה, which disagrees with that gemara, and cf. *ג"ה ע"ב*

ordination^e: "Without mascara and without rouge and without hairdo, yet a graceful gazelle [לא כחל ולא שרק ולא פירכוס ויעלה חן]." If a minor blemish – and on a truly great man it is never more than minor – also exists, it does not ruin the grace of the outstanding personality; he remains a gazelle with a distinctive beauty mark.

In an article in *המעין* by פרופ' זאב לב, I came across a report on my father's attitude toward misrepresenting historical events which validates my approach. It imparts that my father approved the snubbing of "a book on the Gaon of Vilna by an outstanding author" because "the author had purposely omitted chapters dealing with the Gaon's opposition to '*Hasiduth*'", and that he said, "It is prohibited to conceal substantive and important issues such as these. Such distortion is tantamount to falsehood." On the question of how our protagonist regarded that specific book – it is obviously simply ignore the issue of the Gaon's stance toward the *Hasidic* movement. In the introduction to the third edition^g, he declares expressly that he has written chapters dealing with the controversy "which convulsed the House of Israel in those days" and they "*are retained*" in his archives. I was also present when the venerable author, R' Bezalel Landau, held a discussion about this matter with my father during the latter's 5742 (1982) visit to Israel and related that a distinguished *rosh yeshiva* in Jerusalem had accused him (as did פרופ' לב) of "falsifying (מזייף) the image of the Gaon" by omitting the issue of the Gaon's *hithnagduth*. R' Landau pleaded with my father, "How can I publicize the Gaon's prohibition on intermarriage with *hasidim* and possibly cause families to break up?^h" My father agreed that the five chapters he had prepared be left unpublished but not destroyed, saying, "Have them

^e On this specific argument, my father remarked – seriously, it seemed – that even among forbidden marriages there are some that, *ex post facto*, are not required to be dissolved (אם נשאת לא תצא); and there is therefore no fear of *breaking up* families as a result of the publication of the Gaon's prohibition.

prepared for publication but desist from [publishing them] until such time as may come when events will necessitate their publication.” He explained in veiled terms, “They must be ready in case a certain someone [יענער] should do an ugly thing [א מיאוסע זאך].” He was referring to messianic fantasies simmering in a *hasidic* circle – in Israel, the adherents of that group had fomented a political feud along *hasidic-mithnagdic* lines – and my father felt that the eventual publication of these chapters would help the general *hasidic* public shake off the messianics should their fantasy get out of hand. As it turned out, my father’s concerns were well founded: a large segment of that *hasidic* cult did declare its leader to be the Messiah. (The perverse possibility that a decade after his meeting with R’ Bezalel, many of the sect’s members would formulate the phantasm that its *dead rebbe* would make a “second coming” – this is what they believe and are propagating in our day – likely never even entered the realm of our protagonist’s normal, healthy imagination. We may therefore conjecture that my father would have enthusiastically approved the recent publication of *דב*, *דב* by *דב*, *דב*, wherein the Vilna Gaon’s battle against *Hasidism* is bared.) So much for the specific issue of R’ Landau’s book which, as that conversation disclosed, pertained to a situation with current consequences. But my father’s statement as reported by *לב* that concealment of issues is “tantamount to falsehood” is certainly valid when passing on information about historical issues that have no bearing on contemporary affairs, as does this bookⁱ.

There is a more recondite understanding of what seems to be criticism of great Torah figures. R’ Yehiel Perr told me/ of a question he once asked his father, R’ Menahem, a peer of my father’s in the Slabodka Yeshiva. A young lady was about to become engaged when someone divulged to her parents that her intended

ⁱ Also cf. n. 5 in the Prologue of this book, pp. 21-22, which quotes *תולדות מנחם*. / November 29, 1988

groom had once been institutionalized in an asylum. A fierce dispute ensued within the community as to whether the tattler was a *tzaddiq* or a *rasha*. R’ Perr asked his father how to view this act, and the latter replied, “From this episode, you cannot tell. If his other actions are kindly, he did this out of piety [צדיקות], and if his other actions are vicious, he did this out of malice [רישעות].”

R’ Hayyim Shmulevitz brings out the same motif masterfully^k with “definite proof (ראיה גדולה)” from *Masseketh Yoma*^l. The gemara relates that a *kohen* once stabbed a young man to death with a Temple knife, and the father of the murdered youth, finding his son in the throes of death, remarked, “My son is yet gasping, so the knife remains undefiled [טהור] [not having touched a corpse].” A penetrating discussion regarding the father’s comment follows: Did it reflect a laxity in that generation’s concern with murder while its concern with purity was normal, or was it an expression of how meticulous that generation was with the purity of Temple utensils while its concern with bloodshed was at the normative level? R’ Hayyim points out that we have an example here of how a single act or statement can reveal two diametrically opposed characteristics. That father might have personified the epitome of evil, callous even with regard to the life of his own child, or he might have been so saintly that in his moment of extreme anguish he still had the sanctity of the *Beth haMiqdash* in mind. Likewise, when we speak about “failings” of great Torah figures, can we state definitely that their actions indicate character deficiencies rather than manifestations of other traits, uncommon yet positive? When presenting facts about great Torah personalities, unusual as they may be, we never can determine unequivocally that they demonstrate weaknesses and faults; being that they may be an expression either of unusual positive qualities or of common human weaknesses, we opt for the former when representing great personalities.^m

וע' בסוף "מאמר על אגדות חז"ל" לרמח"ל^m כ"ג ע"ב^l קוב-קנג. קק, שיחות מוסר תשל"ג^k

In summary, we cannot judge and evaluate the individual acts of Torah personages of former generations – nor for the same reason can we resolve our problems in the particular ways they resolved theirs. To paraphrase the words of the Prophet²: כי לא מחשבותיהם מחשבותינו ולא דרכיהם דרכינו... כי גבהו שמים מארץ כן גבהו דרכיהם מדרכינו (For their thoughts are not our thoughts, nor their ways our ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are their ways higher than our ways, and their thoughts than our thoughts). Yet there is much for us to learn from them: not perfection – which needs no model and which everyone must try to achieve in accordance with his own personality – but their motives and ideals, their truthfulness and wholesomeness, their charity and love of Torah. These serve as beacons on the paths of our lives.

PREFACE

(How to Read This Book)

A. The text of this book is comprised of chapters, each divided into a number of sections; the book as a whole is divided into two parts: The Text, and Notes and Excursuses. In the first part of the book, called The Text, the entire text is printed without the annotation marks which may disrupt the flow. In the second part of the book, called Notes and Excursuses, the full text is repeated in small type together with note numbers, with the lines of the text that are relevant to each of the notes/excursuses printed atop the beginning of the respective note and excursus. The repetition of the text is made in the exact line-by-line form as it initially appeared in The Text. This has caused some of the lines in The Text to appear sparse, but it enables the reader of Notes and Excursuses to turn back and find easily the particular line of text with which the note/excursus connects and see it in its greater context. Unlike the repetition of the text which is in small type atop the page, the notes and excursuses are printed in the same full-size lettering as is the text in The Text. This was done because the notes and the excursuses are at least as important a component of the book as is the text – see the Introduction which deems the notes even *more important* than the text. The long notes, i.e., the excursuses, are given titles and are listed by their titles in the table of contents. The individually numbered paragraphs in the excursuses are often subdivided for easier readability.

I must explain why the format of this book is so unusual that the book requires instructions on how it is to be read. When I planned the structuring of my book, I envisioned having the text on the upper part of each page with footnotes on the bottom. When the notes proliferated, I thought of putting them at the end of each chapter, or at the end of each section of a chapter. Then, as the notes mushroomed to even greater size, I planned to put all

(שמודפס בריש ספר עין יעקב) שכך היה הכלל בידי חז"ל "שבמעשה הצדיקים כל מה שיש לדרוש ישעיה נה:ח,ט" לשבח צריך לדרוש לשבח" ועל רשעים, להיפך.

Books available from Yashar

Rabbi Israel Salanter: Religious Ethical Thinker

by Menahem G. Glenn

Rabbi Israel Salanter was one of the most influential nineteenth century Jewish thinkers who sought to innovate the yeshiva system as well as lay society from within, while simultaneously warding off the modernizing elements of less committed Orthodoxy. This book presents an academic biography full of interesting tidbits of information as well as an overview of Salanter's innovative ethical system. It was published once before in 1953 but did not receive the acclaim it deserves.

The Students' Guide through the Talmud

by Zevi Hirsch Chajes, translated by Jacob Shachter

Rabbi Zevi Hirsch Chajes, frequently known as "Maharatz Chayes," wrote an overview of Talmudic literature and history titled *Mevo Ha-Talmud*. Long acknowledged as one of the landmarks in Rabbinic scholarship, this work is being republished in English for the first time in over forty years, more than 150 years since the work's original publication in Hebrew. *The Student's Guide Through the Talmud* dates from the illustrious author's later years and in it he attempts to formulate the nature, extent and authority of tradition.

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by Daniel Z. Feldman

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