



# The Seforim Shrank

Reviewed by Rabbi Baruch Weiss

*The Seforim Shrank* features reviews and synopses of newly-released seforim. Rabbi Baruch Weiss selects and reviews a sefer that was recently published, sharing with Yated readers information about its contents and the background of its author. Suggestions may be submitted by authors, publishers and distributors to [seforimshrank@yated.com](mailto:seforimshrank@yated.com).

## The Legacy Haggadah Shel Pesach

by Rabbi Moshe Hubner

The newly published *Fisher Family Edition Legacy Haggadah Shel Pesach* is a unique gem. A compilation of *divrei Torah*, stories, and biographies of *gedolei Yisroel* who passed away without children, it is a connection to our past and a conduit to our future. The brainchild of Rabbi Moshe Hubner, a *rov* and *mechanech* from Brooklyn, NY, the *Haggadah* spans centuries of Jewish history and covers the gamut of both *Ashkenazi* and *Sefardi gedolim*. On the *leil haSeder*, when fathers cherish the opportunity to impart their *mesorah* to their children and grandchildren, the *Legacy Haggadah* is the perfect tool to help maximize the effects of the night.

The concept of disseminating the Torah of *talmidei chachomim* who pass away without children is deeply rooted in tradition. The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 90b, *Yevamos* 97a) states that when the Torah of those who have passed away is repeated in their name, “their lips will be like a bear (or drooling) in their graves,” clearly symbolizing the tremendous merit that it brings them. Those who passed away without leaving children are, in some ways, more in need of such merits, and many such *gedolim* promised to advocate on behalf of those who learn their Torah after their passing. Such *gedolim* include the *Zera Shimshon*, Rav Tzadok Hakohein and Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin.

Certain *gedolim* who did not leave over children, such as the *Chazon Ish*, are well known and their Torah is learned every day. There are other *gedolim* who are less known and whose Torah and histories have almost been forgotten. The *Legacy Haggadah* has brought these *gedolim* back to our national consciousness in a most meaningful way. There are also *gedolim* who, al-

though well-known for their Torah, are not well-known for not having children. By compiling their *divrei Torah* on the *Haggadah*, the *Legacy Haggadah* has given them the *zechus* of taking part in *sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* as well. The *Fisher Family Edition* is also beautiful aesthetically, making it a pleasure to peruse.

As mentioned, the *Legacy Haggadah* is diverse both in terms of the *gedolim*



whose Torah it shares as well as the type of content found within its pages. It includes *gedolim* who lived hundreds of years ago and those who passed away recently; those who lived in Spain, North Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, Eretz Yisroel, and North America and those who belonged to

Chassidic dynasties, *Litvishe yeshivos*, and Hungarian and *Sefardic botei medrash*. It also brings short *vertlach*, *lomdishe shticklach*, stories of *mesirus nefesh*, and brief biographies, making it a *sefer* that is enjoyable for one and all.

The *Legacy Haggadah* also contains Torah that is being republished for the first time in many years. For example, a member of Rabbi Hubner’s team found a *sefer* called *She’airis Yaakov*, written by a Rav Yaakov ben Rav Yoel and published in 1727. The *sefer* contains a rare *haskamah* from the *Knesses Yechezkel*, who recalls growing up with the *mechaber* in Brisk and testifies that he knew *Shas* by heart. Through diligent work, Rabbi Hubner’s team was able to piece together biographical information about the *mechaber* and a beautiful *devar Torah* about the *mitzvah* of *Karpas*. This Torah is now reappearing after hundreds of years.

Another example of a *gadol* rediscovered in the *Legacy Haggadah* is Rav Avrohom Chamoi (1838–1886). A friend and contemporary of Rav Chaim Palagi, Rav Chamoi is revealed to have been both a *baal halacha* as well as a Kabbalist. After experiencing the tragedies of both his wife and son passing away on the same day, he accepted *golus* upon himself and dedicated the rest of his life to publishing *seforim*. His travels took him to over twenty countries, including Italy, France, Morocco, Iraq, India, Yemen, and North Africa, and enabled him to document many rare *minhagim* that are a fascinating window into history. For example, he mentions a *minhag* to blow the *shofar* during the baking of *matzos*, something he refers to as “a worthy *minhag*.”

The *Haggadah* also describes the *Pesach Sedorim* of remarkable figures

such as Rav Avrohom of Prohbsht (1787–1812), the older brother of Rav Yisroel Friedman of Ruzhin, who assumed the mantle of leadership upon the passing of their father, Rav Shalom Shachne of Prohbsht, in 1802, but tragically passed away ten years later without any children.

The stories of *mesirus nefesh* include one of Rav Gershon Liebman, the famous Novardoker *mashgiach*, who, while in the concentration camps, used to break off a piece of his rations as an act of personal *perishus* and in order to do *chesed* with others. Another example is the account of Rav Elchonon Yosef Hertzman regarding how a group of *Yidden* procured *matzos* in the concentration camps.

The *Haggadah* also highlights some remarkable women who passed away without children, such as Rebbetzin Sarah Rivka Rochel Leah Horowitz, who was cited by the *Shoel Umeishiv* as “the *tzadeikes*.”

Towards the end of the *Haggadah*, a lengthy discussion can be found regarding the famous machine *matzah* controversy that came to a head in the mid-1800s. This fascinating discussion is both *lomdish* and historical, and involves two *gedolim* who passed away without children: Rav Chaim Nossan Dembitzer and Rav Yosef Shaul Nathanson, the *Shoel Umeishiv*.

As Rav Hubner says, the *Legacy Haggadah* is the perfect present to give someone before *Pesach* and will surely provide “*Afikoman* presents” for those who learn it from the *gedolim* in *Shomayim* who promised to advocate on their behalf. It is also the first of many such projects that Rabbi Hubner hopes to complete under the umbrella of the Zera Emes project, documenting and disseminating the Torah of these *gedolim*.