

The Talmudic Encyclopedia

The Talmudic Encyclopedia of Jewish Law, a magnificent edifice of the Oral Torah, had its foundations laid in Rabbi Kook's lectures to yeshiva students in his house in Jerusalem in 1921. He challenged them to leave their study halls and establish Torah literary classics that would last for generations. The philanthropist Harry Fishel, a firm admirer of the rabbi, responded to his call and laid the financial foundations for this enterprise.

The first architect was Rabbi Meir Bar Ilan. After him came the great builder, Rabbi Zevin, whose genius encompassed the entire Torah. With his outstanding sense of organization, he was able to set up the great edifice.

Rabbi Zevin recruited the best Torah scholars in the Land of Israel to write the encyclopedia's entries and polish and edit them. These entries are like comprehensive articles on every subject. Rabbi Zevin prepared the list of entries (2,000 entries), sub-entries and the legal analysis method of the encyclopedia. He edited the volumes that were published during his lifetime and prepared a list of the other planned entries, each of which included the following: a definition, sources, reasoning and explanations for each entry and each article. The editors of this important enterprise after Rabbi Zevin were Rabbi Avraham Farbstein, head of the Hebron yeshiva, Rabbi Zalman Nehemiah Goldberg, Rabbi Yona Mertzbach, Rabbi Raphael Shmuelewitz and Rabbi Dasberg.

The encyclopedia is written in a flowing and clear Hebrew style, which was the stylistic standard established by Rabbi Zevin. It constituted a new Hebrew style for writing books of Jewish law which until his time were written in the sages' mixed Aramaic and Hebrew idiom.

Beginning in 2006, the Talmudic Encyclopedia has been supervised by Rabbi Professor Avraham Steinberg. Prof. Steinberg leads and manages the Talmudic Encyclopedia with a new momentum by harnessing computer capabilities and using innovative technologies to facilitate communication between the Torah scholars and the editors. This accelerates the technical process of writing.

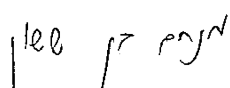
A revolution took place in the Talmudic Encyclopedia administration starting in 2013, due to the exceptionally generous contribution of Dr. Dov Friedberg and his close conceptual and budgetary partnership with Toronto Friends association.

As a result of this partnership, significant changes occurred in the development of the Talmudic Encyclopedia. A Beit Midrash named after Dov Friedberg was opened for the teaching of Torah composition. The Encyclopedia was reorganized in the form of clusters, with each cluster being headed by a veteran editor with four young writers and a reviewer under him. The one presiding over the project is its editor-in-chief, the Gaon Rav Meir Shmuelewitz.

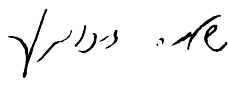
The combination of all the changes described above in the last decade have resulted in an unprecedented momentum in the writing of the Talmudic Encyclopedia's entries and the pace of publishing new volumes, all without compromising the excellent quality of the work. This revolutionary reorganization will allow the Talmudic Encyclopedia team to achieve its aim of completing the entire project by 2024.

The Talmudic Encyclopedia has acquired its place at the eastern wall of Torah anthologies and annotated literature, among scholars, researchers, academics and the general public.

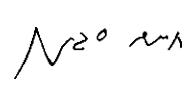
The 2023 Katz Prize is awarded to the Talmudic Encyclopedia as a token of appreciation for the many years spent on this project and in honor of the publication of its fiftieth volume.



Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson



Rabbi Shlomo Dichovski



Rabbi Haim Sabato