

With the coming of Jewish mysticism to Eastern Europe, philosophy found itself replaced by Kabbalah. While there were transitional figures, such as Heller, who continued to study philosophy, by the mid-seventeenth century Jewish philosophy had become an all-but-forgotten discipline in the region. Although there would be a revival of the study of Jewish philosophy in Eastern Europe around the beginning of the eighteenth century, the discipline would not be dominated by rabbis as it had been.

#### Ethical Literature

As was true with respect to Jewish philosophy, writers in Eastern Europe very much relied on medieval literature in compiling their own ethical works. The writings of Asher ben Yehi'el, Yonah Gerondi, Bahya ibn Pakuda', and others either were republished or became the basis for ethical writings of the period. The goal of such literature was not only to improve the soul but also to ensure proper religious faith and behavior among readers. Because *halakhah* was so central to Jewish intellectual life, local writers tended to express themselves in practical guidebooks rather than through the more philosophical writings that had characterized Jewish ethicists in Muslim and Christian Spain. Ethics were often intertwined not only with Jewish law but with biblical and Talmudic exegesis as well, and explanations of biblical passages became a context for discussing topics such as the abuse and evils of wealth, the need to conduct oneself honestly, and the importance of proper communal leadership.

Ethical works were also a means of reinforcing traditional behavior and combating social deviance. The literature recognized human frailties and vices and urged readers not to submit to their base desires but to show strength and, if necessary, repent. To this end, authors made extensive use of examples, parables, and allegories in seeking to inculcate in readers both a fear of God and a desire to change their ways. Discussions were not limited to ritual life, but included instruction on proper familial relations (including sexual relations) and education of the young. The ideal woman was portrayed as someone who spent her time out of the public eye. Married women were to raise their children and help their husbands at home. Men were expected to spend their days in the workplace making a living, but to dedicate some of their time to communal prayer and the rabbinic ideal of study.

Ethical literature appeared in Yiddish already in the sixteenth century. Some such texts were legal guides with moral instruction; others were translations or adaptations of earlier Hebrew works. Perhaps the most famous of the former was Mosheh Altschul's *Brantshpigl*, first published in Kraków in 1596. Specifically addressed to women but, like all Yiddish literature of the day, written with an eye to male readers as well, Altshuler instructed readers on how to attain a virtuous lifestyle in this world, with the promise that they would enjoy the full fruits of their self-sacrifice in the world to come.

The character of ethical literature changed dramatically with the introduction of Jewish mysticism into Eastern Europe. The ideas of Mosheh Cordovero (d. 1570) and Yitshak Luria (d. 1572), both of whom flourished in Safed, began to infuse ethical works, and authors instructed readers to behave in accordance with mystical doctrines without any expectation that readers would become experts in the broader field of Jewish mysticism. These changes became a permanent fixture of Jewish ethical writing in Eastern Europe in the early eighteenth century, in works such as Tsevi Hirsh Koidanover's *Kav ha-yashar* (1705). Koidanover used both Talmudic and kabbalistic sources to convince his readers of the importance of observing the law properly, and he enumerated the rewards awaiting the righteous and the horrors that sinners would suffer in this world and the world to come. Kabbalistic customs and doctrines, such as *gilgul neshamot* (the transmigration of souls), were presented as being of equal importance with Talmudic rabbinic traditions. Given that *Kav ha-yashar* enjoyed dozens of printings after Koidanover himself translated it into Yiddish, its influence in spreading kabbalistic ideas should not be underestimated. The advent of Hasidim in the eighteenth century only strengthened the fusion of rabbinic and kabbalistic traditions.

Ethical wills, in which parents instructed their children about proper behavior, were another means of moralizing. Sometimes such letters became full-blown monographs, the most important example of which was Yesha'yah Horowitz's *Shene luhot ha-berit* (1649), a work that was ostensibly intended only for family members but became one of the most popular ethical works of the period, especially after it was adapted and translated into Yiddish.

[The principal figures mentioned are the subject of independent biographical entries.]

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—EDWARD FRAM

#### Rabbinic Literature after 1800

The literature produced by rabbis after 1800 grew organically out of the literature produced before this date. Rabbis of the period referred (and often deferred) to the canonical works that preceded them, and they embraced all the traditional genres of the rabbinic world. At the same time, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw enormous cultural, religious, and political changes in the Jewish community and the world of Eastern Europe in general. The literature produced by the rabbinic elite could not help but be shaped by those changes in different ways. Rabbis in this period gave new form to the old genres, and pioneered new ones as they sought to maintain the (partially imaginary) supremacy of the rabbinic ways of life.

#### Bible Commentaries

As in previous generations, the Bible, especially the Torah, remained the focus

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yeshiva curriculum) and generated many new commentaries. Students of the Bible in the period beginning in the nineteenth century not only sought to understand the work of previous commentators, but also had their own contemporary needs and challenges. Already at the end of the 1700s one finds a marked shift toward focus on the plain or contextual meaning of the text (in both the German lands and Eastern Europe, especially Lithuania); this, in turn, raised significant questions about rabbinic interpretation.

The commentary of the Gaon of Vilna, although written sometime in the eighteenth century, was first published in the nineteenth century and in some ways set the agenda for Jewish Bible commentary in Lithuania right into the twentieth century. The Gaon worked hard to show the connection between the plain meaning of the text and traditional rabbinic interpretation, especially in the area of *halakhah*. Although he was also deeply interested in the Bible as a source of Kabbalah, his concern with the relationship between traditional law and the biblical text is what came to dominate the agenda of most of his successors.

Not only the influence of the Gaon, but modern forms of Judaism as well, especially in Germany, directed the attention of commentators to the authority of Jewish law as rooted in the biblical text. Me'ir Leib ben Yehi'el Mikha'el (Malbim; 1809–1879), who spent much of his career in Eastern Europe in addition to Prussia, was especially agitated by the rise of Reform Judaism in German-speaking lands, and felt it imperative to respond. To him, Reform grew out of an improper understanding of the biblical origins of Jewish law; the need was to demonstrate those origins, which he attempted to do in his commentary titled *Ha-Torah vehamitsvah*. In this work he attempted to show that the written Torah contained within it all of the subsequent conclusions that were drawn from it by the rabbis. He also made use of the commentary form to argue against some of the findings of contemporary biblical criticism, especially the assertion that the book of Isaiah was the work of at least two different hands.

Following in Malbim's footsteps was Naftali Tsevi Yehudah Berlin (1816–1893), whose Bible commentary, *Ha'amek davar*, was also devoted to showing the intimate connection between the biblical

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struction of Hebrew grammar, Berlin worked to show that the deeper meaning of the biblical text was always consistent with subsequently derived Jewish law, even as he was much more comfortable with the notion that ancient rabbis, and even contemporary rabbis, could innovate in the area of *halakhah*. Berlin relied on his notion that the Torah was best understood as analogous to a work of poetry, and therefore could naturally withstand many interpretations. The plain meaning was, at best, only one of many possible interpretations. Me'ir Simḥah ha-Kohen of Dvinsk (1843–1926) carried on in Berlin's tradition in his magisterial, posthumously published *Meshekh ḥokhmah*, which also addressed itself to questions of a philosophical nature.

Yet another work that was influenced by the Gaon of Vilna was the monumental *Torah temimah* of Barukh ha-Levi Epstein (1860–1942). In this work, the author presents his own comments on biblical verses as well as a compendium of classical interpretive teachings; the idea was to demonstrate that the Oral and Written Torahs were, in fact, one complete Torah. This work may be the most useful of the Lithuanian Torah commentaries, but it broke the least new conceptual ground, as its basic underlying thesis had already been argued a number of times before.

Greater Hungary was also home to Bible commentary. Especially worthy of note are the commentaries or compendia of rabbis Mosheh Sofer (1762–1839) and his student Mosheh Schick (1807–1879). It is difficult to isolate a single dominant theme in these works. At times they reflect a concern with the relationship between scripture and Jewish law; at other times, they are quite homiletical or, in other places, polemical.

Hasidic masters often published collections of teachings that comported with the form of classical Bible commentary: that is, the works are structured around the weekly Torah portion and often offer insight into the portion. Still, it would be difficult to consider them commentaries in the strict sense of the word. Most important in the period under consideration is the *Sefat emet* of Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger (1847–1905). This work gives voice to virtually all the major themes of Polish Hasidism, including the centrality of exemplary leadership, the holiness of the people of Israel, the transcendent experience of the Sabbath, and mystical theology in general—with each theme being

associated with some biblical passage or character.

### Responsa

Rabbis continued to write responsa with respect to all major issues of Jewish law. In many ways, the period beginning in the nineteenth century resembled the one that preceded it—but there were some important differences. For one, there was a marked decrease in questions and responses devoted to *Hoshen mishpat*, the fourth part of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, which deals with topics in civil law and finances. Presumably this was because Jewish communal autonomy was curtailed during this time frame: civil and tort cases that would once have come before a rabbinic court, and on which the court would have sought guidance from the leading lights of the age, were now frequently handled by Austrian or Russian courts. At the same time, the greater involvement of these governments in matters of marriage and divorce actually *increased* the number of questions and problems on which local rabbis would seek guidance. There was thus a rise in the number of questions relevant to *Even ha-'ezer*, the third part of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, devoted to matters of marriage and divorce.

The halakhic status of civil marriage, of married converts from Judaism, and of people sentenced to long or life sentences in Siberia who left spouses behind, among other categories, was of great concern in the responsa literature of the period. Some rabbis would achieve renown as experts on Jewish family law—such as David Friedmann of Karlin (1828–1917, generally known as Dovidl Karliner) and Yitshak Elhanan Spektor of Kovno (1817–1896), who wrote hundreds of responsa on all matters but was known to be especially sensitive to the needs of potential *'agunot* (women whose husbands were unwilling or unable to grant them a divorce); many questions were directed to him concerning this matter. Numerous questions regarding the use of birth control may also be found in the responsa literature of this period.

Beyond the increasing focus on matters of family law, the responsa of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are marked by concern over the fragmentation of Jewish life. As one would expect, the responsa literature of the rabbinic elite of Eastern Europe reflects marked hostility toward most of the era's modernizing trends. Especially prominent expressions of hostility to Reform Judaism

and the Haskalah movement are found in the responsa of the leading figures of Austrian Orthodoxy. Mosheh Sofer of Pressburg (Bratislava) and Shelomoh Kluger of Brody (1785–1869) wrote many responsa categorically rejecting virtually all changes to religious Judaism. Similar, albeit generally milder, expressions of hostility to Reform and Enlightenment world-views may be found in the responsa of Naftali Berlin of Volozhin.

One area of modernization that is generally not opposed in the responsa literature is technology and industrialization. To be sure, there were those who opposed specific applications of new technologies, such as machine-made matzot (strongly opposed by Kluger, among others), but the opposition did not revolve around a distrust of science and technology per se. Virtually all writers of responsa came to oppose the use of electricity on the Sabbath, but here too the opposition was not based on hostility to technology.

With the emergence of the *Hibat Tsiyon* (Love of Zion) movement in the 1880s, significant political questions also began to receive attention in the literature, with most rabbis expressing deep hostility to the movement, while others—including Berlin, Spektor, and Shemu'el Mohilewer of Białystok (1824–1898)—expressed support, though often with reservations. New practical questions emerged as well, most famously on the status of sabbatical-year produce from the agricultural settlements of the early Zionists. In the modern period, Jews also began serving in European militaries (in the Austrian lands from 1788, in the Russian lands from 1827); this service raised a host of questions dealt with in the responsa literature.

In earlier times, responsa collections generally came together after the author's death; only rarely did he see his material through to press. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the exception was to become the norm, as many rabbis issued their collected responsa themselves, reflecting the greater access to publishing houses that characterized the period (some, such as Spektor, ultimately published more than one collection—in his case, under different titles). At the same time, the responsa collections of Eastern Europe continued to reflect some of the communications limits of an earlier age. Quite frequently, we find local rabbis' questions directed to one of the leading lights of the generation, formulated as "In matter X I have ruled in such and such a manner; did I rule correctly?" This time-honored type of ques-

tion reflects the limits of the postal system and the inability of Jews who did not command Western languages to take advantage of telegraphy once it had reached Europe in the 1840s. Thus, as in earlier times, local rabbis often had to rely on their own learning and instincts in answering questions, and only after the fact could they determine if their ruling was approved by the dominant authority of the time and place. This often created pressure for the major respondents of the age to certify that the local rabbi had indeed ruled correctly—particularly when the ruling was irreversible, as when a divorced woman had been permitted by the local rabbi to remarry.

In addition to those already mentioned, important responsa collections were published by El'azar Flekeles of Prague (1754–1826); Akiva Eger of Posen (Poznań; 1761–1837); Menaḥem Mendel Shneerson of Lubavitch (1789–1866); Ḥayim Halberstam of Sandz (1797/99–1876); Yitshak Me'ir Rothenberg (later Alter) of Ger (1799–1866); Yosef Sha'ul Natanson of Lvov (Lwów; 1808–1875); Mosheh Schick of Huszt (1807–1879); Shalom Shvadron of Berezhan (Brzeżany; 1835–1911); Avraham Bornstein of Sokhaczew (Sochaczew; 1839–1910); Ḥayim Ozer Grodzenski of Vilna (1863–1940); and Ḥayim El'azar Shapira of Munkatsh (Munkács; 1872–1937), whose *Minḥat El'azar* contains some of the most vociferous denunciations of the Zionist movement. Some authors were not able to bring their material to press in their lifetimes, and their responsa have only recently been recovered and published. Especially of note is the *Zekher Yehosef, Even ha-'ezer* of Yosef Zekharyah of Shavl (Shavli; 1831–1903), which first appeared in print in 1994.

#### Legal Codes and Commentaries

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles' glosses and the numerous commentaries produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was well established as the primary code of Jewish law in Eastern Europe. Although the pace of commentary writing inevitably slowed, the work remained a focus of legal scholarship. Some scholars wrote additional commentaries; some wrote abridgments or (usually) simplified restatements of the primary conclusions of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*. Among commentaries, especially noteworthy are *Ketsot ha-ḥoshen* by Aryeh Leib Heller (1745–1813) and *Netivot ha-mishpat* by Ya'akov Lorbeerbaum of Lissa (1760–1832), both of which are devoted

to the fourth part of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, *Ḥoshen mishpat* (Lorbeerbaum also wrote a commentary, *Ḥavat da'at*, on the second part of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, *Yoreh de'ah*). Heller's work was characterized by penetrating logical analyses that focused exclusively on the passage under discussion; he would also, at times, seek to resolve difficulties or challenges raised by the classical commentators of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *Netivot ha-mishpat* frequently and acerbically disagreed with Heller's analyses, and was in any case more concerned with determining the foundations of practical *halakhah*.

Perhaps the most authoritative commentary to emerge in this period was the *Mishnah berurah* of Yisra'el Me'ir ha-Kohen (Kagan), better known as *Ḥafets Ḥayim* (1838–1933). The *Mishnah berurah* is a companion to the first section of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, *Oraḥ ḥayim*, summarizing the opinions of latter-day authorities and incorporating contemporary customs. It came to be widely accepted among Lithuanian and Polish Jewry—and, in more recent times, considerably beyond those communities.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing on throughout the nineteenth, there were several attempts to assemble the major halakhic opinions into simpler, more accessible compilations. Shneur Zalman of Liady (1745–1812) wrote the *Shulḥan 'arukh ha-rav*, supposedly at the request of the Magid of Mezritsh. In this work, Shneur Zalman followed the general order of the original but reorganized the subparagraphs, adding what he felt needed to be added to reflect contemporary custom (albeit, surprisingly, little of emerging Hasidic practice). He often effaced the differences between the words of Karo and Isserles, and included the conclusions of various commentators—all in a single voice, as his goal was to present the community with practical law, rather than with a focus for study. He followed the practice of Maimonides in offering a general introduction to the body of law under discussion, frequently citing a biblical verse or rabbinic homily before presenting his legal conclusions.

In Lithuania, Avraham Danzig (1748–1820) offered a summary of Jewish practice in his *Ḥaye adam* and *Hokhmat adam*, the former devoted to the first part of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, *Oraḥ ḥayim*, the latter to the second part (*Yoreh de'ah*). In these, Danzig compiled laws from the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, from the conclusions of the clas-

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conclusions drawn from responsa, as well as from his own understanding of the Talmud. *Haye Adam* was an especially popular work in Eastern Europe and went through multiple editions.

By far the most popular work of this kind was the *Kitsur Shulhan 'arukh* by Shelomoh Ganzfried of Ungvár (1804–1886), which was published in 1864. No doubt its popularity was due to its simple and accessible presentation, and to the fact that it deftly compressed the complex discussions in all four parts of the *Shulhan 'arukh* into manageably sized units; these factors made it uniquely suited to the needs of Jewish lay people. For example, the laws of tefillin in the *Shulhan 'arukh* take up 20 chapters comprising numerous sections, whereas in Ganzfried's work, all the laws of tefillin that a layman might need are presented in one chapter.

Perhaps the most complex work of this kind was the *'Arukh ha-shulhan* of Yeḥi'el Mikhl Epstein of Novogrudok (1830–1908). This was not a popularization, but rather a reformulation that followed the order of presentation of the *Shulhan 'arukh*, but whose inner organization and halakhic conclusions were based on the work of Maimonides. In the manner of Maimonides, and in keeping with the expansive focus of Lithuanian study, Epstein's work was devoted to all aspects of Jewish law, including those that were no longer practiced.

Epstein's work is emblematic in revealing the place that Maimonides occupied in Lithuanian rabbinic literature. While the authority and centrality of the *Shulhan 'arukh* went unquestioned among Jews elsewhere in Eastern Europe, among Lithuanian Torah scholars one finds less fealty to it, along with a strong recovery of the halakhic works of Maimonides, which had received diminished attention since the broad acceptance of the *Shulhan 'arukh* in the seventeenth century. Shemu'el Strashun (1793–1872), Ḥayim Soloveichik (1853–1918), Me'ir Simḥah ha-Kohen of Dvinsk, and Avraham Yesha'yahu Karelits (Ḥazon Ish; 1878–1953) all wrote commentaries on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and his halakhic work was an important focus of Naftali Berlin's commentary on the *She'iltot* as well.

#### Talmudic Commentaries and Glosses

Commentaries on the Babylonian Talmud have abounded in Jewish culture in

S Eastern Europe since the sixteenth cen-  
R tury, and this remained true throughout  
L the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Virtually every significant rabbi and head of a yeshiva wrote *hidushim* or novellae to some part or other of the Babylonian Talmud. Many of these never found their way into print, as they were hardly best-sellers and publishers were often reluctant to print them. Many are no longer extant, and we know of them only from references in other works. Others found their way into print in the postwar period. A relative handful were included in the so-called Vilna Shas, the magisterial second Romm edition of the Talmud—the glosses of Strashun and Tsevi Hirsh Chajes of Żólkiew (1805–1855) stand out—and thus became standards. The literature is vast and not readily described: many of the commentaries were quite conventional, even pedestrian, while others, especially those associated with the so-called Brisker school, broke new ground in Talmudic method. Still others, especially that of Akiva Eger of Posen, display astonishing erudition and critical insight. Eger was also the author of the most important set of glosses written in this period, published under the title *Gilyon ha-Shas*.

What distinguishes East European commentaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is the interest in previously relatively neglected texts, especially the Palestinian Talmud. While commentaries on this Talmud are far fewer in number relative to commentaries on the Babylonian Talmud in the period under discussion, the commentaries that emerged represent an important shift in rabbinic literature.

Significant interest in the Palestinian Talmud emerged in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century, with the commentaries of Mosheh Margoliot—of Keydan and Vilna, among many other places (d. 1780)—and the Gaon of Vilna. This interest flourished in the nineteenth century, especially in Lithuania, yielding numerous commentaries of various kinds. Among these, mention should be made of *No'am Yerushalayim* by Yehoshu'a Yitshak of Slonim, *Gilyon Efrayim* by Efrayim Dov Lapp of Jarosław, *Netivot Yerushalayim* by Yisra'el Ḥayim Daiches, *Perush Ridbaz* by Ya'akov David Willowsky of Slutsk (and briefly Chicago), the *Sefer nir* of Me'ir Shafit (also called Me'ir Kobrin; ca. 1800–1872), and *Meromeh sadeh* by Naftali Berlin, which also includes comments on the Babylonian Talmud.

Many of the rabbinic elite also turned their attention to other relatively neglected rabbinic works, producing numerous commentaries on ancient halakhic

and midrashic literature of the second through tenth centuries. Both halakhic and aggadic collections—including the Tosefta', *Mekhilta'*, *Sifre*, *Sifra'*, Midrash rabah, and *Pirke de-Rabi Eli'ezer*—were deemed worthy of commentary. Especially deserving of note are the many works of David Luria of Bykhov (1798–1855), who wrote extensively on virtually all of the major texts of the rabbinic corpus, and the massive commentary on the Tosefta' by Yekhezkel Abramsky (1886–1976), titled *Ḥazon Yehezkel*, one of the last great works of rabbinic scholarship produced in Soviet Russia. The first volumes appeared in 1925, and the work was completed in England after Abramsky's arrest in 1929 and deportation, after two years in Siberia, in 1931.

#### Ethical Literature

Most of the original ethical literature produced in Eastern Europe (such as the influential *Ḥeshbon ha-nefesh* of Menahem Mendel Lefin [1749–1826]) derived from Hasidic or Haskalah circles. Some of this literature is homiletic in nature, in which ethical behavior is strongly emphasized and encouraged, and some of it systematically develops ethical theories. In the latter category, mention should be made of the *Sefer ha-midot* of Naḥman of Bratslav (1772–1810)—a treatise on morals arranged alphabetically—and the widely read *Likute amarim (Tanya)* of Shneur Zalman of Liady. In addition, many of the stories that became so central to Hasidic culture contained ethical lessons within them.

Among Misnagdim, concern with ethics was also very deep, but this concern did not generally translate into the production of new literature, with the exception of the works of Yisra'el Me'ir Kagan. Rather, it mostly led to intense reflection on some of the classics of the ethical tradition from earlier times, such as the *Ḥovot ha-levavot* by Bahya ibn Pakuda' and *Mesilat yesharim* by Mosheh Ḥayim Luzzatto. Even the leaders of the Musar movement produced little in the way of new literature. What little there was, such as the short *Igeret ha-musar* of Yisra'el Salanter (1810–1883)—the first and most important work that he published in his lifetime—stressed the importance of fearing God (and fearing divine retribution) in the human ethical quest. For the most part, study of Jewish law and the Talmud was seen as the best way to achieve moral betterment. The major original author from Misnagdic and Musar circles was Yisra'el Me'ir Kagan, whose books *Ḥafets Ḥayim*, *Shemirat ha-lashon*, and *Ahavat*

*hesed* were all important works. The first two were devoted to issues of slander and gossip, a central concern of Misnagdim since the time of the Gaon of Vilna; the last deals with various aspects of charitable giving and interpersonal relations.

Among the followers of the Musar movement, as among the Hasidim, stories about the pious behavior of selected exemplars (extending back to the Gaon of Vilna) became important teaching tools, and they remain so to this day in Musar circles. A collection of these stories as told by El'azar Menahem Schach (1898–2001), and involving many of the major figures of the Misnagdic and Musar world in Eastern Europe, was published in English in 1999, translated from the Hebrew, which appeared in 1998.

#### New Genres

Beyond continuing with time-honored genres, the rabbinic elite of the age produced works that were largely without precedent in rabbinic writing. From political treatises occasioned by messianic yearning or Zionist activity; to reflections on the causes of antisemitism and the role of power in Jewish life; from autobiography to the philosophy of *halakhah*; and from polemics against modernity or in favor of some aspect of it; to essays on innumerable topics of contemporary concern—among them the proper education of boys and girls—rabbis produced them all. Rabbinic leaders also became frequent contributors to journals and newspapers—generally, but not always, to periodicals issued under the auspices of Orthodox organizations. It may truly be said that there was no aspect of Jewish life that was not reflected in some way or other in the rabbinic literature of the period after 1800.

[See also Shulhan 'Arukh; in addition, the principal figures mentioned are the subject of independent biographical entries.]

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—JAY M. HARRIS

**RABINOWITZ, SHA'UL PINHAS** (1845–1910), scholar, translator, and Zionist activist. Sha'ul (Saul) Pinhas Rab-

binowitz, known also by the acronym *Shefer* (after his initials), was born in Tau-rage, in the Kaunas (Kovno) district of Lithuania. He spent his childhood in Shnispishok (Lith., Šnipiškės), a suburb of Vilna, and in 1868 was ordained as a rabbi at Yisra'el Salanter's yeshiva in Kovno. Rabinowitz subsequently worked as a tutor in the homes of wealthy Jewish families.

In 1874, Rabinowitz published his first article, "Atsat emet" (Sincere Advice), in the Hebrew weekly *Ha-Magid*, signing his name as "Reshef" (another acronym based on his name). His article discussed a burning issue: the growth of Hebrew schools and the potential abolition of heders. In 1875, Rabinowitz settled with his family in Warsaw and began contributing to the newspaper *Ha-Tsefirah*. Between 1877 and 1881, he served as a member of the paper's editorial board and wrote its political column, *Divre ha-yamim* (Chronicles).

When pogroms broke out in Russia in the early 1880s, Rabinowitz publicized the attacks to the Western press, and was at the center of a group of writers who organized to alert the European public about Russian acts of antisemitism. Rabinowitz wrote, edited correspondence, and collected information about the violence, sending the details to newspapers abroad, mainly to the *Times* of London. [For further discussion, see the biography of Isaac Riif.]

In the wake of the pogroms, Rabinowitz initially advocated Jewish resettlement in America, but soon joined the ranks of the Hibat Tsiyon movement. Serving as secretary of the Warsaw chapter of Hoveve Tsiyon (as Hibat Tsiyon followers were known), he was instrumental in organizing the Katowice conference on Zionism in 1884. Two years later, however, internal quarrels led him to leave the chapter. He then concentrated on scientific work and political journalism.

In 1886, Rabinowitz founded the annual *Keneset Yisra'el*, publishing three volumes between 1886 and 1888, with articles on history, biblical studies, literature and literary criticism, ancient manuscripts, science, economics, and commerce. He also included columns devoted to the cause of Hibat Tsiyon and to the resettlement of the Land of Israel.

Rabinowitz's major work was his translation into Hebrew of Heinrich Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden* (History of the Jews), to which he added revisions and supplements. Rabinowitz's version, *Sefer divre yeme Yisra'el: Mi-Yom heyot Yisra'el le-'am*

*'ad yeme ha-dor ha-aḥaron* (The History Book of the Jewish Nation from the Day It Became a Nation to the Days of the Latest Generation) was issued in eight volumes between 1888 and 1899. His changes to the original reflected his desire to avoid offending Orthodox Jews and Russian censors. He also added substantial information about Jewish events in Eastern Europe.

Rabinowitz published biographies of the scholars Yom Tov Lippman (Leopold) Zunz (1897), Zacharias Frankel (1898), and of Yosel of Rosheim (1902). He created a memorial volume on the four hundredth anniversary of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, titled *Motsa'e golah* (Origins of the Exile; 1894), and a book about political and practical Zionism, called *'Al tsiyon ve-'al mikra'eha* (1898). He was a regular contributor to the column *Hashkafah kelalit* (General Outlook), in the monthly *Ha-Shiloah*. After the death of Shemu'el Yosef Fuenn in 1891, Rabinowitz completed Fuenn's dictionary of Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew. In 1907, he settled in Frankfurt, where he died three years later.

• Menuḥah Gilbo'a, *Leksikon ha-'itonut ha-'ivrit ba-me'ot ha-shemoneh 'esreh veha-tesha' 'esreh* (Tel Aviv, 1992), pp. 324–327; Getzel Kressel, *Leksikon ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ba-dorot ha-aḥaronim*, vol. 2, cols. 823–824 (Merḥavyah, Isr., 1967); Josef Meisel, *R. Sha'ul Pinhas Rabinovits (Shefer): Ha-Ish u-fo'olo* (Tel Aviv, 1943).

—ODED MENDA-LEVY

Translated from Hebrew by Rami Hann

**RABIN, YOYSEF** (1900–1987), Yiddish writer. Born in Grodno, Yoysef Rabin moved to Vilna in 1915 and studied at an evening school. As the leader of the underground Vilna Komsomol organization, he fled in 1920 to Moscow, where he worked as a Yiddish typesetter and studied at the Moscow Yiddish Printing School. In 1922, he was among the first recruits to the proletarian literary group lead by Khayim Gildin and Moyshe Taytsh.

Rabin's poems and stories soon began appearing in periodicals such as the Moscow Komsomol journal *Yungvald* (Young Forest). His poem "Lenin," published in 1924 in the Moscow daily *Der emes*, was written under the influence of Vladimir Maiakovskii's poem "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin." That same year, Rabin was among the organizers of the Yiddish section at the Moscow Association of Proletarian Writers.

Rabin studied in the Yiddish depart-