

For a Remembrance: Books So Titled as a Remembrance for the Author

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“The heritage of the Lord is children” (Psalms 127:3)

Books are titled as they are for many diverse reasons. The most obvious reason is to inform the reader as to the book’s subject matter. Hebrew books are frequently titled for other reasons, among them alluding to the author’s name or a concept or quality associated with the book or its author. Within the category of giving a book a title related to the author’s name is a lugubrious purpose, as a remembrance for the writer in the absence of more common remembrances, such as offspring, to perpetuate the author’s name.

This article describes several books so titled, one with a positive outcome. The works, all, with two exceptions, printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are in chronological order. “For a Remembrance” is one of several articles describing how books are titled; varying from the other articles which either address titles based on biblical phrases or diverse books sharing the same title or theme.² Various con-

¹ I would like to thank Eli Genauer for reading the manuscript and his comments. Images reproduced in this article are courtesy of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad Ohel Yosef Yitzhak, National Library of Israel.

² My other articles on titling Hebrew books are “*Adderet Eliyahu*: A Study in the Titling of Hebrew Books,” in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2008) pp. 72–91; “What’s in a Name? An example of the Titling of Hebrew Books,” in *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2013), pp. 371–94; “*Keter Shem Tor*: A Study in the Entitling of Books, Here Limited to One Title Only;” and “Verses from Shir ha-Shirim (Song of Songs): Entitling Hebrew Books” (*Essays on the Making of the Early Hebrew Book*, forthcoming).

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ventions are followed in naming books, employing biblical phrases, *gematriot* (numerical values and hermeneutical interpretation based on the numerical value of letters), parent's or relative's names, initial words, and other naming devices. This article, as noted above, addresses books named for melancholic reasons.

The subject of book titles has been addressed elsewhere.³ Abraham Yaari wrote an article on books titled as a remembrance, which begins,

Many Hebrew books were written or printed because the authors did not have the merit to have offspring and wanted to leave over their name in their books. They relied on this from the words of our sages in tractate *Sanbedrin* (93b), "What is the meaning of the phrase 'an everlasting name that shall not be excised' (Isaiah 56:5)? ... A writer who did not have the merit to raise a generation, or the merit of a male heir, or who had sons who died, wrote and printed books so that he should have 'a remnant in Israel' (cf. Jeremiah 6:9, 31:7, Zephaniah 3:13, Micah 2:12, Ezekiel 9:8, 11:13) and his name should not be cut off."⁴

We look at several of these works titled as a remembrance, several in some detail, with bibliographic descriptions, to appreciate the nature of the works brought by the authors for a remembrance. One exception is a work relative not to an individual but to a community devastated by an earthquake. Portions of entries referring to loss and remembrance are highlighted in the text.

³ The subject of Hebrew book titles is a popular one. Several other articles address the subject, among them Abraham Berliner, "*Shemot Sefarim Ivrim*," in *Ketavim Nivharim II* (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 147–61 [Hebrew]; Joshua Bloch, "Some Odd Titles of Hebrew Books," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 41:10 (New York, October, 1937, reprinted in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography*, New York, 1976), pp. 151–55; Solomon Schechter, "Titles of Jewish Books," in *Studies in Judaism, First Series* (1896, reprint Philadelphia, 1938), pp. 270–281; and an entire book on the subject, *Menahem Mendel Slatkine, Shemot ha-Sefarim ha-Ivrim: Lefi Sugebem ha-Sbonim, Tikhunatam u-Te'udatam* (Neuchâtel-Tel Aviv, 1950–54) [Hebrew].

⁴ Abraham Yaari, "Name and Remnant," *Studies in Hebrew Booklore* (Jerusalem, 1958), p. 114 [Hebrew].

Toledot Yitzhak. Torah commentary emphasizing the literal meaning, but also including allegorical and kabbalistic interpretations by R. Isaac ben Joseph Caro (mid-fifteenth – after 1518). First printed in Constantinople at the press of Solomon ben Mazel Tov as a quarto (4^o: 100 ff.) and completed, according to the colophon, on Wednesday, the 18th of “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine (Elul),” (Song of Songs 6:3), in the year, “Blessed ברוכים (278 = 1518) be you of the Lord (1518),” (Samuel I: 23:21 and Psalms 115:15). *Toledot Yitzhak* was reprinted four times in the sixteenth century.

Isaac Joseph Caro, uncle of R. Joseph Caro (1488–1575) was born to a distinguished family in Toledo, where he headed a yeshivah. Prior to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Caro, together with his yeshivah, relocated to Portugal. He recounts, in the introduction to *Toledot Yitzhak*, what befell him there six years later. In 1497, conversionary decrees were issued against the Jews by the king of Portugal. Caro lost all of his sons, but was able to escape to Constantinople, where he served as a rabbi. We can still hear his anguish when he writes,



1518, *Toledot Yitzhak*

“And I said, Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then I would fly away, and be at rest” (Psalms 55:7). “Blessed be the Lord; for he has marvelously shown me his loving kindness [in a besieged city]” (Ps. 31:22), “and he shall pass through the sea with affliction” (Zechariah 10:11), for “it is beyond the sea” (Deuteronomy 30:13). And I fled to Turkey for a succor. “My iniquities have gone over my head,” (Ps. 38:5) **all my male children have gone to the grave, the old and the young, their visage as the sons of kings.**

Caro continues, paraphrasing Rashi (*Noah* 6:9), that a person’s primary offspring are good deeds, and nothing is better than Torah. He concludes, therefore, he should publish his commentary, which is “sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psalms 19:11). A second reason is to cleave to the Divine presence, for Torah provides completeness in This World and in the World to Come, as it says, “for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day” (Deuteronomy 6:24).

The title page of the Mantua edition erroneously states that Isaac Caro was the grandfather of Joseph Caro, an error often repeated. Isaac Caro raised his nephew, Joseph Caro, whose father had died at an early

age. The latter often refers to his uncle with great affection and admiration, in terms that may have led to the misunderstanding.

Toledot Yitzhak is written in a concise but clear style. This, the first edition is noteworthy, in that it was issued in segments, that is, the author distributed portions of the book to the buyers weekly. Isaac Caro's intention was to resettle in Eretz Israel, but whether he did so is not known. His responsa are unpublished, although several are to be found in Joseph Caro's *Avkat Rokhel* (Salonika, 1791). He also wrote novellae on *Ketubbot*, and other works, which remain in manuscript.

Ohel Ya'akov. Our next title, *Ohel Ya'akov*, is a commentary on the *Ikkarim* of R. Joseph Albo (c. 1380–1444) by R. Jacob ben Samuel Bunim Koppelman (1555–1594). *Ohel Ya'akov* was first printed in Freiberg-im-Breisgau in 1584 at the press of Ambrosius Froben by his master printer, Israel ben Daniel Zifroni, as an octavo (8^o: 34 ff.).

Koppelman is reported to have been born in Freiburg, but several sources refer to him as Jacob Koppelman of Brisk and he refers to himself in that manner. Similarly, different dates are given for him, varying from 1555–1594 to 1556–1612.⁵ Koppelman was an erudite and multifaceted scholar. He studied under R. Mordecai Jaffe (Levush, c. 1535–1612) and also studied astronomy and mathematics. Koppelman relocated to Frankfurt on the Main, but was forced to leave that city in 1583 on account of the plague. He was also the author of several varied works, such as *Mishlei Shu'alim* (Freiberg, 1583), a Yiddish translation of Berechiah ha-Nakdan's (12th–13th century) popular collection of fables; *Targum shel Hamesh Megillot bi-Leshon Ashkenaz* (Freiberg, 1585), a rhymed Yiddish translation of the Megillot; and *Omeke Halakhab* (Cracow, 1598), an elucidation of “the laws appertaining to *Kilayim*, *Erwin*, etc., with the aid of diagrams and models . . .”⁶

The title page of *Ohel Ya'akov* begins with the heading, “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, [and your tabernacles, O Israel]” (Numbers 24:5). The brief text states that it is “a commentary and elucidation of

⁵ Jacob Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity: Late Sixteenth Century Jewish Literature in Poland and Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), p. 146 [Hebrew]; Abraham Yaari, “Books Written in a Time of Plague,” *Studies in Hebrew Booklore* (Jerusalem, 1958), p. 93 [Hebrew].

⁶ *Ohel Ya'akov* and Koppelman's other works are addressed in greater detail by Marvin J. Heller, “Jacob ben Samuel Bunim Koppelman: A Sixteenth Century Multi-Faceted Jewish Scholar,” *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (Mainz, 2018), pp. 195–207.

the *Sefer Ikkarim* of Albo. Written by the complete scholar and divine philosopher Jacob bar Samuel called Koppelman from Brisk.” It is followed by the introduction, which begins, “For the Lord has chosen Jacob to himself, and Israel for his own possession” (Psalms 135:4). “The spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and in my tongue was his word” (Samuel II 23:2)... And the people went out “and from there it was divided, and became four rivers” (Genesis 2:10) comparable to the four brothers, one wise, those are the great scholars; second is the wicked, the ignorant who abhor the word of the Lord; third is the simple ...” Koppelman continues the Passover parable, noting that he examines with the light of a candle, not a torch, reaching into cracks and holes, with wax that does not drip. The commentary is understandable without difficulty, of value to each of the groups represented by the four sons. The advent of the plague in Frankfurt is mentioned, Koppelman writing,

It came to pass that when I was in Frankfurt the plague broke out. I said if it comes to the city we will perish, if I leave the city perhaps misfortune will befall me on the way. Therefore, for this reason I can't leave or come. I said in my heart, I will fall now into the hand of the Lord for great are His mercies, and I will write this work. **If I die it will be a remembrance for my name before the Lord continually**, for my intent is to merit the public and to quench the thirst of my students who have requested that I explain to them the words of R. Joseph Albo.

Albo's *Ikkarim* was selected for its words are upright and “there is no blemish in [it]” (Song of Songs 4:6). This is followed by the introduction in which Koppelman discusses his commentary. *Ohel Ya'akov* was completed on *erev Pesah*, 14 Nissan, 343 (April 6, 1583), when Koppelman was twenty-eight, and printed in 1584. The text, on selected passages of the *Ikkarim*, is made up of four *ma'amarim*, subdivided into 105 chapters. It concludes, “Until here did I see [a need] to comment, the remainder requires no commentary.” The commentary is generally brief, with only a few long passages. Use is made of the *Moreh Nevukhim*; there are rare references to Kabbalah. The text is accompanied by charts and illustrations. *Ohel Ya'akov* was reprinted in Cracow in 1599. The text of that edition is a copy of this edition, line for line exact, reproducing all of the illustrations, omitting the hand pointers only.

Kevod Elohim. Philosophical book on diverse subjects in which the author, R. Abraham ben Isaac ha-Levi ibn Migash (16th cent.), also describes his travels and the customs he has witnessed. *Kevod Elohim* is Ibn Migash's only published work, completed on 11 Nissan 341 (Wednes-

day, March 25, 1581). It was printed in Constantinople at the press of Solomon and Joseph Jabez as a quarto (4^o: 183 ff.). The title page dates “The beginning of the work was 15 Adar I in the year “[The staff shall not depart from Judah, nor the scepter from between his feet], until Shiloh שילה (345 = Thursday, February 14, 1585) come” (Genesis 49:10) and the colophon dates completion to Wednesday, Rosh Hodesh Heshvan 5386 (October 24, 1585).

Ibn Migash, descended from R. Joseph ben Meir Migash (1077–1174), was a physician and Talmudist, and served as court physician to Sultan Suleiman the Great, even accompanying his army into Syria. He was requested by the Jews of Damascus to settle in that city, which he did, and corresponded with R. Joseph Caro, being mentioned in the latter’s responsa, *Avkat Rokhel* (n. 27). The text of the title page, surrounded by a border of floral florets, states,

Written by the sage, the physician, Abraham ibn Migash ha-Levi and printed in the house of the author with the assistance of his wife, a woman of valor, Esther, “blessed shall she be above women in the tent” (Judges 5:24), whom he instructed prior to his death saying you shall not pass over nor depart from the mitzvah, neither to the right nor to the left without fulfilling his good word which he told her to publish this unknown book, for which he will be mentioned and praised, to be for him “a remainder upon the earth” (Samuel II 14:7), which is “better than sons and daughters” (Isaiah 56:5) for “the main offspring of the righteous are their mitzvot and good deeds” (Rashi on Genesis 6:9), “if a righteous person is punished on earth” (Proverbs 11:31) “and the study of Torah is equal to them all” (*Peab* 1:1, *Shabbat* 127a, and *Kiddushin* 39a and 40b), “and eat and live forever” (Genesis 3:23). **This is his name and this is his remembrance for he has no sons.** And the words of the sage her husband, the crown of her head, Esther did after his death. “Esther . . . as when she was brought up with him” (Esther 2:20), while he was alive, “She girds her loins with strength, and makes her arms strong” (Proverbs 31:17) to fulfil the command of her lord. . . . The beginning of the work was 15 Adar I in the year “[The staff shall not depart from Judah, nor the scepter from between his feet], until Shiloh שילה (345=Thursday, February 14, 1585) come” (Genesis 49:10).

There is a detailed table of contents (2a–13b), verse (14a) in praise of the book from ibn Migash formed from an acrostic of his name, the author’s introduction (14b–17a), and the text, which is divided into three *ma’amarim*, subdivided into chapters. The contents enumerate ninety-

nine chapters but the last thirteen chapters of the third *ma'amar* are headings only as ibn Migash did not complete them.

Among the varied matters ibn Migash discusses are transmigration, which he strongly disputes, the eternity of the Torah, disputations with Christians, and the effects of the reformation on Christianity, which he believed should cause Protestants, splintered and lacking form, to accept Judaism. Among the customs he witnessed on his travels and described in *Kevod Elohim* are those of the Kurds and Druze. This is the only work of ibn Migash's to be published, although he mentions three other works in *Kevod Elohim* that he has written.

Matteh Moshe. Halakhic compendium by R. Moses ben Abraham Mat of Przemysl (c. 1540–c. 1606). *Matteh Moshe* was published in Cracow at the press of Isaac ben Aaron Prostitz in the year “Happy is the man אִנְיָ (351=1591) who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; [who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil]” (Isaiah 56:2) as a quarto (4^o: 213 ff.).

Mat, the leading student of R. Solomon Luria (Maharshal, 1510–73) was born in Przemysl, where his father, Abraham, אֲבִי (may God avenge his blood), died a martyr's death. He served as rabbi in Belz, where he had many students, leaving because of the difficult times to live privately by his father-in-law in Vladimir-Volynski, where *Matteh Moshe* was completed in 1585. Called back to the rabbinate, Mat served in Przemysl, from 1597 in Lyuboml, and afterwards as rabbi of Opatow and the district of Cracow. The family name, Mat (מת), presumably stands for *Marbitzei Torah* (disseminators of the Torah) or *Mahzikei Torah* (supporters of the Torah). However, given the meaning of מת, dead, contemporaries preferred to call him *Moshe Ish Hai* (Moses, a valiant man, based on “Benayahu... a valiant man” [Samuel II 23:20]).

Matteh Moshe is a halakhic work encompassing daily routine, the Jewish year, and occurrences, such as birth, death, and matters between them. It has ethical content and descriptions of customs, to which Moses places great value, providing sources and reasons. Sections are introduced by considerable expository material, including *gematriot*. These last features, unusual for such a work, add to its interest and value. The halakhic positions and customs expressed in the book follow the teachings of the Maharshal. *Matteh Moshe*, a highly regarded work, is often quoted by later authorities.

The title page has an architectural border with standing representations of the mythological figures of Mars and Minerva, above them vines and fruits. This non-Jewish motif was used by Hebrew printers in Italy,

who were not allowed to own a press at that time; in order to print Hebrew books they associated with gentile partners. The latter owners of the presses where Hebrew printers published their books, supplied their Jewish partners with ornamental frames. The Jewish printers used these frames; it was cost effective to do so, rather than incurring the expense of making different ornamental borders for the smaller Jewish market. The Mars and Minerva frame, as in this case, was also used, but less so, in Poland.⁷



1591, *Matteh Moshe*

⁷ Concerning the use of that frame see Marvin J. Heller, "Mars and Minerva on the Hebrew Title Page," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 98:3 (New York, N.Y.: 2004), pp. 269–92, reprinted in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2008) pp. 1–17.

On the verso of the title page are several lines of verse by Shabbetai Sofer in praise of the book; then two pages of the author's introduction, a list of the contents, and, beginning on 14a, the text. *Matteh Moshe* (the staff of Moses) is so named for four reasons, 1) "with this my staff I crossed the stormy sea of this world . . ." 2) as the rabbis said "Happy is he who comes here with his learning in his hand," that is, everyone has to give an account of themselves. When asked what he has in his hands he will reply a staff, as the staff of Moses, 3) every man must inscribe his name in a book, and 4) the book is divided into three parts, Torah [study], service [of God], and kind deeds (*Pirkei Avot* 1:2). Service, dealing with prayers, benedictions, and holidays, has, as Mat constructs it, a numerical value of *Matteh Moshe*.

Matteh Moshe concludes sadly, for in the colophon Moses Mat informs that he has called the book after his name for a remembrance and a comfort for the loss of his son, writing,

He "has not withheld His steadfast faithfulness" (Genesis 24:27) from His servant Moses, whom He has enabled to complete this work titled with my name . . . and I have done so that my name will be mentioned for this is my remembrance and **this is my name and "my comfort for the sorrow" (cf. Genesis 5:29) of my sons whom the Lord has taken from me.** I ask from God, "my rock and Redeemer" (Psalms 19:15) that He comfort and merit me with lasting male (*anashim*) offspring that I am able to delight in . . . and if not by my merit may God remember the merit of my holy father R. Abraham. . . .

His entreaty was apparently fulfilled, for *Ho'il Moshe* (Prague, 1611), Moses Mat's super-commentary on Rashi's Torah commentary, has an introduction from R. Abraham ben Moses, the author's son.

Mat's other works are *Taryag Mitzvot* (Cracow, 1581), a versified enumeration of the 613 commandments, written at the age of 22; an index to *Ein Ya'akov*, printed with the 1587 Cracow edition of that work; and *Minbagei Maharshal*, printed in Jacob R. Zemah's *Nagid u-Mezavveh* (Przemysl, 1870); responsa and correspondence quoted by R. Joel Sirkes (Baḥ, 1541–1640) and Benjamin Aaron Solnik (c. 1550–c. 1619); and novellae mentioned by him in his books but never published.

Benei Aharon. Responsa on *Hoshen Mishpat* by R. Aaron ben Isaac Lapapa (c. 1604–1667) of Izmir. *Benei Aharon* was published in Izmir by Kaf Nahat, the press of Abraham ben Jedidiah Gabbai as a folio (20: [3], 158 ff.). The title page of *Benei Aharon* has the three-crown pressmark used by Gabbai. This device was first used by Aluise Bragdine (1550–

1554 and 1564–75) in Venice and subsequently by the Gabbai family. It is dated “eternal right of redemption גאלת (434=1674)” (Leviticus 25:32).

Lapapa, a student of R. Isaac Afomado, R. Abraham Motal (1568–1658), and R. Joseph di Trani (1568–1639, Maharit), was the son-in-law of R. Solomon Algazi (1673–1762). He was born in Magnesia, where he first served as rabbi without compensation and headed a prominent yeshivah. In 1665, he succeeded R. Joseph Escapa (*Rosh Yosef*, 1570–1662) as rabbi in Izmir, serving jointly with R. Hayyim Benveniste. When Shabbetai Zevi proclaimed that he was the Messiah in 1665, Lapapa was among his strongest opponents, excommunicating him and sentencing him to death. Shabbetai Zevi and his followers forced Lapapa to leave Izmir, and even after Shabbetai Zevi’s apostasy his devotees would not allow Lapapa to be reinstated.

The title page informs that it is responsa to queries concerning *Tur Hoshen Mishpat*. By publishing *Benei Abaron* posthumously the publishers pray that they have the merit to see the hidden light in his treasury of responsa on *Tur O. H.*, *Y. D.* and *E. E.*, which they wish to bring to press so that “his lips move in the grave” (cf. *Yevamot* 97a, *Sanhedrin* 90b). The title page is followed by introductions (approbations) from a student of the author, R. Judah ben Isaac Lapapa, the author’s brother who brought *Benei Abaron* to press and prepared the index; R. Abraham di Boton (c. 1545–1588); R. Jacob ibn Na’im, the author’s son-in-law and student; R. Solomon ben Moses ibn Ezra, employed at the press; R. Solomon Algazi, the author’s father-in-law; and the publisher, Abraham Gabbai.

Judah Lapapa writes that *Benei Abaron* is so titled, **to be a remembrance for him (Aharon), in place of sons**, and those who learn from



1674, *Benei Abaron*,
Aaron ben Isaac Lapapa, Izmir

it will be better for him than many sons (see *Yevamot* 97a, *Sanhedrin* 90b, and *Bekhorot* 31b), also praising ibn Na'im. The latter recounts the travail that Lapapa encountered in his later years.

The responsa in *Benei Aharon* encompass laws of partnership, buying and selling, fraud, possession, agency, loans, orphans and inheritance, rental, deposits, fines, and oaths. The volume concludes with an index. This is the only edition of *Benei Aharon*. Aaron's novellae on *Orah Hayyim* and *Yoreh De'ab* were published in R. Baruch Kalomiti's discourses and responsa, *Avak Derakhim* (Salonika, 1814). Other works, including a commentary on R. Jeroḥam ben Meshullam's (1290–1350) *Toledot Adam ve-Havvah*, remain unpublished.

Ha-Eshel. Discourses on the weekly Torah readings in *Beresbit* by R. Asher Jacob Abraham ben Aryeh Leib Kalmankes (d. 1681). *Ha-Eshel* was published in Lublin at the press of Solomon Zalman Kalmankes as a folio (2^o: 26 ff.). *Ha-Eshel* is undated and the accepted date, 1678, while an approximation, appears reasonable from the approbations, of which there are nine, dating from 1671 through 1678. The title page has the heading, "This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter" (Psalms 118:20) and the title, *Zeb Sefer ha-Eshel*, and states that it is a commentary in which difficulties in many Midrashim are resolved. The title is from "And Abraham planted a grove (*eshel*) in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God" (Genesis 21:33).

Kalmankes, a grandson of R. Joseph Kalmankes of Lublin, was a kabbalist, known for issuing *Ma'ayan ha-Hokhmah* (Amsterdam, 1652), an introductory work on Kabbalah. There is an introduction from Kalmankes. Writing in a personal vein, he informs that he was without means and could not afford to print the book, and that he came to Lublin where the press belonged to a cousin of his grandfather Kalmankes, who enabled him to publish it. "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar" (Genesis 28:22) **to be a remembrance for his name.** Kalmankes states here that he named the book *ha-Eshel* because the sages (*Yalkut Shimoni* Psalms 110) explain *eshel* אשל (in the verse in Genesis) as referring to אכילה eating, שתיה drinking, and לוויה accompanying. It is his intention to return on the way that he came, that is to Jerusalem, and attend to the tent of his Torah in Jerusalem, for already the hairs of his head and beard are white.

On the page facing the first text page is the device of a man by a well with a bucket with winged figures at the sides and the words *Keter Torah* at the top. This device is similar to the mark on the title page of

several books printed in Lublin decades earlier, among them tractate *Bava Kamma* (Lublin/Cracow, 1646–48, above) begun in Lublin by Zevi ben Abraham Kalonymous Jaffe and completed in Cracow by Naḥum Meisels.



1678, *Ha-Eshel*

The text encompasses all of *Beresbit* and includes explanations of *ag-gadot* that Kalmankes heard from his grandfather R. Joseph Kalmankes. This is the only edition of *ha-Eshel*.

Adderet Eliyahu. R. Elijah Ḥayyim ben Naḥum Rabbinovitz of Turets completed, according to the colophon of his edition of *Adderet Eliyahu*, his work on the laws of *Shebitah*, on Tuesday, 23 *Marḥeshvan*, כַּאֲדַרְתָּ (625=Tuesday, 22 November 1864). The book is comprised of the text of the *Shulḥan Arukh Y.D.* and two commentaries, *Yad Eliyahu* and *Me-keor Ḥayyim*, the former Rabbinovitz’s novellae on the subject, the latter his explanation of the subject based on their sources from the Talmud to the present, arranged about the text like Rashi and *Tosafot*. The book’s numerous approbations are followed by a long introduction by Rabbinovitz, in which he informs that,

Due to בעוה"ר [my many iniquities] **I did not merit to have any children, neither a son nor a daughter**; therefore my heart trembled (cf. I Samuel 4:13) and “the hair of my [head] stood up” (cf.

Job 4:15) for how will I come before the King, Lord of hosts “clothed with sackcloth” (Esther 4:2) that I have made for my soul with my wicked deeds. I am impoverished, without Torah, wisdom, or good deeds to safeguard me. What will He make of a “rotten wood” (Job 41:19) such as I on the day that I have to give an accounting in the underworld. What Torah and *mitzvot* will shield me? And who will be for me for a remembrance **for I did not merit children** occupied in Torah and *mitzvot*, that their merit should raise me “up from the gruesome pit, out of the miry clay” (Psalms 40:3)...

And I searched to find any cure or remedy for the affliction of my desolate soul and spirit, until the Lord enlightened my eyes and I found a modest alleviation to my abject condition in the words of our sages (*Yevamot* 96b): “R. Judah said in the name of Rav, ‘I will abide in your tent forever’ (Psalms 61:5). Can a person reside in two worlds? What David said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, May it be Your will, that something be said in my name in this world, so that my lips will move in the grave, for as R. Johanan stated in the name of R. Simeon ben Jehozadak, every sage in whose name something is repeated in this world, his lips, etc. R. Isaac ben Ze’ira said, from the verse, ‘And the roof of your mouth like the best wine [for my beloved, that goes down sweetly, causing the sleepers’ lips to murmur]’ (Song of Songs 7:10)...”

Kelal Katan. A very different work is *Kelal Katan*, kabbalistic discourses on *parashat Haazinu* (Deuteronomy 32), by Mattathias Lieberman ben Benjamin Wolf Bloch (ca. 1610/1620–ca. 1668), published by Abraham Franco in Constantinople in 1665 as a quarto (40: 16 ff.). Bloch is primarily remembered today for his important role in the Shabbatean movement. Born to an influential Cracow family—his grandfather was one of the community’s *parnasim* (benefactors)—Bloch studied under Rabbi Menahem Mendel Krochmal (ca. 1600–1661) and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (d. 1664).

After his experiences during the Chmielnicki massacres of



1665, *Kelal Katan*

1648–1649 (*taḥ ve-taḥ*), Bloch determined to go up to Eretz Israel. On the way he met, either in Constantinople or Izmir, Shabbetai Zevi, becoming one of that false prophet's leading adherents. Zevi gave Bloch the title King Asa and appointed him the Shabbatean representative in Egypt, where because of his learning he was called a *gaon* (mastermind). After Shabbetai Zevi's apostasy Bloch relocated to Iraq, serving as a *dayan* and continuing to support the Shabbatean movement. *Kelal Katan* was published by Bloch on the way to Eretz Israel.

In his introduction, Bloch informs that he wrote a desirable interpretation in the manner of *sod* on the entire Torah, **calling it after his name *Matat yahu*; it should be a remembrance for him after his death.** It is titled *Kelal Katan* because it is one part of his *Kelal Gadol* on every *parashah*. Because of what befell him he lacked the money to publish the entire work, so that he is printing this one discourse delivered on *Shabbat Teshuvah* in 1620 in the city of Yas in the synagogue of Rabbi Isaac Moses Rofe ben Abraham Crispin. There are pages of verse with allusions to the Chmielnicki massacres (*taḥ ve-taḥ*) and a testament to his son. The initial letters of alternating stanzas on the first page of verse are an acrostic of Mattathias Lieberman, beginning, “Why then does a living man complain” (Lamentations 3:39), “in that his throat is open like a sepulcher” (see Jeremiah 5:16). The initial letters of the first column in the second page are alphabetic, the second column spelling Lieberman ben Rabbi Wolf Bloch.

Shever ba-Metzarim. Another very different work, this focused on a community rather than an individual, *Shever ba-Metzarim* is prayers and an account of a devastating earthquake at Leghorn. Published in Livorno by Abraham ben Raphael Meldola in 1742, also the author and editor, as a sextodecimo (16^o: [22] ff.).

Livorno (Leghorn) is the port city of Tuscany, Italy. Significant Jewish residence dates to the last decades of the sixteenth century, when the Medici encouraged Marranos to settle in order to promote the growth and prosperity of the city. Livorno soon became one of the more prosperous cities in Italy. For centuries it was the center of Hebrew presses, beginning with that of Jedidiah ben Isaac Gabbai in 1650. His press was so named after his father Isaac ben Solomon's commentary on Mishnayot, *Kaf Nahat* (Venice, 1609). There is still a Hebrew press active in Livorno today, that of Salomone Belforte & Co. Publisher and Booksellers.

In January 1742, from the 5th (Friday, 29 Tevet 5502) through the 16th (Tuesday, 11 Shevat), Livorno experienced a series of earthquakes which, it is reported, left no major building undamaged. These earth-

quakes were significant enough to be the subject of a pamphlet by a Mr. Horton, Schoolmaster at Hampton, then Chaplain to the British factory in Leghorn, published in London, and noted in another pamphlet by Z. Grey on earthquakes published in Cambridge, both in 1750.⁸ The Jewish community memorialized the earthquakes in a small book (16^o, [22] ff.) of prayers (*tehinnot*) in 1742, the year of the earthquakes, titled *Shever ba-Metzarim*. The title-word, *metzarim* (troubles, distress) is vocalized, for unvocalized it can be read as *Mitzrayim* (Egypt), as the title page elaborates:

Prayers and supplications at a time of wrath, in the days of earthquakes. It is titled *Shever ba-Metzarim*, an allusion that in the year *Shever שבר* (502=1742), that is here in *Mitzrayim* (Egypt), from the implication that *shever* is a language of hope, expectation, of trust, that even though a sharp sword rests on the neck of a person he should not despair of mercy, for as our eyes saw how the Holy One, blessed is He, broke the strength of the *Mitzrim* (Egyptians) and delivered and redeemed us from all “trouble and anguish” (Isaiah 30:6, Proverbs 1:27); furthermore, that *shever* is a language of acquisition, as it says of Jacob, our patriarch, when he “saw that there was grain in Egypt (*shever be-Mitzrayim*) [Jacob] said to his sons [Why do you look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt (*shever be-Mitzrayim*); get down there, and buy for us from there; that we may live, and not die” (Genesis 42:1–2). As there was grain (hope) for you in *Mitzrayim* so this book, *Shever ba-Metzarim*, informs that Israel has no strength but in his mouth (prayer), “The voice is Jacob’s voice” (Genesis 27:22), and the Holy One, blessed is He, desires the prayers of the righteous.

The author (editor) of *Shever ba-Metzarim*, Raphael ben Eliezer Meldola, begins with a detailed and moving account of the earthquake, describing it in the first thirteen leaves of the book, mentioning several times the activities and prayers of R. Malachi ben Jacob, one of the community’s *parnasim*, as well as that of the Duke, lord of the land. Mel-

⁸ Rev. Mr. Horton, *An account of the earthquakes which happened at Leghorn in Italy, between the 5th and 16th of January, 1742* (London, 1750); Zachary Grey, *A Chronological and Historical Account of the Most Memorable Earthquakes that have Happened in the World, from the Beginning of the Christian Period to the Present Year 1750* (Cambridge, 1750), pp. 76–78.

dola's account is followed by *Selivot* and prayers, and includes *piyyutim* written at the time of earlier earthquakes, in Lugo (1688) and in Ancona (1690), by R. Johanan Ghiron (1646–1716), rabbi in Florence, and known as *Aluf Torah* due to his great erudition. The colophon records the corrector as R. Moses ben Raphael Meldola.

Nahalat Ya'akov. Our final work is *Nahalat Ya'akov*, a commentary on four minor tractates, *Sofrim*, *Semakhot*, *Kallah*, and *Gerim*, by R. Jacob Naumberg. *Nahalat Ya'akov* was printed in Fürth in 1793 by Isaac ben David Zirndorfer as a folio (20: [2], 48 ff.). The title page is dated with the chronogram “You will keep faith with Jacob תתן אמת ליעקב (553 = 1793)” (Micah 7:20). The colophon informs that work was completed in Elul in the year הגאולה לע"ת (550 = 1790), this more than a year earlier than the date on the title page.

Naumberg, a grandson of R. Jonah Te'omim (*Kikayon de-Yonah*, d. 1669), served as rabbi in Mayence and Offenbach. In addition to *Nahalat Ya'akov*, Naumberg also wrote *Hiddushim* on the Torah, *Hiddushim* on *Midrash Rabbah*, and three volumes of the discourses he delivered in Mayence and Offenbach, all in manuscript. In the introduction to *Nahalat Ya'akov*, Naumberg notes that he also wrote *Nahalat Ya'akov* on *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*.⁹


The title page of *Nahalat Ya'akov*, set in a border of florets, is comprised of two paragraphs. The first paragraph states:

“This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord” (Isaiah 54:17), which the Lord gave as an inheritance to Jacob his servant “as an inheritance to those who love Me” (cf. Proverbs 8:21), there is a multitude of goodness. A commentary on the *Massekhtot Ketanot*, to illuminate the land and on it to dwell. To first explain *Massekhet Sofrim* and afterward to clearly elucidate all the stringencies of *M. Semahot* . . . “There are four things on earth which are small, but they are exceedingly wise” (Proverbs 30:24). Until now they were left in a corner (cf. *Shabbat* 125a, *Eruvin* 120a, *Bezah* 28b) for its pathways were corrupt due to the many errors and inaccuracies. This author strove to find a level way (cf. Jeremiah 18:15) to remove the impediments, to show the way for each chapter and *halakhab*, in the sea of the Talmud of the *halakhab*. Also added is

⁹ Fuenn, *Keneset Yisrael*, 556.

Massekhet Gerim which, until now “the eye has not seen” (Isaiah 64:3) for it was closed and obscured, and “mighty waters cannot” (Song of Songs 8:7) relate and enumerate. The author has looked and searched, as he relates in the introduction.

In the introduction, Naumberg informs that he has titled this work *Nahalat Ya'akov* in accordance with the verse “the heritage of the Lord is children’ (Psalms 127:3), and **because “I have not merited until now to have children, this commentary and work will be a merit for my soul and considered as children.** Through this work I will be among those who merit the multitude to learn these tractates. Therefore, I have called it *Nahalat Ya'akov* for ‘this was my portion for all my labor’ (Ecclesiastes 2:10). ” Naumberg then gives a second reason for titling this work *Nahalat Ya'akov*, with an involved *gematria*, based on *mispar katan* (small value, i.e., truncated zeros) of the two words *Nahalat* and *Ya'akov*, which then have the value of his name and that of his father, which is given as יעקב בן ר ברוך.

Ten varied works, all issued as a remembrance, are described in this article. Most deal with the loss or lack of children. One, with the devastation resulting from an earthquake. The books themselves are comprised of Torah commentaries, philosophic and halakhic works, responsa, and novellae. What they have in common is that each, in its individual way, is a remembrance of sorrow or lack. 



1793, *Nahalat Ya'akov*