

YOM TOV LIPMANN HELLER

A Rabbi's Career During the Thirty Years' War  
An Appreciation of his Personality  
And Some of his Literary Achievements  
With Special Reference to his  
Megillat Evah

Thesis

Submitted  
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CHAPTER I  
HELLER'S EARLY LIFE  
1879-1927

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CHAPTER I  
HELLER'S EARLY LIFE  
1579-1627

Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller was born in the year 1579 at Wallerstein, Bavaria. He was the posthumous son of Nathan ben Moses Levi Heller who died at the age of 18. Fortunately Yom Tov was able to live with his renowned grandfather, Moses Heller, chief Rabbi of the German communities, whose personality was outstanding not only in his own generation but even in the succeeding ones.<sup>1</sup>

As a youth Yom Tov was sent to Friedburg, where he studied under Jacob Günsburg.<sup>2</sup> Then he was invited to Prague by a wealthy merchant, Aaron Ashkenazi, who later became his father-in-law.<sup>3</sup> There he studied under Judah Löw ben Bezaleel, head of the Prague yeshivah and Solomon Ephraim Lenexyes (cf. ch. IV), chief rabbi of Prague.<sup>4</sup> Heller even at the tender age of 18 was appointed as dayyon, judge, in Prague -- the capital of Bohemia and also a center of Jewish learning. He was annually reelected to this position until Marcheshvan of the year 1624 when he was selected as Av-Beth-Din in Nikolsburg, Moravia. Here he remained but a scant six months before he accepted an invitation from Vienna to become their rabbi.<sup>5</sup>

In order to appreciate the three years of Heller's career in Vienna, we must also have a clear picture of the Jewish community of which Heller played such a prominent role. The Thirty Years' War was just entering into its seventh year with Ferdinand II a powerful Cath-

see note



olic emperor on the throne. The Jews were gradually returning to Vienna from which they had been expelled in 1600 by Matthias. They were being allowed to return because the war had depleted the national treasury and the government needed the wealth of the Jews for their fight against the Protestants. Thus we find the Jews receiving gracious favors from the king who needed their financial backing to carry out his long desired plans of converting the whole world to Catholicism. (In Prague -- chapter II -- we shall likewise see that during the same period the Jews were the recipients of royal dispensations.) Ten thousand gulden were contributed by the Jews on June 17, 1619 for war purposes. Unlike the Jews of neighboring communities, the Vienna Jews were exempt from serving in the army or providing substitutes. The Vienna Jews, however, declared that they had done their utmost and that now they were on the verge of starvation. How bad the financial conditions of the crown were might be recognized in the fact that even the clergy were threatened with being taxed.<sup>6</sup>

The Jews suffered not only from the prevailing conditions but also from the imperial soldiers who, through excessive taxations and punishments, made life miserable for the Jews. The government was appealed to on June 28, 1619, and as a result an order was issued in Vienna that no one was to molest the Jews. The citizenry were told to live together peacefully and quietly and in no manner were they to disturb the Jews. This edict could not generally be understood by the average Catholic who thought that since the Protestants were being attacked, why should

2. the Jews be excluded. But the Court saw the value of protecting the Jews and were ever ready to accede to reasonable requests. Hence Ferdinand II, on July 22nd of the next year gave permission to the Jews in Vienna to erect a synagogue, much like the one in Prague, and through that anathema to elect the necessary officials -- elders, an unbiased rabbi, cantor, choral leader, schulklopfer (a sexton), and a schochet. The elders, whose duty it was to assess taxes, had existed before this order, but they had often been accused of displaying favoritism and to avoid the recurrence of any such objection an unbiased rabbi was permitted to be elected who should also have a vote in the apportioning of taxes. However, since the Jewish community could not loan 17,000 gulden on security this same synagogue was closed. Again in 1623 the Jews were asked to contribute another sum of money -- 40,000 to 50,000 florins. This enormous sum was imposed upon the Jews because they were supposed to have amassed much wealth by means of commercial exchanges, and in the event they could not pay this amount they were threatened with the wearing of the yellow hat.<sup>7</sup> But their wealth was greatly exaggerated and Ferdinand II convinced of this fact reduced their obligation to 20,000 florins (April 18, 1623).<sup>8</sup>

Despite the protection of the government the Jews were the objects of much scorn. While their inner religious life was autonomous they were greatly influenced by external forces.<sup>9</sup> Envy and jealousy caused Christian preachers to attack the Jews until Ferdinand II

warned them to desist from their methods.<sup>10</sup> The Jews were permitted to loan money at the current rate of 8 per cent interest with pledge and 10 percent without.<sup>11</sup> But the Jewish community was uneasy, while doing their business they were at the same time living among the Christians,<sup>12</sup> where they were constantly attacked by soldiers and citizens.<sup>13</sup> True, they had their own little circle but they wanted a separate suburb where they could reside alone. And so the Vienna Jews requested of Ferdinand the Second that a district be allotted to them.<sup>14</sup>

On June 26, 1623 the emperor created a commission to investigate the complaints against the Jews and also to consider their request for independent territory. It was imperative that the Jews be given a separate district as is evidenced in their repeated petitions for royal protection from the local governments. The Jews although they sometimes sought the aid of the local magistrates were convinced now that their true hope rested with the crown, who was never hesitant in granting their request.<sup>16</sup> Repeatedly ordered by the emperor to hasten their examination this commission composed of Johann Baptist Verda, chancellor of the court and special confidant of Ferdinand, Peter Heinrich von Strahlendorf, Count Hans Heinrich von Salzburg, Johann Wersl, and Christian Schaeffer, reported that there was no validity to the complaints against the Jews, and no punishment, not even the detested yellow badge should be meted out to them. But what is very important this same commission heartily recommended that the

only way the Jews could be free from the whims of the local magistrates was to permit them to possess their own soil upon which they could erect their dwellings.

Ferdinand decided to act upon the report of this committee and aided by the suggestion of P. Wilhelm Germain Lacombrant, spiritual adviser and confidential counsellor to Ferdinand, ordered on June 10, 1694 that the Council of War (which had charge of Foreign Affairs) should find a safe place for the purpose of segregating the Jews. On the advice of Field Marshal Bonalde count of Collalto, president of this council, the territory in the vicinity of the lower Wörth,<sup>17</sup> the present Leopold City, was staked out for the Jews. This suburb was separated from the city proper by a tributary of the Danube and only poorly joined with Vienna by a drawbridge. Naturally the inhabitants of this land were reluctant to move and they protested vehemently to Ferdinand (August 17, 1694), but to no avail.<sup>18</sup> And when this allotted territory was found to be too small the emperor permitted two of his court Jews, Abraham Rles<sup>19</sup> (Sept. 23, 1694) and Israel Wolf (Feb. 12, 1695) to purchase additional property.<sup>20</sup> The Jewish community itself was asked to contribute ten thousand florins to the city militia for protection but this was reduced to four thousand florins.<sup>21</sup>

The date, December 6, 1694, is memorable in the history of the Jews of Vienna,<sup>22</sup> for on that date they received the Great charter of freedom.<sup>23</sup> At last the Jews could be as one big family! In the same way that they were shut out from the Christian world were they shut in their own compact group. A dog in the streets, a king in



his own home -- this was the Jew. The charter, however, did not provide for the Jews the privilege of trading and doing business in Vienna.<sup>24</sup> And on March 8, 1625, Ferdinand the Second again manifested his like for the Jews by permitting them to retain their walls and trading places in the city market,<sup>25</sup> to loan money at the prevailing interest, to do pawn-broking business, to pay exactly the same poll tax as the Christians.<sup>26</sup>

It is at this point in the history of the Vienna Jews when they were sure that they would not be deprived of their source of living and were residing in their own city that Yom Tov Lipmann Heller began to figure as an influence in their development. He had just arrived in Vienna at the invitation of their leaders to become their new spiritual adviser and organizer of the new community. "The reputation preceded him that he was a man of great learning and sagacity, there is hardly any one at that time as big as he; his knowledge of the world, his talent to organize was shown in his administration of the ghetto in Vienna." No longer was the spiritual horizon to be dark and black before their eyes -- dawn and the morning star of Lipmann Heller were to bring life and light to the young community.<sup>27</sup> The Jewish soul was . . . free, free from the hateful surroundings of the city. Unhindered now the Jews could direct their efforts to the construction of a genuine Jewish community. And Heller was the man to encourage them in their aims.

There were two important problems with which Heller and the new community were confronted. In

the first place fourteen houses were not enough to receive the whole Jewish community of Vienna, even though Ferdinand thought this to be sufficient room for them and ordered on July 16, 1625 all Jews to move to the lower Wörth.<sup>28</sup> However, he realized that he had miscalculated the number of houses and on August 5, 1625, ordered the residents of Vienna to sell additional land at reasonable prices. But more difficult of solution was the paying of taxes to the city.<sup>29</sup> Being considered the personal chattel of Ferdinand the Jews were relieved of paying local taxes and services. People hated and scorned them because they were exempt from tax regulations. It was imperative that the Jewish community and the city of Vienna come to some understanding in this regard. The latter needed the Jews as taxpayers and the former needed the good will of the Christians. After several conferences on May 6, 1626, the Jews agreed to pay the city 1,000 gulden annually, to refrain from selling supplies in food-stuffs and building materials and from maintaining inns for Christians. However, their new homes were exempt from taxation for a period of three years.<sup>30</sup>

Heller describes this Jewish community as composed of "law abiding, well informed, wealthy and honorable people." Through his efforts the Jews had a constitution to guide them.<sup>31</sup> His opinions and statements were accepted without contradiction. As he mentions in his autobiography he always studied and in order to encourage others to study he set aside certain rooms in his house for this

very purpose.<sup>32</sup> His greatness attracted many pupils from various countries, although the local Jews did not suffer for want of students.<sup>33</sup> "The exhausted interpretations, the keenness of his intellect in solving and explaining perplexing questions, like a hammer which sends forth a shower of sparks was his mind when it came into contact with the words of the Bible....in him showed the mild light of devoutness that did not burden the community with mystic exercises or heavy atonements but enriched them by elevating institutions."<sup>34</sup>

But it seems that the community knew him only long enough to understand the greatness of their loss when he was called in Tebeth 1627 to fill the vacancy of the rabbinate in Prague. This was a position to which Heller had looked forward with hope for there he had spent twenty-seven years and had been disappointed when he was not elected in 1623 to succeed Rabbi Moise Mendels.<sup>35</sup> Without avail the community in Vienna offered him more money and more honors. He received many gifts especially from individuals who had come to know him intimately. But Vienna could not offer the same circle as Prague and after Purim of 1627 he left Vienna. His was a departure full of tears. No father ever left his children under a more sorrowful scene.<sup>36</sup> Heller reached Prague in Nisan accompanied by the officers of the Jewish community who had advanced a day's journey to escort him to the city. About half a year later he was elevated to the head of the yeshivah.<sup>37</sup>

CHAPTER II  
AS RABBI IN PRAGUE

1627-1629

To truly appreciate Heller's life in Prague for the next two years is first to understand the development and the status of the Jewish community at that time. On account of the Thirty Years' War the Jewish communities of Bohemia, including that of Prague, had heavy taxes imposed upon them by the government. As early as 1619 Frederick began to lay high taxes on the Jews despite their gifts of November 8 to him and his royal family.<sup>38</sup> The battle of the White Mountain (Montagne-Blanche) was a costly affair for Frederick; his coffers were empty and he needed money to pay his troops. The nobility and the bourgeoisie refused to help him in his plight and so he turned to the Jews as a last resort. The Jews had stamps placed on their books and their merchandise, their homes were ruthlessly pillaged in their absence for silver and valuable objects. The government would stop at nothing in their search for money and the Jews realizing this fact agreed to give 40,000 florins (later 10,000 florins were added) so they would be left unmolested. Happily for the Jews Frederick was defeated and driven out of Prague on November 9, 1620 by Ferdinand II, leading an army of 9,000 men. Ferdinand had been previously influenced (October 5, 1620) favorably toward the Jews because of their attitude. Before his attack on the city he had ordered the commander-in-chief of his army, Duke Maximillian of Bavaria, to use extreme discretion with the Jews. Thanks



to these orders from the emperor, the Jews were spared during the terrible weeks when the city was under bombardment; their quarter, in fact, was guarded by a detachment of royal troops.

The report that the Jews were to be spared was not long in being circulated through the city and many of the Protestants wishing to save their goods from confiscation sought to deposit their merchandise in Jewish homes for safe keeping. But they reasoned incorrectly for the Jews turned over to the conquerors 17 cases of gold and silver which had been secreted into their homes by Protestants.<sup>39</sup>

Full of gratitude and joy because of their deliverance the elders of the Jewish community resolved to perpetuate the memory of the day of the entrance of the imperial troops into Prague and called it the PURIM of Prague (14th of Marchesvan). They were to abstain from drinking and eating up to mincha and after that there was to be much rejoicing. It was on this occasion that Heller wrote two selichot for recitation (cf. chapter V).

The most influential man in the empire then was the governor of Prague, Prince Charles of Lichtenstein, later Duke of Silesi. A great economic shifting and diminution in value of landed property resulted from the confiscations of war. During these confiscations we see appear for the first time Jacob Bassevi who was to play a most important role in the life of Heller (cf. chapter IV). To Bassevi the governor on May 11, 1622 presented certain

Silesia  
(Silesien)

houses that were the former possessions of Christians -- for the first time a Jew was owner of property once possessed by Christians.<sup>40</sup> Other Jews beside Bassevi were granted the privilege of buying property and to such an extent that the bourgeoisie and clergy protested in no uncertain terms to the emperor. FOR WHILE THE COURT FAVORED THE JEWS, THE BOURGEOISE AND CLERGY WERE SCARCELY FAVORABLY INCLINED TO THEM. AND THIS IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE FOR WHERE THE JEWS WERE A SOURCE OF VERY IMPORTANT REVENUE PAYING DIRECTLY TO THE CROWN THEY WERE CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL AND ARTISANS NOT ONLY AS COMPETITORS BUT AS BEING EXEMPTED FROM ANY MUNICIPAL TAX.<sup>41</sup> At each occasion the town council complained that the Jews were hurting their commerce and professions since the latter imported their merchandise and sold their goods exclusively to Jewish pedlars. The Christians found only the gleanings left to them after the foreign buyers had transacted business with the Jews and many Christians actually found it impossible to take care of their families.<sup>42</sup> Especially bitter was the Catholic clergy as many of them had to sell their property to the Jews in order to have ready cash.

And quite naturally the bourgeoisie and council objected strenuously to the edict of May 30, 1623 which ordered them to put the Jews in full possession of the houses bought by them. To appease these protests the governor appointed a commission to investigate the charges against the Jews. When this commission reported that they could see no harm in the Jews possessing these homes and

that the Jews were even bent on improving the property,<sup>43</sup> Prince Charles issued a new edict dated June 16, 1623 which stated that :

- (1) the Jews were to come into possession of their houses,
- (2) the property of the Jews was to be inscribed into the municipal tax records,
- (3) the houses bought by the Jews are to be exempt from all municipal charges.<sup>44</sup>

On June 30, 1623 Prince Charles reiterated his attitude in another edict which was his answer to the protests of the Christians to the decree issued on June 16. The community made still another attempt to prevent the Jews from possessing their houses. The Christians said that the number of Jews is already large enough, that the Jews were monopolizing the commerce and thus reducing the Christian artisans to a state of beggary. The clergy gained a temporary concession when on April 8, 1627 they restrained the Jews from selling their houses to other Jews. Evidently the Jews complained of this restriction and by the privilege accorded to them on August 12, 1627 Ferdinand confirmed not only the edict of June 30, 1623 but added that :

- (1) Jews now had the right to transmit their property to their descendants,
- (2) since the Jews were obliged to

give annually 40, 000 florins to the imperial chamber they were free from all ordinary and extraordinary taxes,

- (3) the Jews could frequent all the markets and trading places,
- (4) the Jews could learn and transact some business without hindrance,
- (5) all authorities, under pain of death, were told to protect the Jews in their rights.<sup>45</sup>

ONE PERCEIVES VERY DISTINCTLY THE POSITION OF THE CROWN TO THE JEWS -- THE EMPTINESS OF THE WAR TREASURY AND THE EARNESTNESS OF THE JEWS TO MAKE UP THE DEFICIT BY PAYING EXORBITANT SUMS TO THE ROYAL EXCHEQUOR WAS CERTAINLY A MOST POWERFUL ARGUMENT IN THEIR BEHALF.<sup>46</sup>

We return again to Heller who as chief rabbi of the community was compelled, much against his will, to serve as chairman of the committee which had the unpleasant task of apportioning the annual sum of 40,000 florins among the members of his communities. When the time came for apportioning some individuals complained of the unfair allotment even though Heller was most conscientious and proceeded with scrupulous prudence. These complainers believed themselves to be victims of an injustice, that the rich were being spared and that the burden of the taxes was being shouldered by the poorer people.<sup>47</sup> There was much dissension among the Jews -- relatives were estranged, there was secret and even open plotting -- Heller strove



in vain to placate the community. Finally in 1629 his enemies, whose names Heller never divulges, succeeded in having him severely censored and warned by Ferdinand not to repeat such proceedings as were reported to him. But his enemies were not satisfied with this rebuke for they trumped up still another and a much more serious charge -- that in his book, *Ma'adanne Melek*, he had attacked the Christian religion.<sup>48</sup> This was a grave accusation for it intimated that Heller had flagrantly violated the royal edict of November 24, 1626 issued by Ferdinand which specifically stated that:

- (1) any one, Jew, or non-Jew, who wrote a blasphemous book against Jesus or the Christian religion should be apprehended and be made to stand trial,
- (2) suspected texts should be scrutinized and all objectionable passages were to be expunged, or if beyond revision the books were to be entirely destroyed.<sup>49</sup>

The governor of Prague was ordered by the emperor to arrest Heller and to send him in chains to Vienna.<sup>50</sup>

Heller, despite the activities of his enemies, paid very little attention to them as he knew that in no wise had he harmed any individual or issued an unfair judgment or committed any acts of indiscretion. And it was not until the evening of the 4th of Tammuz, 1629, when he was informed that the chief of police had been

seeking him, that he finally took cognizance of any attacks against him. So highly esteemed was Heller even by the Christians of Prague that the head of the police who was charged with his custody behaved with extreme indulgence toward him. First the officer made inquiries as to Heller's presence as he did not wish to embarrass him in the presence of his friends. Then when Heller had been located the official and Heller went to the home of the community representative, Jacob Bassevi (cf. chapter IV), and there Heller was appraised of his arrest, and further that he was to be sent in fetters and under guard to Vienna. However, the police chief permitted the elders of the congregation to interview the governor in Heller's defense. The residence of the governor was in a little place on the other side of the river Elbe. When the elders arrived, the place was secured for the night and there was no response to their first knocking. But these men were undaunted and they continued to pound upon the door until one of the servants leaning out of a window asked them what they wanted. He was informed that they were there on a matter of life and death and that they must see the governor. It would have been difficult to refuse the request of the Jewish leaders and so the governor instructed his servant to admit them to his room. When they entered his bed-chamber they nodded and said: "My lord has sent the chief of police to seize our beloved rabbi and to take him under heavy guard to Vienna. Whither shall we turn in our disgrace? For tomorrow the Christians will say -- 'Since their leader is arrested, this is a token that the Jews

down before  
him

have rebelled against the emperor.' And in every vicinity where this will become known, they will attack the Jews and this will indeed work the emperor harm. Therefore, our petition is that you allow the rabbi to travel alone to Vienna and we place ourselves as hostages that he will carry out your orders." The governor naturally was moved and not wishing to lose the support of the Jews he told them that for the night he paroled the rabbi into their care, but that he reserved his decision 'till the morrow. Apparently the intervention of the elders had influenced the governor for Heller was permitted to travel alone to Vienna. He departed for Vienna on the fifth of Tammuz, 1629.

Vienna again! What shame and disgrace Heller must have experienced as he returned to the city where only two years previously he had served as the first rabbi of the new Jewish community. Little did the Jews of Vienna realize that the same feeling of sorrow at the time of his departure was to overcome them again at the sight of his forced and ignominious visit to their city (10th of Tammuz, June 30, 1629). On arriving Heller waited for the chancellor of the court, Werdenberg, in order to learn particulars with regard to the charges proffered against him. He was soon informed. It was not exactly the title "Ma'adanne Melek" (Royal Dainties)<sup>51</sup> and "Lehem Hamidot" (Pleasant Bread) as he had previously heard, that stirred up the anger of Ferdinand; the point was that the commentaries contained references to non-Jews and thus it was implied that he had written against the Christian religion. On Sunday, 17th of Tammuz, the Jewish fast day, Heller was

H incarcerated together with the common criminal offenders. Three days later, through the influence of Ferdinand's Hofjuden (court Jews), Heller was removed to the royal prison where he enjoyed "the comfort of a bed, a table and a lamp." The prison keeper and fellow prisoners held nothing but the highest respect for Heller.<sup>52</sup>

In the meantime a commission had been appointed to ascertain the degree to which Heller had violated the edict of 1626. This commission composed of Sebastian Tengnagel, a Christian knowing Hebrew, Matthias Maximillian Norbertin, a convert to Christianity who had on a previous occasion denounced the Jews before the officials, and Joseph,<sup>53</sup> a blind apostate Jew whose name was Paul Joseph bar Sadok,<sup>54</sup> met on July 15. Heller was called before them and asked how he dared to praise the Talmud after it had been ordered burnt by Papal command! And also to justify himself for his attacks on their religion. In vain did Heller and his friends protest that the objectionable sections referred not to Christians of his day but to the idolaters of olden times; that the laws regulating the dealings of the Jews with these idolaters were part and parcel of the religious literature, the Talmud and Mishna, and that they were studied in the yeshivahs as literature and not as any attack upon their present day religion.<sup>55</sup> The commission submitted a report in which certain passages were to be expunged<sup>56</sup> as violations of the order of 1626 and consequently Heller was sentenced to death. However, the emperor was content to release Heller upon the payment of a fine of 12,000 thalers, to be



paid instantly and the guilty works to be destroyed: in default of this payment Heller was to be publicly stripped and flogged in Vienna and Prague. Heller's enemies had grossly exaggerated his wealth before Ferdinand and it was only through the heroic efforts of the influential Jews that the fine was later reduced to 10,000 thalers, a sum still too large to be paid by Heller alone.

His enemies, not yet content with the humiliation and misery they brought upon Heller, did further injury when they influenced the crown to prevent Heller from officiating in any community in the Austrian empire. It was only after Heller was released that he learned how these maligners had perpetrated still another falsehood; they had reported to a person close to the emperor, that Heller had boasted in the presence of the governor of Prague that he had defeated this same person in a disputation.<sup>57</sup> Heller was released from prison on August 14, 1629 through the efforts of two of the richest families in Austria, the family of the late Koppel Mirels-Heller, that is, the Frankels in Vienna,<sup>58</sup> and Jacob Bassevi (cf. ch. IV) who were related to Heller. Bassevi, in particular, aided Heller when he contributed the 2,000 thalers necessary for the first installment on Yom Tov's fine. His freedom is an attestation both to the fidelity and love of the Jews for Heller and to their great influence in the court.

Heller returned to Prague on Erev Yom Kippur, 1629. The distressing trial in Vienna was beginning to tax his strength and he was bed ridden for the next three

months. While convalescing at home he recalled that a well known Polish rabbi, Pinchas ben Solomon Isaiah Horwitz,<sup>59</sup> whose father was a former occupant of the rabbinate in Prague,<sup>60</sup> once told him that he (Pinchas) had heard that the Holy Books of the Jews would be burnt on the 5th of Tammuz. And since this was the day when Heller was summoned to Vienna he declared it to be observed as a day of fasting by his entire family and also by the coming generations. In Shevat of 1630 Heller received a letter<sup>61</sup> from Abraham Bassevi (son of Jacob Bassevi), father<sup>62</sup> of his son-in-law, and learned that his friends in Vienna had influenced the king to modify his decrees against Heller to the extent that he would now be permitted to reenter the rabbinate<sup>63</sup> and further that his confiscated books would not be destroyed. Selling all of his gold and silver dishes, his multitude of gifts, and helped by his friends, he somehow managed to pay his entire fine. Even the local magistrates were most sympathetic to Heller and frequently permitted him long delays in meeting the instalments. To celebrate the payment of the last 250 florins he preached in the Meisel Synagogue at Prague on the parashah schalah. On the third of Tammuz, 1631, he left with his wife and youngest son, Abraham, for Lublin to attend the latter's wedding to Esther, daughter of Rabbi Yechiel and granddaughter of a Mr. Lazarus of Brisk in Lithuania. After their wedding ceremony Mrs. Heller left for Vienna and Prague while Yom Tov went to Brisk.

granddaughter  
in Lublin  
son-in-law  
Moses Leizer's

Brest Litvinsk

CHAPTER III  
HIS ACTIVITIES IN POLAND  
1629-1654

in Brisk  
(Brisk Litzov)

It was while he was in Brisk that he received an invitation to become Av-Beth-Din in Nemirov in Podolia, Russia (1632). He spoke at the synagogue in Nemirov on Shabbas Shuvah and made a fine impression. The people received him cordially and bestowed honors upon him.<sup>64</sup>

*minor he arrived middle of the century*  
Heller stayed in Nemirov until 1635 when he accepted a similar position in Vladimir, Volhynia -- leading community of the Vaad Arba Arazoth and a very influential city.<sup>65</sup>

Here it will be necessary to divert the trend of this work and discuss briefly the institution of the Vaad Arba Arazoth. This council had become a fixed institution by the middle of the sixteenth century. It gave the Polish communities extraordinary unity, firmness, and strength, and hence secured respect from their members as well as from outsiders. Hitherto it had naturally come about that, at the meeting of rabbis and heads of schools with their followers at the great fairs, important questions were discussed, law cases were settled, and general consultations took place. The utility of such meetings may have become clearly apparent, and given rise to the idea of arranging regular conferences of the heads of the communities, to draw up final, binding decisions. Both leaders and communities must have been actuated by a healthy spirit in agreeing to common action.

The council (Vaad) was known at first as the

Council of Three Lands, that is, of Poland (Great and Little), Lithuania, and Polish Russia. Subsequently (in 1623) Lithuania formed a central organization of their own for the reason that the grand duchy had a distinct fiscal administration all to itself. The usual appellation for the Polish Council came to be Vaad Arba Arazoth -- Great Poland, Little Poland, Podolia with Galicia, and Volhynia each figuring as a constituent district. The communities sent delegates to this council which was composed of six rabbis and twenty-four laymen -- each a man of proven excellence, having a seat and a vote in the synod. The council met once a year at Lublin during the spring fair and lasted about a month. Another place of meeting was the Galician town Jaroslav, during the chief fair which took place at the end of the summer. This was so at least at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but soon it became customary to hold two meetings annually, one at Lublin before Passover and the other at Jaroslav before the autumn holidays. On exceptional cases sessions were held in other localities.

At the head of this synod was a president, elected by the regular members, who directed the discussion of questions, who drew up (or had this done by others) the reports of the minutes which are called Pinchas.<sup>66</sup> The chief business was to apportion to each district its share in the collective annual tax paid by the Jews to the government, as well as extraordinary expenditures entailed in propitiating high officials, in the defense of innocent Jews charged with crimes, and in warding off



hostile legislation. The council sent its agents, representative men who by their wealth and station had access to the court or to the magnates, to watch over Jewish interests during the sessions of the Polish Diet at Warsaw. Especially was it imperative to be in attendance during the 'Coronation Diet', when a new king ascended to the throne and pressure was likely to be exercised by anti-Jewish elements either to annul or to curtail privileges previously conceded. The council was constantly on the watch to prevent friction between the government and the Jewish population, or any private altercation between a Jew and a Christian, for fear that it might be perverted into a corporate libel against the whole body of Jews. When the Vaad, as in 1580, was powerless to avert the enactment forbidding Jews to engage in farming the royal taxes or customs it gave effect to the measure by an ordinance of its own, lest the greed of the few might endanger the welfare of the many. The council was supremely concerned with the welfare of the Jews as a whole. That alone was paramount, and individuals were forced into submission by the efficacious weapon of the ban which the rabbis were empowered to use by the royal edict granted to them in the year 1551. The synods also exercised a literary censorship by granting permission for certain books to be printed and sold, and refusing permission in the case of others which seemed to them harmful. These conferences had a most beneficial effect: they prevented long standing dissensions, averted or punished acts of injustice, kept alive a feeling of union amongst the various communities, directing them towards common

action, thereby counteracting the narrowness and selfishness of merely local interests, which so greatly encouraged the dismemberment and isolation of communities,<sup>67</sup> as, for example, in Germany.<sup>68</sup>

Heller, as rabbi of Vladimir, attended these various fairs. There was then much strife and corruption among the rabbis of Poland who were engaged in the disgraceful practices of buying their offices. Just as in the days of the Second Temple when the priests practiced these same degrading methods so were the Polish rabbis offering silver and gold in order to secure a position. To the highest bidder would fall the choicest of openings -- the rabbinate sank to the level of a trade or of a selling proposition. Because of his strong love for the truth, his inflexible integrity, and his noble character, Heller protested most vigorously against these prevailing abhorrent practices of the rabbinate. He strove with all his might to uproot this terrible custom and finally on the eighteenth of Adar (March 12, 1640) at the provincial synod of Volhynia and by a publication made in the synagogue of Jaroslav (first of Nissan, March 24, 1640) he succeeded in renewing the ancient decrees against simony. Bans and excommunications were placed on the offending rabbis as well as on the communities accepting these men. Thus, for example, the community of Lokasze was notified by Heller to remove their rabbi, Josel, because he had procured his position through his wealth. It was against this letter of Heller that the opposition of the community of Ostrogh formed. They demanded that the affair of the rabbinate of Lokasze be once again examined at the time

ing his position. Heller's adversaries besides took the lie upon themselves since at Lokacze Josel had really acted as their attorney. Moved by a sentiment of dignity easy to understand he rebuked their insolent reprimand of his having made light of a word of the Mishna. His accusers knew, as did everybody, that his commentary to the Mishna, the Tosfos Yom Tov, was universally received with favor, and that he did not ignore the decrees of the Mishna. He recognized willingly that his many duties had prevented him, much to his regret, from making a more thorough arrangement of his book. But to reproach him for having forgotten a passage that every studious scholar knows by heart, that is stupidity and downright wickedness. The Lokacze incident was settled on the tenth of Kislev with the election of a new rabbi.<sup>69</sup>

This was not the first time that Heller was the object of maligners and even as his enemies in Prague had him reported to the authorities so again did his slanderers calumniate him, this time before the governor of Volhynia. They wrote a letter of censure, without attaching any signature, and in it they demanded that Heller be removed from the rabbinate. They accused him of things that no Jew ever committed; and their efforts were rewarded for Heller was ordered to leave town before the governor appeared. However, pressure was brought by the influential Jews of Warsaw upon the governor and Heller was again permitted to occupy the rabbinate in Vladimir. On the second day of Succoth, 1643, he was invited to become rabbi in Cracow. He accepted this honor and upon his arrival in Cracow on

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the twenty-eighth of Marchesvan, 1643, he was met by all the members of his congregation who proffered their best hopes and wished him much success and happiness. While in Cracow he was in perfect accord with the head of the yeshivah, Joshua Heschel, author of the "Magine Shelomoh," and when the latter died in 1648, Heller was chosen as head of the yeshivah until his death in 1654.<sup>70</sup> Just as he had ordered the fifth day of Tammuz to be observed as a perpetual fast day in his family so did he make the first of Adar a day of great joy to celebrate his nomination to the Cracow rabbinate.<sup>71</sup> Heller lived in Cracow <sup>his</sup> for the rest of his life. He took sick just before death and in accordance with the Jewish custom the names Gershon and Saul were given to him. Heller died either on the fourth<sup>72</sup> or twenty-sixth<sup>73</sup> of Ellul in Cracow and was buried there. He was so poor when he died because he had given away all his money to those even less fortunate that he did not leave enough money to buy even his own burial shroud.<sup>74</sup> On his tombstone there is an epitaph stating that he was great and highly respected among his generation and was the author of many books. Moses Zacuto wrote an elegy on Heller's death.<sup>75</sup>

Yom Tov Lipmann Heller was twice married -- his first wife, who died in 1586, was the daughter of the famous Aaron Ashkenazi, head of the Prague hospital and at whose invitation Heller first came to Prague, and his second wife was Rachel, neice of Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz. He had nine children -- the sons -- Moses from Prague<sup>76</sup> (Tosfos Yom Tov, Ukatzim, Perek 3, mishna 12),<sup>77</sup> Samuel

2  
Vincent

from Nemirov, Abraham from Lublin and Löb of Brest Litovsk;  
 the daughters -- Nashli (died in 1632), wife of Aaron  
 Lowy, son of the Köppels in Vienna; Nissel, wife of Wolf-  
 Slowe; Rösel, wife of Jacob Joseph Cohen (Turisk); Rebecca,  
 wife of Hirsh (Cracow); and Dobrisch (died 1643), wife of  
 Samuel Bassevi.<sup>78</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### TWO IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES

No discussion of Yom Tov Lipmann Heller is complete without a remark about SOLOMON EPHRIAM LENCZYCS and JACOB BASSEVI both of whom played an important role in Heller's life as well as that of the Jewish communities of Prague and Vienna.

One of Heller's earliest teachers was Solomon Ephriam Lenczyes, who, since the year 1604, was Av-Beth-Din in Prague and as such it was incumbent upon him to have charge of the assessment of taxes which he did in an honorable manner. Perhaps it was his example that later led Heller into so many difficulties over this very same business of tax collection! Lenczyes violently opposed the pilpulistic tendencies of his contemporaries. He wrote on this subject: "I have often examined with the scholars of my time the question of the complete abolition of the dialectical debates called Hillukim, estimating that HE WHO TORTURES THUS THE WORD OF GOD IS, LITERALLY SPEAKING, A SCORNER OF HIM. But I have not been able to succeed, because there are among the scholars many ambitious men each of whom wishes to occupy first rank, and who hope to surpass the other by pilpul. They pretend that it is the best means to sharpen the wits of some pupils and to prepare them thus to search into the sense of the Torah, which is obscured. And yet do we not see that in the countries like Palestine and other places where they do

not pursue this defective method, the science of exegesis and the learning of the Talmud are developed better because they do not squander their time in quibbling? This method is rather harmful for the young men, but the heads of the schools retain, because, thanks to it, they can thus attract many more disciples, which flatters their vanity; they wish to have a great number of students even if the majority are valueless. CAN SUCH A METHOD BE AGREEABLE TO GOD? It is true that I, I also, have employed pilpul but I can affirm that my argumentation always conformed with the truth, being almost of literal text; such a pilpul can be useful and is not altogether to be condemned. However, it would be much better to suppress it, because they are very much like lies."

As preacher Solomon Ephriam enjoyed a great reputation. In his sermons he showed himself to be very bold -- he dared characterize the rich man, seeking only to amass further wealth, as typical of the "mob." He attacked the teachers of the youth as aspiring only to acquire money. He attributes the laxity during the service to the great number of piutim which most of the listeners could not understand. He declared that fasting was not an act agreeable to God. He opposed the ever increasing Cabalistic mania of explaining the laws. Always he felt it his duty to improve the lot of his listeners by instructing them. Lenczycs died on Sunday, the seventh of Adar Shenit (Feb. 21, 1619). His epitaph still can be found in the old cemetery at Prague.



He left numerous homiletical works:

1. עיר גורן -- which begins with two sermons followed by an exegetical consideration of all the Pentateuch. A work of his youth.
2. הושענות -- a collection of sermons for the holidays, as well as some speeches for various joyous and sad occasions.
3. אורח חיים -- moral considerations of the אורח חיים and on Pesach.
4. קצות חיים -- a commentary on the Pentateuch.
5. הושענות -- homiletical considerations on the Pentateuch. Prague, 1610.
6. שש עמודי -- sermons based on the six fundamental pillars of Judaism.<sup>79</sup>

Even more important of mentioning is Jacob Bassevi who was descended from a family living in Prague for a long time, possibly of Italian origin. This family was rich and of great prominence, and Jacob Bassevi, early in life had the occasion to receive the favor of the royal court. As early as 1590 he was given the title 'Jew of the court' by Emperor Rudolf II and this same title was confirmed by Emperor Mathias.<sup>80</sup> Such a wealthy man as Bassevi was just the person with whom an ambitious governor would want to enrich himself. Shortly after November 17, 1620 when Prince Charles of Lichtenstein became governor he entered into a contract with Bassevi whereby the latter was to have the concession of mint

farming but at the same time was to pay Charles a large fee for this purpose. But to appropriate all the benefit and to achieve the depreciation of the currencies altogether, it was necessary that the directors of the mint of the empire be first of all placed entirely under the governor's control. For this purpose, he formed with some other influential noblemen a sort of cabinet in which there figured besides Prince Charles, the Count Wallenstein, the Count Paul Michna, celebrated general of the imperial armies, Jean de Witte and Jacob Bassevi.

However, the proposition of Prince Charles, of October 1621 to give over the direction of the coinage in Prague to Bassevi was at first vetoed by the emperor. Then, the Prince of Lichtenstein made most brilliant promises to Ferdinand -- if they gave to Bassevi the direction of the coinage, the receipts of the emperor would double and treble. Finally, on January 18, 1622 an agreement was reached whereby the cabinet was to have charge of the farming of money for a period of one year in exchange for which the emperor would receive a huge sum of money. It was really Bassevi who did the farming of the money. Quite naturally the cabinet having only a year's time worked in great haste. Precious metals were prohibited from being exported; moneys of good weight were monopolized and remelted to make of them money of less value. A new stamp was made. In a short time the country was flooded with a depreciated currency. The thalers which were then in circulation were called Schmiele's Thalers, named after Jacob Bassevi whose family was called Schmiele's.

At the advice, without doubt of the Prince of Lichtenstein, he was raised to the rank of a noble of the Roman empire and became thus the first Jewish nobleman. On the previously mentioned date, January 18, 1622, the emperor confirmed upon him the noble title TREUENBERG and a code of arms representing a blue lion with eight red stars on a black field. Besides, the diplomacy of the nobility contained still more privileges, the liberty of establishing himself, and of possessing in all the hereditary countries of the empire the right of commerce everywhere, the exoneration from all taxes and imposts and the right to possess a particular house of prayer. The consideration of which Bassevi enjoyed spread out over all the community. Thus we read in the Megillas Evah that when Heller first sensed his arrest he went to Bassevi's home, who was the representative of the Jews.<sup>81</sup> Jacob Bassevi showed himself worthy of his position. He was very generous, and even the poor of Palestine received considerable aid from him. We know from chapter II of this thesis that Yom Tov Lipmann Heller was the object of Bassevi's generous support to the amount of 2,000 florins which were used as the initial payments on the ransom. Bassevi and Heller were related -- Jacob had a grandson who married a daughter of Heller.<sup>82</sup> However, the star of Bassevi was not long in being eclipsed for his protector, Prince Charles, died in 1627. The heirs of the Prince were not kindly disposed toward Bassevi since he was in possession of a debt of 60,000 thalers acknowledged by the Prince. In 1633 he lost his large fortune. He

left Prague and returned to Gitschin. He died on May 2, 1634 at Jungbunzlau.<sup>83</sup> It may truly be said that even during the darkest days of the early phases of the Thirty Years' War, the Jewish community still had some beautiful days, thanks to Jacob Bassevi.<sup>84</sup>



CHAPTER V  
WHAT HELLER WROTE

1. פנין חכמה -- a commentary on the "Behinat 'Olam" of Jedaiah Bedersi.  
b Hock in his notes in the Gal Ed, page 68, says that Heller wrote this book in his youth. Prague, 1598.
2. זרע חכמה -- Zuraṭ ha-Bayit, on the design and measurements of the Temple of Ezekiel.  
 In this book Heller mentions Wallerstein as his birth-place. Prague, 1602, according to Zunz, but 1603 according to Fuenn.<sup>85</sup>
3. נתיבות חכמה -- Notes on the "Gib'at ha-Moreh", a commentary on the Moreh Nebukim by Joseph ben Isaac ha-Levi. Written in Prague, 1612, while Hock says 1611.<sup>86</sup>
4. תוספות יום טוב -- Tosfos Yom Tov, notes and glosses to the six orders of the Mishna. Published in 1614-1617 in Prague with the text, and revised in 1644 by Heller in Cracow.
5. מאדאנע מעלעק -- Ma'adanne Melek and Lehem Hamudot, a double commentary on Asheri's "Piske Halakot" to Berakot, and on "Halakot Ketanot" to Hullin, Bekorot, and Niddah. Prague, 1628.
6. פילפלה חריטה -- Pilpela Harifta, the fourth part of the Ma'adanne Melek on Nesikim.  
x  
 Prague, 1619.
7. אורח חיים -- Orhot Hayyim, a Judeo-German translation of Asheri's ethical work,

"Orhot Hayyim", Prague, 1626. *f*

8. A sermon on the Parasha, Hayai Sarah, which he preached in Vienna after his trial.
9. הנהגות על מצות וראי' קרבן העדה -- a supercommentary on Ibn Ezra's commentary to the Pentateuch. *2)*
10. דרוש חידוש הלבנה -- Derush Hiddush ha-Lebanah, an astronomical treatise of the renewal of the moon. Wilna, 1866. *2*
11. תב טא"מ -- Tub Ta'am, a cabalistic supercommentary, following the "Pardes Rimmonim" of Moses Cordovero, on Bahya's commentary to the Pentateuch.
12. מלבוש יום טוב -- Malbushe Yom Tov -- critical notes on Mordecai Jaffe's "Lebush" to the Orhot Hayyim. (Hock, 68).<sup>87</sup>
13. דרכי הוראה -- Darke Hora'ah, a guide to decisions in ritual laws when the authorities disagree. *Hallmark*
14. תורת האשם -- Torat ha-Ashem, on the "Torat Hottat" of Moses Isserles (3 volumes).
15. שאלות ותשובות -- She'elot u-Teshubot, some printed in David Gans' "Zemah David" and others in "Geonim Batra's", most of them are still unpublished. *2*
16. Compare book 5 but in addition to Moed, Nashim, and Nezikim.
17. פרשתי החדש -- Parashat ha-Hodesh, on Maimonides' "Yod," Kiddush ha-Hodesh, laws on the sanctification of the month.

18. ברית מלח -- Berit Melah -- treatise in Judaeo-German on the salting of the meat. Written especially for the women. Amsterdam, 1718.

19. לקט שושנים -- Leket Shoshanim, a grammatical treatise on Archevolti's "Arugat ha-Bosem."

(The above mentioned books are to be found in Zunz's "Geschichte der Krakauer Rabbinat." ) <sup>88</sup>

20. Heller is also the author of two selichot to be recited on the fourteenth of Marchesvan commemorating the sufferings of the Jews in Prague between the years 1618-1620. (Chapter II, p. 10)

21. In 1650 he wrote three other selichot:

a. אזה"ר בצנינו שמענו

b. אזה צדקה בזמנו של שבעה סרה גדולה

c. על מצא רחמים שובן חרומים

in which he describes the sad plight of the Jews during the Chmielincki riots of 1648. They are recited on the twentieth of Sivan. <sup>89</sup>

22. The "Mi she-Berah" recited every Saturday is also his contribution. <sup>90</sup>

- no. 8 23. Sermon delivered by Heller in Vienna on the disappearance of the cholera. November 22, 1626. <sup>91</sup>

24. מגילת עוה -- Megillat Evah, autobiography published by Moses Korner (Zlotower)

in Breslau, 1836, with a German translation by J. A.

Miro. Under the title ישיבת הנקרא ח"א <sup>P</sup>it

appeared in Vienna in 1851 and 1862. In Wilna in 1864

and in Warsaw in 1870 it appeared with a Yiddish translation.

A false edition by Samuel Heller to the original appeared in 1880 in Wilna. The Megillat Evah was published again in 1895 and 1897 in Munich.<sup>92</sup> Heller formed the title of his autobiography from the first letters of the first four words of the book of Lamentations 1:1

הָיָה עֵיטָה לְיָמֵינוּ -- "How doth the city sit solitary", and the combined letters made up the word אִתָּה -- hatred. It was a most appropriate title for this book. The Megillat Evah is not a complete autobiography for it begins only after Heller was apprehended by the government in 1629. Nothing of his birth or early training is specifically mentioned. As Heller himself writes: "I have called this work the Megillat Evah because it resembles a scroll, and because it makes known to my children and to the other readers the false accusations of my maligners whose tongues were sharper and whose lying lips pierced deeper than a sword."

In the opening pages Heller mentions a few of the books which he wrote -- a commentary on the "Behinat 'Olam" of Jedaiiah Bedersi, Zurat ha-Bayit, Tub Ta'am, Tosfos Yom Tov, Ma'adanne Melek, and later he includes the Malbushe Yom Tov. Of the actual conditions of the Jews in Vienna and Prague he says very little and it was necessary in this thesis to read other sources in order to make a complete biography of Heller. The bulk of the Megillat Evah is devoted to his trial in Vienna and to his subsequent life in Poland up to his election as rabbi in Cracow. His autobiography is written in an easy style and in an interesting manner, yet it is inferior to some of his other works, let us say for example, the Tosfos



Yom Tov or the Ma'adanne Melek. While the Megillat Evah does not reflect his great scholarship it does reflect his mild and honest personality.

The continuation of his biography is both false and spurious as is perceived by the style which is not at all that of Heller's, but a product of the Haskalah movement. And, furthermore, the mention of Turenne as French ambassador in Vienna in 1629 and also that he was appointed in that same year by Ludwig XIV as Field Marshal is altogether impossible because Turenne never entered the French army until 1630. It is simply a fantasy.<sup>93</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MAN HELLER

It is only from his other writings as discussed by Zunz<sup>94</sup> that we learn more of the real man. Heller knew mathematics and engineering to such a degree of proficiency that he was quite qualified to teach these subjects. All of his books are written in excellent Hebrew and presented in an extremely logical manner. In recognition of his ability as a Hebrew stylist Samuel Archevolti of Italy sent his (Archevolti's) book the "Aru-gat ha-Bosem" to Heller for examination despite the great territorial distance. Heller also knew foreign languages even reading the genuine Yosepon (יוסף) in Latin. Many foreign words in Rambam he explained to those not linguists. His great love for the truth and the obligation that he felt he owed his readers not to hide anything of importance from them made hypocrisy impossible in his writings, made him an impartial and honest critic. To show his great toleration for the truth, as he saw it, he mentions a work of Azaria dei Rossi, the "Me-or 'Enayim", despite the objection that his teacher, Löw b. Bezaleel, whom he revered, had for this author. While no pressure was brought upon him to mention this book, yet in a true spirit of scholarship he did not conceal the author's name, even praising the book because of its worth, though its contents may have been personally disagreeable to him.

Through Heller the esteem of the Zohar and the whole of the Cabalistic literature was raised. It is not to be deduced that he was a Cabalist for although he knew the Zohar and other Cabalistic works he was an ardent advocate of the Halakah. Many times he would show that the Law and the Cabala really coincided, the only difference being that the latter was written in secret. He was also versed in the secular sciences. From his notes on Joseph ben Isaac ha-Levi's "Gib'at ha-Moreh" and his Parashat ha-Hodesh on Maimonides' "Yad" we find that he was acquainted with philosophy. Especially in this latter book we see many instances where he discovered the sources of Maimonides and even changed much of the "Yad." He also loved Aristotle and Plato. While criticizing the Pitanim for their verbosity of style and lack of feeling and also that they might have applied their knowledge to the Torah and more worth while things, he still defended them from other critics. He wrote the Berit Melah to acquaint the women with the laws regarding the salting of meat, and, likewise, for their benefit he translated the "Orhot Hayyim" of Asheri. Both are written in Judaeo-German. The Zemah Zedek, which contains some of his responsa, states that he was well known throughout Israel. As a general statement it can be said that because of his love for truth and sincerity he is recognized by the Jewish scholars as being a most reliable source of information and possessing an intelligent understanding of the many fields of Jewish lore and study. His commentaries fairly glow with the utmost spirit of intellectual free-

dom and thought. Never proud or arrogant, always humble and honest -- thus did Heller come to be admired by scholars of all generations.

Yet, it is this very characteristic, his most commendable passion for honesty, that on two occasions was the source of great unhappiness and misfortune for him. The first instance, that of the circumstances leading up to his trial (cf. ch. II), and the other, that of his fearless struggle against the corruptness of the Polish rabbinate (cf. ch. III). And in this connection the author wishes to state that were it not for the policy of the government during the Thirty Years' War that Heller would, in all likelihood, never have been arrested. The Austrian government then, as has been discussed, was in very dire straits financially. They would seize any and all pretenses to exact money from individuals. This is precisely what happened in Heller's case. Not for one moment was the Crown genuinely interested in his alleged attacks on Christianity, there were other matters far more urgent during those war times. THE AUTHORITIES SIMPLY TOOK THE ARGUMENTS OF THE MALIGNERS AS A GUISE IN ORDER TO MULCT HELLER OF HIS GREATLY MAGNIFIED WEALTH. THE REPLENISHING OF THE ROYAL TREASURY WAS THE ALL IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION AND THE AUTHORITIES WERE NOT REALLY CONCERNED EITHER WITH HELLER'S GUILT OR HIS INNOCENCE. The Crown would have taken any individual and would have done the very same thing on the flimsiest of subterfuges. Unfortunately Heller was represented as a man of riches and thus became an innocent victim to this policy of ruthlessly extracting



finances and contributions. With all <sup>of</sup> Ferdinand's apparent tolerance toward the Jews it is very clearly seen that he had ulterior motives. Permission was always granted to the Jews as long as their petitions were either accompanied by a sum of money or were sponsored by court Jews who had influence simply because of their financial connections.

Throughout the autobiography there is observed a personality dignified and modest. Never once dragging in the names of his adversaries or thinking of retaliating against them. Heller was respected wherever he went by both Jews and non-Jews. His opinions were accepted without contradiction, his scholarship was recognized in many lands by the leading authorities. Even as it was said of his illustrious grandfather so may it be repeated of Yom Tov that he was the outstanding personality, not only in his own generation, but also in the succeeding ones.

# NOTES

1. Zunz, I. M., Geschichte der Krakauer Rabbinats, p. 93.
2. Azulai, Chayyim J. D., Shem ha-Gedolim, p. 78
3. Hock, Simon, in the Gal-Ed by Koppelman Lieben, p. 67.
4. Popper, M., Revue des etudes Juives, vol. 30, p. 90.
5. Zunz, op. cit. p. 93.
6. Wolf, Gerson, Geschichte der Juden in Wien, p. 43.
7. Ibid. p. 44.
8. Ibid. p. 45.
9. Wolf, Gerson, Ferdinand II und die Juden, p. 6.
10. Ibid. p. 10.
11. Ibid. p. 11.
12. Ibid. p. 15.
13. Wolf, Gerson, Geschichte der Juden in Wien, p. 45.
14. Wolf, Gerson, Ferdinand II und die Juden, p. 15.
16. Kaufman, David; Die Letzte Vertreibung der Juden, p. 3.
17. Ibid. p. 4.
18. Ibid. p. 5.
19. Ibid. p. 6.
20. Ibid. p. 7.
21. Wolf, Gerson, Geschichte der Juden, p. 45.
22. Kaufman, D., p. 7.
23. Wolf, G., Ferdinand II, p. 15ff.
24. Kaufman, D., p. 8.
25. Ibid. p. 10.
26. Herrmann, Johann Franz von, Geschichte der Israeliten in Böhmen, p. 55.
27. Kaufman, D., p. 10.

28. Ibid. p. 11.
29. Ibid. p. 12.
30. Ibid. p. 13.
31. Ibid. p. 15.
32. Heller, Tom Tov Lipmann, Megillat Evah, p. 6.
33. Kaufman, D., p. 16.
34. Ibid. p. 17.
35. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 91.
36. Kaufman, D., p. 17.
37. Megillat Evah, p. 8.
38. Popper, M., vol. 29, p. 128.
39. Ibid. p. 130.
40. Ibid. p. 131.
41. Ibid. p. 132.
42. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 85.
43. Popper, M., vol. 29, p. 132.
44. Ibid. p. 133.
45. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 82.
46. Popper, M., vol. 29, p. 134.
47. Wolf, G., Ferdinand II, p. 18.
48. Zunz, I.M., p. 94.
49. Simonsen, David, Festkrift i Anledning, p. 206.
50. Zunz, I. M., p. 94.
51. Gen. 49:20.
52. Megillat Evah, p. 18.
53. Simonsen, D., p. 207.
54. Ibid. p. 211.
55. Megillat Evah, p. 20.

note  
when  
says it  
Megillat

56. Simonsen, D., p. 208-9.

I. Fol. 66 verso und 67 recto. Und zwar:

1. Im Roš (Berakhoth VIII, 3) von 66 v. vorletzte Zeile bis 67 r. 3. Zeile, die Mišna. Darauf bezieht sich der jeweils am rechten Rande fol. 66 v. unten und 67 r. oben stehende Buchstabe A (von der gleichen Hand wie die Einrahmungsstriche). Er ist an der ersten Stelle mit einem Abkürzungsstrich versehen und bedeutet zweifellos Anathema.

2. Im Maadane melekh fol. 66 v. die letzten sieben Zeilen, also der Beginn des Absatzes וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל und weiter fol. 67 r. von Z. 4 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Z. 7 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.

3. Im Lehem hamudoth von fol. 66 v. Z. 4 von unten וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis 67 r. Z. 9 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל, also Absatz 11 und 12 mit Ausnahme des Schlusses.

4. In Raši fol. 66 v. die letzten sieben Zeilen וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Ende.

II. Fol. 70 r. Und zwar:

1. Im Ros (Berakhoth IX, 6) von Z. 3 von unten וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis letzte Zeile וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.

2. Im Leḥ. ḥam. von Z. 8 von unten וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Z. 6 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל und von Z. 4 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Z. 2 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.

III. Fol. 70 v. Und zwar:

1. Im Roš (Ber. IX, 10) von Z. 6 von unten וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Z. 5 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.

2. Im Leḥ. ḥam. von Z. 12 von unten וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל bis Z. 9 וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת הַקּוֹל.



57. Megillat Evah, p. 26.
58. Kaufman, D., p. 20.
59. Megillat Evah, p. 28.
60. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 91.
61. Megillat Evah, p. 30.
62. Kaufman, p. 19.
63. Megillat Evah, p. 32.
64. Ibid. p. 34.
65. Ibid. p. 36.
66. Dubnow, Simon, Pinchas ha-Medinah, p. 278-279.
67. Graetz, H., History of the Jews, vol. 4, p. 643-4.
68. Margolis, Max L. and Marx, Alexander, A History of the Jewish People, p. 537 ff.
69. Brann, M., Revue, vol. 21, p. 270 ff.
70. Zunz, I. M., p. 102.
71. Megillat Evah, p. 44.
72. Landshuth, L., Amude ha-Aboda, 83.
73. Fuenn, Samuel J., Keneset Israel, p. 442.
74. Zunz, I. M., p. 102.
75. Ibid. p. 100.
76. Hock, S., p. 67.
77. Zunz, I. M., p. 100.
78. Hock, S., p. 67.
79. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 90 ff.
80. Dworsky, Franz, Zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen, Mähren, und Schlesien, p. 824.
81. Megillat Evah, p. 12.
82. Kaufman, D., p. 20.

*This refers to items  
signed by  
R. Yoram Tuv*

83. Popper, M., vol. 29, p. 136 ff.
84. Popper, M., vol. 30, p. 90.
85. Fuenn, S. J., p. 442.
86. Hock, S., p. 68.
87. Ibid.
88. Zunz, I. M., pp. 93-104.
89. Landshuth, L., p. 84.
90. Ibid. p. 85.
91. Kaufman, p. 16.
92. Steinschneider, Moritz, Die Geschichtsliteratur der  
Juden, p. 118.
93. Simonsen, D., p. 210.
94. Zunz, I. M., pp. 96 ff.

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