

Abstract/Intro

This genealogical research sheds light on Eastern European Jewish history, Hasidic dynasties, and modern Zionism. It draws on primary archival sources including oral interviews, memoirs, photos, poems, operas, works of art, maps, hespedim, synagogue pinkasim, demographic statistics, state records, and scholarly secondary sources such as those by Dr. Hillel Zeitlin, Iggeort Kodesh of the Friedicker Rebbe, Minsk Yizkor books, and academic articles on topics such as anti-semitism in the former Soviet Union under the Tzars and communists, and journals such as Kiryat Sefer. The study draws on documents in multiple languages. The testimony is peppered with primary sources including interviews and many secondary sources in languages such as Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Hungarian, French, German. The project is the summary of over two decades of research visiting family in Israel, Russia, Australia and other countries as well as consulting archives and library across the globe.

The study also in part describes some of the methods, strategies, to uncover and bring to light the past of my family history and place this account in its historical context. As well as bringing to light of an elite rabbinic dynasty this study is unique in revealing matriarchal histories of remarkable family members and draws on archival resources in Jewish womens' history. It notes some individuals who made major impacts in their Jewish community, Judaism, cultural history at large, Zionism, and Eretz Yisrael.

Some of the Rabbis featured, include: Rabbis Rav Menachem Mendel Gluskin, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitz, Rabbi Eliyahu Pearlman (the Minsker Gadol), The Chazon Ish (as Dr. S. Lieberman was his nephew), Rabbi Aaron Ori Gluskin of Paritchi (after Habad luminary Rabbi Hillel of Paritch), Rabbi Yehoshua Gluskin of Lvov who was the grandson of Rabbi Moshe Zev Gluskin who gave a Hespel for the GRA and comrad of The Netziv.

Also noted are academic scholars such as (1) **Dr. Saul Lieberman** (brother in law of Rav Menachem Mendel Gluskin), (2) **Dr. Aryeh Vilsker** Chief research Judaica Librarian in the Ferkovitch Hebraica Collection of the Saltykov Schredrin Library in St. Petersburg, who amongst many scholarly achievements discovered unknown poem of Rav Yehudah HaLevy that were made more widely known by Dr. Ezra Fleischer of the Medieval Cairo Poetry Unit in Israel, founded by German philanthropist Shocken, (3) **Dr. Joseph David Amusin** who published over 50 books and articles in many languages including Hungarian, Russian, Hebrew, French, and German on the Dead Sea Scrolls,

Also featured are Zionist pioneers such as Zev Gluskin a remarkable Zionist who played and important role in the development of Kosher wine making. Moshe Zev was a founder of the Menuhah ve-Nahalal society, which established the settlement of Rehovot. He was also one of the founders of the Ahi'asaf publishing house, which introduced innovations in the publishing and distribution of Hebrew books. He participated in the establishment of the Carmel society (1896), which marketed and exported the wine produced in the settlements, and was its first director. In 1901 he took part in a Hovevei Zion deputation to Baron Edmond de Rothschild to persuade him to continue his settlement activities in Erez Israel. In 1904 he was among the founders of the Geulah Company, which was established for the private purchase of land in Erez Israel. Gluskin went to Erez Israel late

in 1905 and took over the directorship of Agudat ha-Koremim ("Vintners Association") and of its wine cellars in Rishon le-Zion and Zikhron Ya'akov. He was director of the Geulah Company from 1925–46. He published his memoirs (1946), which contain valuable material on the history of the Jews and of Zionism in Russia and Erez Israel.

The matriachal history uncovered in part features many remarkable mothers, daughters, and Rebbetzins such as (1) Dr. Gitel Gluskin (zl) who amongst an important scholarly output wrote a dissertation on an unknown manuscript in St. Petersburg Saltkov Library by Rabbi Yehudah Alharizi and later a mathematical treatise in Hebrew from the Medieval ages, (2) Dr. Leah Gluskin who was a scholar of 2nd Temple Judaism and expert on the formation of the mishnah, Philo, and Josephus, (3) Esther Gluskin who as a member of Hashomer HaTzair was sent to Siberia and suffered for her Zionist commitments, and (4) Dr. Sonia Gluskin, a professor of Russian Literature and medievalist, whose son Sasha Mintz was a world renowned ballet dancer who performed around the world including the NYC MET. The image of women's participation and their role in the Hasidic movement are illustrated in the book. Gita Gluskina said Kadish for her father for 11 months as Rav Menachem only had 4 daughters and no sons. What emerges is that leaders like the Maiden of Ludmir (Hana Rahel Werbermacher (1805-1888) or Eydele Brody are not the only paradigmatic representatives of Hasidic women. Gita and Leah and Sonia all became academic scholars of distinguished rank. In the book we show how we can gain a window to better understanding the wives, daughters, and mothers of rank and file Hasidim- by the professional achievements in Hebrew philology and medieval history in the case of Gita, 2nd temple Judaism in the case of Leah, and Russian language and literature in the case of Sonia. Recent academics who have shown an interest in women's relation to Hasidism include Ada Rapoport-Albert, Moshe Rosman, Naftali Lowenthal, Nechemia Polen, etc but our book celebrates women from Hasidic backgrounds who displayed not only great courage, perseverance, dedication, but pioneered in academic fields filled with road blocks not only against women but Jews in general at a time when only Yiddish in Russia was tolerated as an area of academic interest as a form of folk culture. In general the Gluskin family including the women suffered great economic hardship. Thus **The example of Temerl Sonnenberg a wealthy Jewess patron and philanthropist of the Polish Hasidim however did exert influence due to her financial leverage on the Hasidic communities economic well being. Thus a women's virtue in Temerl's case was associated with Tzedakah, but women from Hasidic roots like the Gluskin daughters achieved in the realm of intellect and in the case of Esther Zionist political activism. While In Hasidic circles women did not eat in the sukkah during the festival of Tabernacles which distinguished them from non-Hasidic women (Schoenfeld, Jewish Life in Galicia 101) the Gluskin daughter's showed that they were not only equals of their male counterparts in scholarship but even on a higher madrega perhaps in ruchniut. Jewish women often davened at home and were considered to be on a higher spiritual status as noted in the Mishnah Sanhedrin that attests to the 10 men in a minyan (quorum) as arising for the tikkun that is needed for the 10 spies who gave bad report about Eretz Yisrael. Since women were not amongst these 10 spies, and women did not worship the egel ha-zahav and thus were also exempt from work such as weaving on rosh hodesh.**

The work is not a Hagigraphic although other rabbinic portraits exist of Rabbi Moshe Zev Gluskin (ztsl). Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821) admired, honored Rabbi Moshe Zev's father Rabbi Eliezer of Hlusk as a gadol; Rav Moshe Zev gave hesped for GRA who was a confidant of Reb Chaim of Volozhin (Netziv); Rabbi Menachem Gluskin (zts) who was a chief Rabbi (Av Bet Din) in Paritchi, Minsk, & Leningrad,

chosen as a son in law of Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitch who in turn was the son in law of the Minsker Gadol, Rabbi **Rabbi Yerucham Yehuda Leib Perlman, known as the Gadol of Minsk (d. 1896)** (see Gedolei MiMinsk, Feldheim Press)

The study reveals the incredible misirat nefesh of Jews lives under the Tzars and communist Boleshevicks. For instance both Rav Menchem Mendel and Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitch were imprisoned by the Communists including Jewish communists (Yivsikey) for the actions on behalf of Yiddishkeit in the USSR under the surveillance of the KGB. Dr. Vilsker was arrested by the KGB on one occasion and interrogated "what subversive behaviors Jewish elders do when consulting Rabbinic texts in his library!" Many letters about the miserat nefesh of these ancestors are preserved in the Iggerot Kodesh of the previous Lubavitch Rebbe to this effect. The Gluskin family via Rabbi Aaron Gluskin of Paritich who served as av bet din after the Chabad Luminary Rabbi Hillel of Paritich. Rabbi Aaron Gluskin was the son of Rabbi Yehoshua Gluskin of Lvov who married a daughter of Rabbi Dan of Slonim. **The Gluskin family stems** stems from Rashi and like the Habad 7 Lubavitch Rebbes, the Maharal of Prague. The latter history of his long Rabbinic dynasty shows that there are many insights into life of Jews under persecution in the USSR and rabbinic life in general that comes to light in the journey of uncovering this rabbinic past in Eastern Europe that many Ashkenaz Jews share. The unusual interactions of Hasidim and Mitnagdim are discussed quite differently than most flat portraits of one of sinat hinam, rechilus, herem, and antagonism and polemic. For example when Dr. Saul Lieberman said to Rav Menachem Gluskin "the Hasidic shtiebelach are superfluous, Rav Menachem did not get angry but retorted that every town, city, and shitebel should have Hasidic shtiebelach so Jews not become arrogant with their elaborate synagogue architecture but let us not polomicize let us go sing a niggun. While it is true the Hasidic courts operated differently than the mitnagdic yeshivos where pilpul, lomdus, and rarified intellectualism were the focus, both mitnagdim and Hasidim revered their leaders as Tzadikim as the sources of blessing, advice, and guidance.

While one went to Rimanow for financial advice. To Kozhinitz for a cure and to Belz for piety (Walden, Ohel ha-rabi 76). In view of the supplicant pilgrims the tsaddik was not just a miracle worker but also an expert in secular matters, a competent financial advisor, a job placement officer, and a medical consultant. The average supplicant expected help from the tsaddik in matters of health, livelihood, and family, and everyday matters such as arbitration. The tzadik having learned the Talmudic laws on torts was capable as an arbiter conversant with the law of nuances of business, and expert on finance, knowledgeable about the job market, and a medical advisor. All types of topics and case law in the Talmudic texts. Thus for the Hasid and for the mitnaged the tsaddik was a man of business, a lawyer, a doctor, a leader, and a holy man- all in one person (Leder, Raysher Yidn, 23).

This Rabbinic history is substantiated with bringing to center stage from the margins the Rebbetzins, female scholars, and devoted wives, mothers, and daughters especially in a chapter titled "the 7 prophetesses." There we see the personal side of the family as when in an interview with David Levy, Dr. Gita Gluskin who remarked to me in Givatayim that "all the women had crushes of Saul Lieberman who they felt was very good looking (Dr. Lieberman was one of the brothers in law of Rav Menachem Mendel Gluskin (ztl), as Lieberman's 1st wife was Rochelle Rabinowitch Lieberman and Rav Menachem's wife was Fraidl Rabinowitch Gluskin were sisters. We learn from such anecdotes little hints of the personal lives of these family members as when Dr Gita in an interview tells me that "it is no accident that the yearzeit of Rav Menachem (my father) and Fraidl Rabinowitch Gluskin (my mother 5 years earlier) is both the 13 Kislev- *"Because their souls were so mystically bound up with one another...*

al pi Kabbalah." Thus the overall book is not a Hagigraphic work, but rather recoups the role of womens' history and the exemplary roles of individual women in my family and bring them center stage from the margins. For instance Esther Gluskin was arrested by the kGB and sent to Siberia for her involvement in a Zionist organization *HaShomer HaTzair*. Gita and Leah achieved doctorates in Hebrew philology and Jewish studies under difficult circumstances. And Sonia Gluskin raised a son who became an international ballet dancer.

This research notes the importance of genealogical research. The study describes the methods and strategies, to uncover history of various members of the Gluskin family back about 13 generations and place this account in its historical context. As well as the revealing of an elite rabbinic history, this study brings to center stage from the margins material on matriarchal histories. The testimony is peppered with primary sources including interviews in I s r a e l , p h o t o s , g e n e a l o g i c a l t r e e s , l e t t e r s (Iggerot), Hespdim, Hashkamot, pinkasim, maps, the historic Jewish press and current Israeli Newspapers, techinos prayers, kvitlekh, memoirs, diaries, public records, oral histories, tombstone inscriptions, original poems by family members, blog and FB posts, and demographic studies. Also many secondary sources such as Eleh Ezkarah, Minsk yizkor books, Hillel Zeitlin's portrait of Rav Gluskin, Toldot Shklov, academic articles, etc (see Hebrew Bibliography) are drawn upon. For example, a map of Minsk can be found in the yizker book.

The research notes some individuals who made major impacts in the eastern European Jewish community [such as Rabbi Zev Gluskin a confidant of the Netziv and gave a hesped for the GRA), Jewish scholarship (Dr. Vilsker, Dr. Josef David Amusin, Dr. Gita Gluskin, Dr. Leah Gluskin, Dr. Sonia Gluskin), cultural history at large (Sonia's son was the international ballet dancer Sasha Minsk), Zionism and life in Israel for those fortunate to get a VISA out of the former Soviet Union in Aliya. We trace censorship and persecution under Communist Russia and how this effected family (rabbis, scholars, and members of HaShomer HaTzair) under the surveillance of the KGB. For example, Rav Menachem Gluskin with his father in law Rabbi Eliezer Rabinowitz was imprisoned twice for teaching Torah, Esther Gluskin as a Zionist sent to Siberia, Dr. Vilsker was interogated about the Jewish elders who used his library workplace to learn "Jewish texts", and medical members of the Helfgott family were accused in the Doctor's plot, the paranoid machinations of Stalin. The work reveals the *misrat nefesh* of those who sacrificed as a form of Kiddush Ha-Shem, in trying times before in Tzarist Russia under the Cantonist system, and after the Communist Revolution.

This book is a decades long journey not only in search of academic history, but *for sacred MEMORY, as the Besht, notes, "Bizikranot yesh ha-geulah"*. We cannot do justice to the present unless we remember and learn from the noble deeds of our ancestors to guide us in the future. Further we cannot know where we are going unless we know "where we have walked" in generations before us. This teaches us to "trust the future, remember the past, and live the present," informed and guided by the light of the holy souls sparks that shine as glistening "names" in Gan Eden. The book is not so much one in search of yichus, which many hagigraphic works document. It is a journey to reveal the *misrat nefesh* of our ancestors in usually abject material poverty, who sacrificed to be proud Jews in trying times, accomplishing greatness in Torah learning, for we are mere dwarfs in *ruchnius*, intellectual virtue, and moral and spiritual middot compared to our forefathers and matriarchs in Eastern Europe. We can only know where we are going if we walk by the light of their inspiring examples. It is an attempt to turn to the past to guide the future, to make us better persons, seeking wisdom from the elders, as parasha Hazinu enjoins:

זכר זמות עולם, בינו שנות דר-נדר; שאל אביה ונגדה, זמניה ויאמרו לה