

Brief Summary of the Project: Critical Edition of Selected Works of Isaac Breuer (1883-1946)

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This research project is a continuation of the successful cooperation between the two researchers. In past years they have already cooperated in research on Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the grandfather of Isaac Breuer, and founder of this particular stream of German-Jewish Orthodoxy.

The goal of our joint project is a new critical edition of selected works of Dr. Isaac Breuer (1883-1946). Breuer was a lawyer by profession, but was known mainly as a German-Jewish philosopher and in later life as the spokesman for the Orthodox workers' political party - *Poalei Agudath Israel*.

The fact that the man and his oeuvre have been widely forgotten is due to the extermination of European Jewry in the Nazi holocaust. After World War II, the identification of his teachings and writings with the heritage of German Jewry was not conducive to his reception in Jewish circles. In addition, Orthodox Jewry in Israel did not develop in the direction that Isaac Breuer envisaged. Breuer's oeuvre is, however, one of the most remarkable examples of the productivity of German-Jewish orthodoxy. His writings provide invaluable insights into the history of Orthodox Judaism in Germany and for its contribution not only to Jewish, but also to German culture and literature. His texts are part of the heritage of German Jewish literature that has been forgotten and should be remembered. His oeuvre deserves to be saved from oblivion and be made available to the Jewish and non-Jewish reader.

Breuer's works include legal and philosophical tractates, texts on philosophy of religion, on Zionism and on Agudism (the ideology of Agudath Israel) and on synagogue and community affairs. After their publication, his writings, mostly in the German language, went out of print quickly. Some of his texts were serialized in Orthodox Jewish newspapers but were never published in book form. Partly produced in the old *Fraktur* lettering (blackletter or Gothic script), the very few copies that exist today of Breuer's texts are mainly to be found in Israel and across the Jewish Diaspora. They are difficult to read even for the few German speakers living in these countries who would find it hard to understand the many allusions to historical events and to German-Jewish lore and expressions in Ashkenazi Hebrew that Breuer used. In the German speaking countries, apart from very few specialized libraries, these texts are not available at all. Also most of Breuer's essays on religion and philosophy of religion, as well as his newspaper articles are hardly accessible. Some renewed interest in Breuer meets therefore the obstacle that a sound philological basis for the reception of his texts and essays is still missing.

This project aims to fill this gap by preparing a critical edition of these texts in the original language by comparing the different editions and early translations into Yiddish, Hebrew, and English including the manuscripts in Isaac Breuer's legacy, while also providing a commentary on the various texts and a critical introduction. The personal background of the researchers is of importance with regard to the legitimacy of the project within the independent Orthodox milieu in Israel where the investigators will need to gain access to several archives (that are generally not open to the public) and permission to quote the relevant material.

The critical addition of Breuer's texts will be published in 3 volumes.