Preface

As in the case of the two supernal Talmuds, the Yerushalmi and the Bavli, nothing original is proposed in these volumes, only respectful commentary on what Sages have said, or should have.

Everything in them, I have read, heard from somebody, or talked about to myself; or the reader has creatively imputed new meanings to old words. For all of these voices, I am grateful. Where I have directly quoted someone, it is pretty clearly marked.

Against my inclination, my publishers have insisted that to aid librarians and bookstore owners in putting these volumes on the right shelves I label clearly what they are.

Like all human lives, this is a collection of fictive short stories or, if you prefer, of Aggadah: very little in the way of Halachah here.

Some of the stories are accurate; all of them are true. Of course, as Church dogma teaches, if any thing is not true, then no thing is. Still, as far as mere accuracy is concerned, not all seeming errors in the text are accidental. Sometimes even the immortal Homer only pretended to nod.

Taken together, this Irish history of civilization is a micro-Talmud of humankind: for, ultimately, we are all of the one stock, and what we learn of one of us tells us something about each of us. I am confident that Irish readers will be generous and will permit their culture’s experience of world history to be presented in this Jewish form. After all, the Irish rarely forget a debt.

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