

A Legacy for Generations *Vehigadeta Levincha*

by RABBI BINYOMIN ZEV KARMAN

V'higadita l'vincha — the mitzvah of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim is to transmit to our children the story of the exodus of Klal Yisrael from Mitzrayim. Indeed, when the Mishnah in Pesachim (116a) introduces Mah Nishtanah, it begins by stating, "Here, the son asks..."

At the Seder, a parent has the obligation and opportunity to transmit to their descendants the emunah and tradition of our heritage. Yet throughout the generations, many childless people, including Gedolei Yisrael, did not have the chance to convey this legacy to their offspring.

For this Pesach, a new Haggadah compiled by Rabbi Moshe Hubner, titled The Legacy Haggadah — Vehigadeta Levincha, presents the Torah ideas promulgated by some of these Gedolim and nashim tzidkaniyos as a means of allowing these precious thoughts to be repeated at Sedarim throughout the world. Rabbi Hubner shares with Hamodia how he brought his dream to reality and some of the captivating discoveries he made along the way.



In his approbation to this *Haggadah*, Harav Yitzchak Breitowitz, *shlita*, of Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim writes: “There are literally thousands of commentaries on the *Haggadah*, and every single year, scores of new commentaries are published. It would be difficult to imagine that, at this late date, something new and different could be produced. And yet Rabbi Moshe Hubner has managed to do so.”

How did Rabbi Hubner manage to accomplish this task? What drove him to spend countless hours on this project, searching for material, researching the lives of these *Gedolim* and bringing this *sefer* to publication in just a few months?

“This idea has been percolating in my mind for quite some time,” Rabbi Hubner shares, “and between this past Sukkos and Chanukah, I put in long hours with a team of people, gathering the material and editing and proofreading the manuscript. With great *siyatta diShmaya*, we were able to bring it to print in time for this Pesach.”

As to the impetus for producing this type of work, Rabbi Hubner simply says that he was looking for *zechuyos*.

“Many of these *Gedolim* are relatively unknown,” he remarks. “If a person leaves this world childless, he is often forgotten. I wanted to introduce them to the public through their Torah and stories about their lives.”

One of the better known *Gedolim* who passed away childless was Harav Shimshon Chaim Nachmani. Harav Nachmani writes in the introduction to his *sefer* that since his son passed away at a young age, his *sefarim*, *Toldos Shimshon* and *Zera Shimshon*, will be his eternal legacy.

“I had the *sefer* long before its popularity rose in the past few years, and I dreamed of publishing a *sefer* that would enlighten people about such *Gedolim*,” Rabbi Hubner recalls.



He compiled a list of a few hundred names of *Gedolim* who did not leave over children; some are better known, while some are unfamiliar. “People like the Bas Ayin of Ovritch, Harav Meir Shapiro and the Chazon Ish, *zecher tzaddikim livrachah*, and the Satmar Rav, *zy”a*, are known not to have left any progeny, but there are many others who are less known. When I challenged some people to name even 20 such *Gedolim*, most were unable to. As I researched this, I discovered many *sefarim* written centuries



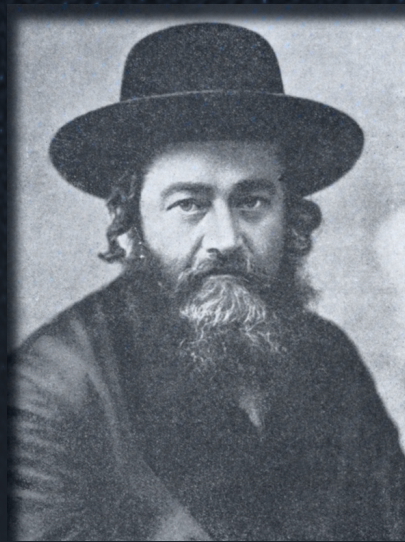
Harav Meir Shapiro (right) 1929 in Vienna with Harav Aharon Walkin of Pinsk and Rabbi Dr. Samuel Spitzer of Hamburg.



Chazon Ish



Ohr Sameiach



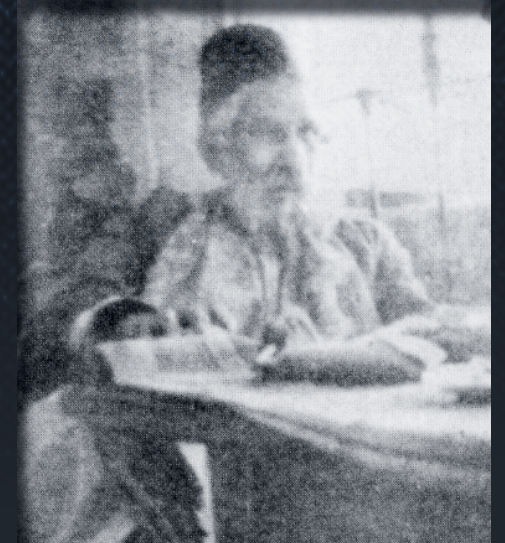
Harav Meir Shapiro



The Satmar Rebbe



Eish Kodesh



Harav Eliezer Alfandari

ago by childless *Gedolim*; I felt it would be wonderful if I could publicize them and their works, allowing contemporary people to know them and learn the Torah they expounded.”

The daunting task was made even more difficult when Rabbi Hubner realized that he had accumulated an abundance of material. “One cannot bring an ‘encyclopedia’ to the *Seder* table. I had to eliminate some material to decrease the size, which was difficult both in the physical and the intellectual sense. We began by discarding all the English translation and kept only the text of the *Haggadah*. Next, we eliminated some sections not central to the *sefer*. Still the *Haggadah* was too large, and it contains about two and a half times the material of other *Haggados*.

“Although the mainstay of the *Haggadah* is the *drush* along with the relevant stories, we included a section in the back of the *Haggadah* containing more *lomdishe* pieces. We were forced to remove one unique section on the *korban Pesach* that contained more than 25,000 words. But

don’t worry; the piece has already been edited and will appear in one of the forthcoming volumes on the *Yamim Tovim* and *Chumash* that we hope to release in the future.

Excising some *divrei Torah* was a heart-wrenching yet necessary task. “I hoped to accumulate *zechuyos* through this project, and I am trepidatious about losing the *zechus* of having the Torah of one of these *Gedolim* appear,” Rabbi Hubner admits. “I guess that will be the impetus to carry on with this project and produce other works of a similar nature.”



Criteria had to be established for deciding which *Gedolim* to include in the *Haggadah*. “After much consideration, we resolved that if a *Gadol* had a child, and the child passed away in his lifetime, we would include the *Gadol*. Therefore, the Satmar Rav, the Ohr Same’ach and the Eish Kodesh were included. However, we did not include those whose entire families were annihilated together during any of the tragedies that *Klal Yisrael* faced,

— the *Gezeiros Tach v’Tat* or the Holocaust.”

To broaden the appeal of the *sefer*, pieces were included from all sectors of *Yidden* throughout the past five centuries. It features *Chassidische*, *Litvishe* and *Sephardic Gedolim*. Nearly every branch of *Chassidus* had a Rebbe who did not have children, and every *Litvishe yeshivah* had a childless *Maggid Shiur*. The *sefer* also contains a variety of genres: *drush*, *lomdus*, stories, biographies and photos. “We even incorporated a few women, including Sarah Schenirer, the founder of the Bais Yaakov movement,” Rabbi Hubner relates. “Rav Meir Shapiro spoke about her in Vienna in 1929, and we included a photo of him at the *Knessiah Gedolah*. Another virtuous woman included is the sister of Harav Itzikel Hamburger, Rebbetzin Sara Rivka Rachel Leah Horowitz, who composed the *Techinah Imahos*.

“The earliest *Gadol* we researched is Harav Yitzchak Karo, the uncle of the Beis Yosef, who lived at the beginning of the 1500s and wrote a *sefer* titled *Toldos Yitzchak*. He was *niftar*

without children. We discovered some wonderful pieces of his about the *korban Pesach* that we wanted to include. However, as we mentioned before, the section on *korban Pesach* was removed due to space constraints; Rav Karo is not included in this *Haggadah*, but *b’ezeras Hashem*, will be included in future endeavors.

“Moving forward to the 1600s, Harav Meir of Tarnipol wrote a *sefer* titled *Maor Hakatan*. We included a piece in which he compares the four practices the *Yidden* maintained in *Mitzrayim* (they did not change their names or language, they did not inform on one another, and they were not promiscuous) to the four *geulos* (the stoppage of hard labor, the cessation of the work, the exodus and the splitting of the *Yam Suf*). We paired this together with the *Meshech Chochmah* at the beginning of *Parashas Va’eira*, where the *Meshech Chochmah* connects these concepts to the four *kosos* as well. We included

“I TOLD HIM HE MANAGED TO PRODUCE A GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE SHOEL U’MEISHIV WHEN THE SHOEL U’MEISHIV HIMSELF COULD NOT ACCOMPLISH THAT!”

what Rav Meir of Tarnipol records in his introduction about his family — they perished during the *Gezeiras Tach V’Tat* and the slaughter continued during the following years as Jews wandered from place to place.”

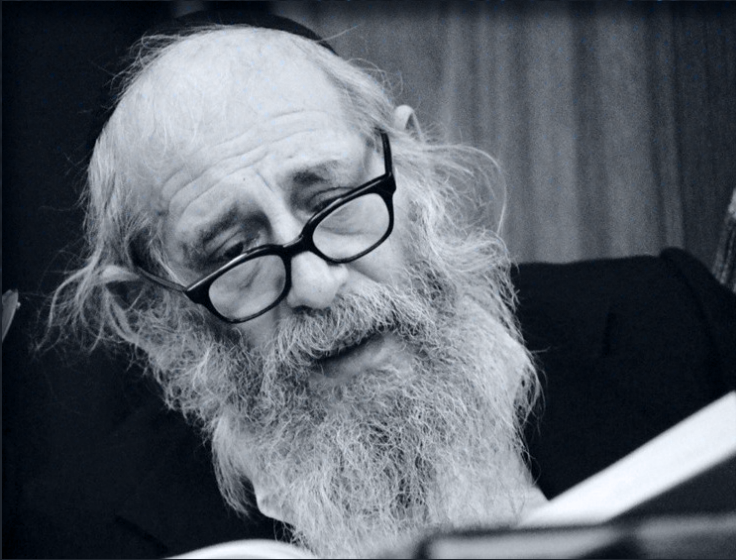
A relatively unknown *Gadol* of the 1700s is Harav Yaakov ben Yoel, a *Dayan* in Brisk and the author of *She’eiris Yaakov*. The

Knesses Yechezkel, Rav of the three municipalities of AHU (Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek), described Rav Yaakov as a *Gadol Hador*. Rav Yaakov’s son knew 500 *blatt* by heart when he was just 10 years old, yet was *niftar* before his *bar mitzvah*.

Turning to the 1800s, we find a few surprises, one of which is Harav Yosef Shaul Nathanson of Lvov, the author of *Shut Shoel u’Meishiv*.

“I was surprised that many of the *talmidei chachamim* I spoke to while working on the *sefer*, including some *Dayanim* who are familiar with *Shut Shoel u’Meishiv*, but were unaware that Rav Yosef Shaul was childless,” Rabbi Hubner reports. “In fact, I

once had a funny experience with a well-known speaker. He mentioned that his grandmother was a friend of the ‘granddaughter’ of the Shoel u’Meishiv, and that they survived the Holocaust together. He claimed his grandmother inherited the *gartel* of the Shoel u’Meishiv from her. I told him he managed to produce a granddaughter of the Shoel u’Meishiv when the Shoel



Rav Moshe Tzvi Weintraub in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas.

WHILE THE SABA KADISHA PURPORTEDLY LIVED TO 117 YEARS AND IS THE OLDEST QUOTED IN THE SEFER, THE YOUNGEST PERSON INCLUDED IS A YOUNG BACHUR WHO WAS NIFTAR RIGHT AFTER HIS BAR MITZVAH

u'Meishiv himself could not accomplish that!"

The *Haggadah* includes a fascinating account about the Shoel u'Meishiv, told by the son of the Rav of Brezhan, Galicia (Berezhany, Ukraine). The story, which incorporates a well-known tale of the Baal Shem Tov, is a testament to the character and holiness of the Shoel u'Meishiv and can be found in the *Haggadah* at the *brachah* of *Hamotzi*.

In the realm of Sephardic *Gedolim*, the *sefer* includes pieces from Harav Avraham Chamoi from Aleppo, Syria. After his wife and son passed away, he traveled to Turkey to learn under Harav Chaim Palagi in Izmir (Smyrna). A contemporary of Rav Avraham Chamoi was Harav Nissim Avraham Ashkenazi of Izmir, author of *Na'eh L'hodos on Tehillim*. Rav Nissim offers a fascinating explanation concerning *Makkas Bechoros*. He derives from the fact that the *pesukim* in Shmos (12:12) and *Tehillim* (105:36) stress that the firstborn were smitten "ba'aretz," in the ground, that the firstborn who had already died were resurrected and killed once again.

Another Sephardic *Gadol* from that era is the Saba Kadisha, Harav Eliezer Alfandari, who originated from Istanbul, Turkey, and later served in Damascus and Beirut before settling in Yerushalayim.

While the Saba Kadisha purportedly lived to be 117 years old and is the oldest quoted in the *sefer*, the youngest person included is a young *bachur* who was *niftar* right after his bar mitzvah in 5655/1895. His father published a manuscript of his *chiddushim*, which he found many years after his son's *petirah*.

A contemporary *Gadol* who lived in America in the 1900s was Harav Moshe Tzvi Weintraub, who served in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas for many decades. After the *petirah* of his Rebbetzin, Rav Weintraub was invited by Harav Avraham Pam, *zt"l*, to join his *Seder*. Later, Rav Weintraub spent his *Sedarim* at the home of

Harav Yisroel Belsky, *zt"l*.

One year, one of the Belsky girls, an eighth grader at the time, snatched Rav Weintraub's *afikoman*, and instead of requesting a present, she asked that he give a *brachah* to her two siblings, who were already older and had not yet found their *shidduchim*. Naturally, this amazing story and its outcome can be found in the *Haggadah* at *Tzafun*.

Haggadah Vehigadeta Levincha is known as the Fisher Edition in honor of the generous benefactor who funded a substantial portion of the project. "The *Haggadah* includes superb graphics and layout, and of course, wonderful *chiddushim* and stories that will enhance anyone's *Seder*," Rabbi Hubner says proudly. "Putting it all together was a great expense, and it was only due to this dedication that the publication was possible."

Mr. Abe Eisner, the father-in-law of the benefactor, informed Rabbi Hubner that his uncle, who served as Rav of Ellenville for 35 years and was instrumental in founding Yeshiva Gedolah Zichron Moshe of South Fallsburg, never had a child; he's included in the *Haggadah*.

The *Haggadah* contains 10 *haskamos* from *Gedolei Yisrael* who extoll the *sefer* in superlative terms. Many point out that *Chazal* tells us that the memorials for *tzaddikim* are not the monuments on their graves but rather the words of Torah they bequeath to this world. Rabbi Hubner has created a way to spread this Torah to our generation.

In his own words, Rabbi Hubner begins the *Haggadah* by writing, "Invite them to your home and your table; speak their words of Torah at your *Seder*; be their child, thus allowing them to advocate on your behalf as a parent would." ■

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