

the "well-born," wealthy communal leaders, and rabbinic families created an exclusive "aristocracy" in Poland-Lithuania, contributing to a growing gap between rich and poor. For example, the Landau family of Opatów, which included prominent rabbis in at least 20 towns, communal elders, and leaders throughout Poland, retained its influence for almost a century.

Another way to acquire *yikhes* was through knowledge of magic and practical mysticism. The activities of Yo'el Ba'al Shem II, who died in the 1750s, were bolstered by his well-known *yikhes*—a lineage of healers who transmitted amulets and knowledge from generation to generation.

Among Hasidim, *yikhes* played a central role in establishing leadership and hereditary succession. The Ba'al Shem Tov, as was true of a number of early leaders, lacked *yikhes*; however, he married into a prestigious family. Hasidic dynasties generally only chose rebbes from the descendants of their founders. Yisra'el of Ruzhin (1796–1850), despite his lack of education, ascended to his position as rebbe because of his notable *yikhes* and charisma. To be sure, some rebbes, such as Levi Yitshak of Barditshev (Berdichev; ca. 1740–1809), stressed the importance of one's merit as well as "that of his holy ancestors"; however, in reality, lineage was critical for Hasidic leaders to retain their legitimacy and prestige.

During the imperial Russian period, *yikhes* remained an important consideration in marital decisions. Yekhezkl Kotik (1847–1921) recalled how his grandfather, Arn Leyzer (who was a communal elder in Kamenets, later the town's tax collector, and then a leaseholder), "despaired of having his children marry into families of great rabbinical pedigree." He succeeded, however, in arranging a match for his son Mosheh (Yekhezkl's father) with Sarah Halevi of Grodno, who traced her lineage back to Hayim of Volozhin and the Gaon of Vilna.

The desire to maintain pure *yikhes*, as well as restrictions on geographic mobility, prompted many Jewish families to resort to marrying relatives or a close circle of acquaintances, especially in small towns in the Pale of Settlement. Starting in the late nineteenth century, Jewish medical reformers castigated these patterns of consanguinity and geographic endogamy, which they claimed made Jews more vulnerable to hereditary diseases and mental illness. Moreover, new

expectations of love and companionship in marriage began challenging traditional marital alliances between Talmud scholars and the wealthy elite. Acculturated daughters of respectable families voiced dissatisfaction with their scholarly husbands, who had little knowledge of worldly matters. To address this crisis, Yitshak Ya'akov Reines (1839–1915) proposed creating a modern yeshiva in Lida to acquaint male scholars with "the ways of the world." Despite the new sciences (especially eugenics and psychiatry) that cited "objective" evidence of the need to reconsider marriages based on *yikhes*, as well as the rise of love-based marriages, the concept of noble and pure lineage continued to play a significant role in marital considerations in the twentieth century.

• Saul Bastomsky, "Yihus in the Shtetl and Dignitas in the Late Roman Republic," *Judaism* 39.1 (1990): 94–96; Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *Hagut ve-hanhagah* (Jerusalem, 1958/59), pp. 90–110; Glenn Dynner, "Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewry, 1754–1830," (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 2002), pp. 174–240; ChaeRan Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, N.H., 2002); Jacob Katz, "Nisu'im ve-haye ishut be-motsa'e yeme ha-benayim," *Tsiyon* (Jerusalem) 10 (1944–1945): 33–48; Haym Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in the *Sefer Hasidim*," *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 311–358; Shaul Stampfer, "Heder Study, Knowledge of Torah, and the Maintenance of Social Stratification in Traditional East European Jewish Society," *Studies in Jewish Education* 3 (1988): 271–289.

—CHAE RAN FREEZE

YISRA'EL BEN SHABETAI OF KOZHENITS (ca. 1737–1814), rabbinic scholar and Hasidic leader. Known as the Magid of Kozhenits (Pol., Koziencie), Yisra'el ben Shabetai was one of the founders of Hasidism in central Poland. Born in Opatów, the son of a poor bookbinder, he studied with Dov Ber, the Magid of Mezritsh, and later with Elimelekh of Lizensk.

As a rabbinic scholar, Yisra'el wrote Talmudic novellae and responsa, including a controversial lenient decision permitting an *'agunah* (a "chained woman" abandoned by her husband) to remarry. He was active in the dissemination of rabbinic literature, encouraging the publication of ancient manuscripts along with new editions of rare works, including the writings of Maharal of Prague. Yisra'el wrote dozens of approbations for other authors, often together with his close

friend Levi Yitshak of Barditshev, from whom he received an important collection of early Hasidic teachings.

Despite involvement in publishing the works of others, Yisra'el was apparently unconcerned about publishing his own voluminous writings, which appeared only posthumously. His *'Avodat Yisra'el* (1842), a classic of Hasidic homiletic literature, is characterized by stylistic elegance, clarity, and creative exegetical insight, reflecting generosity of spirit, compassion, and concern for the community. One can discern in it traces of Yisra'el's intense inner life, including ecstatic prayer and mystical attachment to the divine. At one point he recounts a teaching he received from the Ba'al Shem Tov in a dream.

Yisra'el was renowned not only for his knowledge of rabbinics and theoretical Kabbalah, but also for being a practical kabbalist and thaumaturge. His blessings and amulets were said to be efficacious for healing, and he was particularly reputed to have the power to bless barren couples with fertility. Legend has it that many Christians, including prominent figures such as Prince Adam Czartoryski, came to seek his counsel. Yisra'el used his influence and prestige to mitigate the effect of prejudicial regulations on the Jewish community and to protect his people from outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. He had scores of disciples, many of whom became leading figures of the Hasidic movement in Poland and Galicia during the nineteenth century—including Yitshak Me'ir Alter, the founder of the Ger Hasidic dynasty.

Yisra'el was survived by a son and two daughters. Kozhenits Hasidim were initially dubious about the ability of his son, Mosheh Elyakim Beriyyah Hapstein (ca. 1777–1828), to lead the community after his father's death, but Mosheh's stature grew over time and he was eventually accepted as his father's successor. Mosheh wrote many Hasidic works (among them *Be'er Mosheh*; 1858), which enjoyed wide popularity and contain valuable information about his father and other early Hasidic masters; they also provide an explanatory framework for the shamanistic powers of *tsadikim*.

Yisra'el's older daughter, Perele Shapiro (known as Perele der Magids), was also a pivotal figure in the family; stories about her spiritual practices and paranormal powers abound. Her father is reported to have sent Hasidim to her for talismanic oil; she dispensed blessings and was said

to have communicated with the spirits of departed *tsadikim*. Perl's son Hayim Me'ir Yehi'el Shapiro of Mogelnits (Mogielnica; known as the Seraph of Mogelnits [ca. 1789–1849]) was a popular *tsadik* known for fiery prayer and ecstatic spirituality. The Seraph's son, Elimelekh Shapiro (ca. 1816–1892), followed his father as a major figure in Polish Hasidism; his works include *Imre Elimelekh* (1876) and *Divre Elimelekh* (1890).

Both the Shapiro and Hapstein branches of the family of Yisra'el of Kozhnits produced Hasidic leaders through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to the Holocaust. On the Shapiro side, notable figures include Kalonymus Kalmish Shapiro (1889–1943), an educational theorist who rose to special prominence as a result of his teaching in the Warsaw ghetto during the Holocaust; and Kalonymus's brother Yesha'yah Shapiro (1891–1945), a passionate Zionist who immigrated to Palestine against the wishes of many members of his family. He became a leader in the Mizrahi movement and worked to encourage aliyah from Poland.

On the Hapstein side, there is Yerahmi'el Mosheh Hapstein (1860–1909), who brought many Karlin-Stolin traditions to Kozhenits Hasidism; his son Yisra'el El'azar Hapstein (1898–1966), a cofounder of Kefar Hasidism; and his daughter, the writer and memoirist Malkah Hapstein Shapiro (1894–1971).

• Aaron Zeev Aescoly (Eshkoli), *Ha-Hasidut be-Polin* (Jerusalem, 1998); Abraham Isaac Bromberg, *Mi-Gedole ha-torah veva-hasidut*, vol. 18, *Bet Koz'nits* (Jerusalem, 1961); Ze'ev Gries, "R. Yisra'el ben Shabetai mi-Koz'enits u-ferushav le-Masekhet avot," in *Tsadikim ve-anshe ma'aseh: Mehkarim be-hasidut Polin*, ed. Israel Bartal, Rachel Elior, and Chone Shmeruk, pp. 127–165 (Jerusalem, 1994); Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany, N.Y., 1995); Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Ha-Magid mi-Koz'nits: Hayav ve-torato* (Tel Aviv, 1946/47); Malkah Shapiro, *The Rebbe's Daughter: Memoir of a Hasidic Childhood*, trans. Nehemia Polen (Philadelphia, 2002).

—NEHEMIA POLEN

YISRA'EL ME'IR HA-KOHN (1838–1933), prominent halakhic authority and Orthodox Jewish leader. Yisra'el Me'ir ha-Kohn (Kagan), who became known as Hafets Hayim after the title of his first book, was one of the major rabbinical authorities of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and has been regarded as a paragon of piety.



Funeral of Rabbi Yisra'el Me'ir ha-Kohen (portrait inset), Radziejów, Poland, 1933. Photograph by R. Lejbowicz. (YIVO)

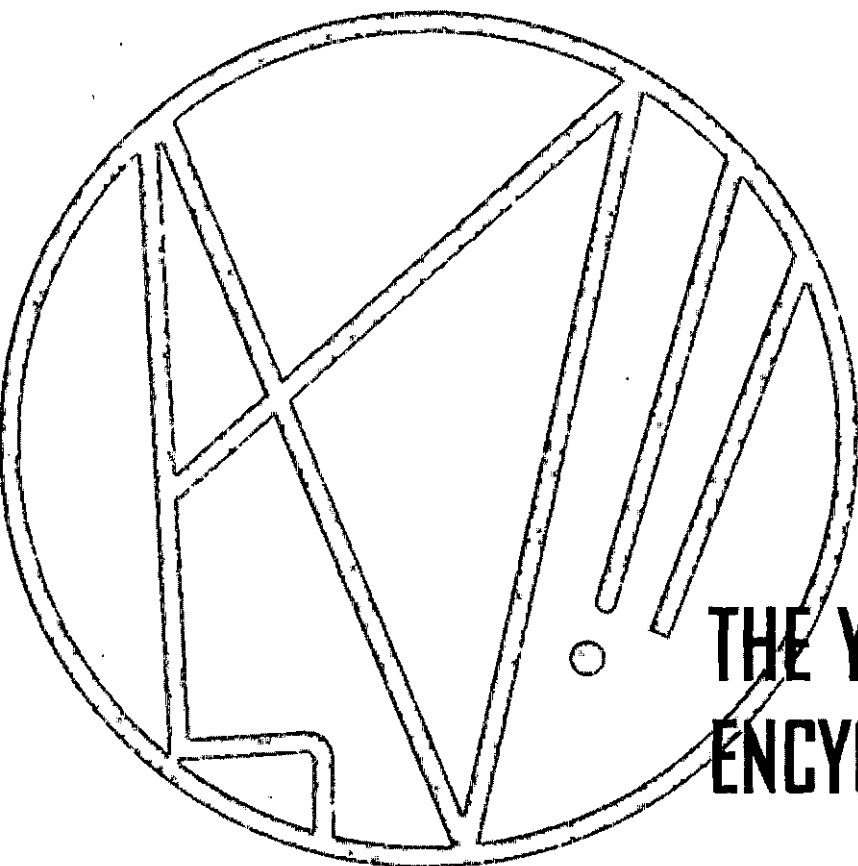
Hafets Hayim was born in Zhetl (now Diatlovo, Belarus), studied at a yeshiva in Vilna, and then moved to Radin (Pol., Raduń; now Radun', Bel.), where he married and continued to study; he also opened a grocery store, where his wife worked for their subsistence and he assisted. In 1865 he was teaching in Vashilishok (now Vasilishki, Bel.), and in 1869 he established a yeshiva of his own in Radin. Soon after, he stopped teaching and concentrated instead on the yeshiva's educational and administrative management, raising money for the school, and delivering *musar* talks. He nominated notable rabbinical scholars, such as Mosheh Landinski and Naftali Trop, as heads of the yeshiva, and they turned the school into one of the most prominent yeshivas in Lithuania. Meanwhile, Hafets Hayim devoted himself to writing and public activities. Eventually he was able to close his store and could support himself primarily by selling his books.

As immigration to the Land of Israel increased, Hafets Hayim became convinced that the coming of the Messiah was imminent. He called for renewed study of Seder Kodashim, the section of the Talmud dealing with the Temple practices, and established a *kolel kodashim*—a group of advanced students devoting themselves to the study of these matters—associated with his yeshiva in Radin. Two of his books, *Likute halakhot* (1900–1918) and his interpretation of the *Sifra* (1911),

also deal primarily with this subject. The horrors of World War I bolstered his messianic faith even further. At the same time, he was critical—albeit not to an extreme—of the Zionist movement, particularly of its secular orientation. During World War I, Hafets Hayim fled to Russia, where he was a founder of the Orthodox organization Ahdut (Unity) in 1917. After the Bolshevik Revolution, he remained in Russia, but in 1921 returned to Radin, then under Polish rule, and reestablished his yeshiva school and the *kolel kodashim*.

Hafets Hayim also sought to unify Orthodox Jewry in Lithuania, and endeavored to bridge internal disputes. He supported the establishment of Agudas Yisroel and in 1923 opened its first Grand Conference in Vienna. He was appointed honorary president of the party's Council of Torah Masters, but generally avoided political involvement and regarded the fulfillment of the religious needs of European Jewry as the primary function of the party. In 1924, he took part in the establishment of the Va'ad ha-Yeshivot (Yeshiva Schools Committee), intended to help sustain Jewish religious institutions in Eastern Europe. In spite of his poor health in his later years, he continued to respond to current events and wrote open letters to the Jewish press. He also planned to immigrate to the Land of Israel, but eventually declined to do so.

Hafets Hayim did not show much inter-



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