***The Days of My Life*: An Unknown Autobiography of a 19th Century Hungarian Rabbi**

**Background**

Within the vast field of scholarship dedicated to autobiography, the autobiographies of the Haskalah movement (Jewish Enlightenment) hold a small but important place.[[1]](#footnote-2) Since virtually all the representatives of this movement at some point in their lives wrote an autobiography, a memoir, or a literary construction with autobiographical elements,[[2]](#footnote-3) these writings deserve special attention both as pioneering literary creations and as valuable egodocuments of social history.

While there is a great deal of disagreement among scholars regarding the definition of autobiography as a literary genre,[[3]](#footnote-4) there is consensus on some of the common features of the Haskalah movement’s first-person retrospective description of the lived life. Consequently, scholars agree that, apart from the objective of preserving the story of one’s life for future generations, these autobiographies served a social mission. Their authors were determined to use their life experiences as encouragement and guidance for younger generations in their transition into the modern world.[[4]](#footnote-5) Additionally, some of the authors described in their autobiographies the processes of secularization they underwent, and expressed doubts about religion and religious faith. Many articulated a harsh critique of the religious institutions of their time and of the religious educational system. The latter dealt specifically with the educational system of the yeshivahs, [[5]](#footnote-6) the violent methods used by the educators, and the traditional patterns of disseminating knowledge. Inspired by the ideals of the European Enlightenment, the authors of the autobiographies judged this system, which was based on passive oral learning, as unproductive, retrograde, and even harmful. They urged their contemporaries to replace it with an active system that would encourage writing, among other things, as a legitimate means of self-expression. In fact, the entire project of Haskalah literature was a forceful realization of this much-needed change.

The Maskilic (Jewish Enlightenment) effort to initiate change through a critical representation of life events went hand-in-hand with the authors’ humanistic struggle for the revival of the Hebrew language in general, and biblical Hebrew specifically. The biblical lexical stratum chosen by the authors in their writings challenged the educational system that had suppressed, or simply forgotten, the Bible and its language throughout centuries of halakhic learning. In other words, the autobiographies were part of an ideological struggle to free the Hebrew language from the chains of the halakhah (Jewish law), and turn it into a language of self-expression and storytelling.[[6]](#footnote-7)

**Rabbi Mózes Salamon**

All the above is true of the short autobiography written in 1887 by an almost anonymous author, Rabbi Mózes Salamon. Like other Haskalah authors, Salamon saw his own life as an example from which younger generations could learn. However, in contrast with many authors of the period who were disillusioned with religion, Salamon was dedicated to the Jewish faith, and determined to preserve it without relinquishing the achievements of modernity. Rabbi Salamon was a pious Jew and an autodidact who belonged to the so-called *rabbinic* *Haskalah.[[7]](#footnote-8)* What is known about this modest member of the Haskalah movement?

Born in 1838 in Khust, a town in northeast Hungary (now part of Ukraine), Rabbi Mózes Salamon spent most of his professional life as the rabbi of a tiny community in the town of Thurdossin in northwest Hungary (now Tvrdošín in Slovakia). Between 1896 and 1901 he published five critical essays on various subjects within Judaism, which mostly went unnoticed by his contemporaries.[[8]](#footnote-9) His original background was ultra-Orthodox, but during his lifetime he slowly shifted from ultra-Orthodoxy to mainstream Orthodoxy (status quo) and later to Neolog Judaism. Throughout these transitions, he remained an Orthodox Jew. We know from external sources that in 1899 he ran for the position of rabbi of Pest’s Neolog community after the death of its longstanding leader, Rabbi Samuel Löw Brill. Within the framework of the competition for this position, Salamon gave two public lessons. Eventually, his candidacy was rejected by the community, who found his command of Hungarian to be sound but not brilliant.[[9]](#footnote-10) Apparently, Pest’s cultivated Jewish community liked its rabbis to be in full and equal command of Hebrew, German, and Hungarian. While Salamon’s Hebrew was beyond competition and his German was very good, his Hungarian was adequate, but not as brilliant as Pest’s community expected it to be. Following this painful rejection, Salamon remained with the community of Thurdossin until his death in 1912.

In 1887, at the early age of 49, Salamon wrote a short autobiography. However, he published it 23 years later together with a collection of his poems and short stories.[[10]](#footnote-11) The autobiography, titled *The* *Days of My Life* (Yemei Ḥeldi) is written in Hebrew in rhymed (A A C B B C) prose divided into 116 six-line stanzas. Presumably, the decision to write the story of his life in verse form was part of Salamon’s Maskilic effort to revive the biblical poetic tradition that had been lost among the Central and East European Jews. In a short introduction to the collection, Salmon decries “the days of misery and darkness” that the Jewish people had lived through for centuries, when rabbinic scholars had “sunk in muddy depths of casuistry and *pilpul* in order to forget their poverty and let their spirit sustain their impotent body.”[[11]](#footnote-12) Nowadays, he explains, when those terrible days are over and Jews have civil rights, like other citizens, it is time to rediscover a sense of the beautiful, and especially the beauty of poetry.

Salamon modestly describes his literary creation as an act of clearing away boulders to prepare the ground for younger writers. He adds that he decided to publish his life story to show what he had to go through to reach his goal and become the man he has become.[[12]](#footnote-13) He expresses hope that his readers will learn from his experience that education should begin in youth, when learning is easy, since it becomes much harder at a mature age. The vital importance of general education and a harsh critique of those who stand in the way of acquiring knowledge are the central motifs of Salamon’s autobiography.

**Literary Structure of *The* *Days of My Life* and Its Central Ideas**

A few words should be said regarding the literary structure of *The* *Days of My Life*. Although it lacks many of the characteristics of the classical maqama,[[13]](#footnote-14) it can be called a maqama in a more inclusive sense[[14]](#footnote-15) because it exhibits several features characteristic of this genre: it is written in rhymed prose, it tells the story of the author’s life in a humorous spirit, and it contains elements of a picaresque.[[15]](#footnote-16) Salamon’s choice of the maqama as the literary form should be understood as his Maskilic-humanistic tribute to the golden age of medieval Hebrew poetry. The same can be said of his language: Salamon’s Maskilic infatuation with biblical Hebrew leads him to adopt the so-called biblical purismtrendthat plagued the literature of the Haskalah. In the words of one of the critics of this trend, it “expropriated the writer from his own authority and made him a slave to the verses of the Bible.”[[16]](#footnote-17) These words faithfully characterize Salamon’s writing technique, which weaves together fragments of biblical verses and allusions to the point of imposing them on the plot and blurring the meaning of the author’s words.

It is not clear whether Salamon planned his autobiographical poem as an authentic testimony, or as an autobiographical story that was not fully committed to facts. On the one hand, the autobiographical story favors his decision to write in verse, which signals a literary design. Furthermore, the poem is constructed as a humoristic narrative of the adventures of the hero/author in search of a better life, which is characteristic of the picaresque. The hero, a carefree, sharp-eyed youngster of humble origins, leads his readers through a series of places and events that take him from the poor, socially backward ultra-Orthodox atmosphere of his native town to the Orthodox, yet cultivated and respectable life of his later days. Although the formal reason for Salamon to constantly move from town to town, from one yeshivah to another, is his search for a proper educational environment, he is driven by an intrinsic restlessness. He admits that he must be perpetually on the move like a sailor who is never steady on dry land and is only stable when at sea.[[17]](#footnote-18) Gradually, the hero’s experiences and his inherent drive for self-accomplishment forge him into a mature man proud of his intellectual and social achievements.

On the other hand, the author’s intent to create an authentic testimony supports the first-person narration of events. Additionally, the poem precisely states the author’s itinerary and the names of his family members, the rabbis he studied with, and the religious communities he encountered during his travels. Not content with merely mentioning places, Salamon provides us with anecdotes connected with rabbis and their communities, which may contribute to social history research.

Positioning oneself as the subject of the narrative and a mostly realistic treatment of events are traits that may qualify Salamon as a typical member of the Haskalah literary tradition. Although Salamon, like other Haskalah authors, makes extensive use of biblical verses and allusions,[[18]](#footnote-19) his writing is spiced with a pinch of bittersweet humor. What is especially charming is Salamon's ability to paint a scene with a few strokes, and to turn the story of his life into a lively narrative.

Throughout his autobiography, Salamon criticizes the curricula of the yeshivahs for being based solely on the study of the Talmud and halakhic literature. We know from other autobiographies and scholarly research that religious educators prevented yeshivah students from studying the Bible out of fear of *minnut* (heresy).[[19]](#footnote-20) As a result, the entire community of Talmudic scholars lacked basic knowledge of the Bible, the Aggadah, and the Hebrew language. This practice produced generations of semiliterate men.

Similarly, like other maskilim, Salamon criticizes the problematic attitude of yeshivah culture toward writing, both as a technique and as a means of self-expression. The conscious distancing of the learners’ community from writing was at least partly motivated by fear of its subversive power and the dissemination of written texts.[[20]](#footnote-21) Not accidentally, the flow of Salamon’s autobiographical poem is interrupted by a digression that tells of his praise and love for his pen. The pen, Salamon exclaims, is his lover and good angel that has never forsaken him. More than that, it is the pen that has made him the man he is.[[21]](#footnote-22) Although the word for pen (‘*et*) in Hebrew is masculine in gender, Salamon addresses it in the feminine. This poetic feminine personification of the pen reflects Salamon’s sensibility toward the aesthetic aspects of his poem.

 In hindsight, we must admit that Salamon's intellectual journey from a typical representative of a Central European ultra-Orthodox society to an open-minded critic of some of the fundamental principles of Judaism—such as the genesis of the Oral Law, the uniqueness of the Mishnah as the corpus of the Oral Law, or Judaism’s gender-exclusive practices discussed in his essays[[22]](#footnote-23)— prove that ultra-Orthodoxy had every reason to fear the subversive power of writing.

***The Days of My Life***

The immediate reason for writing the story of his life, explains Salamon, is his childlessness: if he were not to write about himself, no one would remember him after he died. Naturally, he begins his narrative with his childhood in Khust, a town in the Maramureș Marmaros region in northeast Hungary. At that time, Maramureș was a poor, backward, and scarcely populated part of the country and, accidentally, the cradle of Central European ultra-Orthodoxy. When Salamon was growing up, Maramureș’ ultra-Orthodox Jews were at the forefront of the struggle against the secular education that the Hungarian government tried to introduce into Jewish communities.[[23]](#footnote-24)

Salamon tells his readers that he grew up in a humble family, the youngest of two sons. He praises his parents, who, despite their extreme poverty, valued dignity and knowledge above all. The family was poor to the point of sending Salamon to earn his living as a pedlar when he was still a small child. Salamon humorously confesses that he was prepared to sell whatever he found on his way. He adds that he did not fit this line of work, which was more suitable for swindlers than honest people. Despite the hardships of his daily life, his thirst for learning was so strong that, encouraged by his mother, he did not leave the *ḥeder* (Jewish school). Like other authors of this period, Salamon describes the harsh atmosphere of the *ḥeder*.[[24]](#footnote-25) His educational experience with the *melamed* (Jewish *heder* teacher) included being hit with whatever the *melamed* had to hand at that moment, and his body was covered with bruises of all colors as a result.[[25]](#footnote-26) Even as a grown man, says Salamon, he cannot forgive his teachers for their violent ways that scarred his body and soul.

However, this painful experience did not deter Salamon from learning. He recounts how, one afternoon, when his father decided to put his knowledge to the test, Salamon so impressed him with his progress and his love of the Torah that he decided there and then to take him the very next day to the local *yeshivah* of the *dayan* (judge), Rabbi Yakov Katina.[[26]](#footnote-27) Salamon humorously adds that when proclaiming his decision, his father emphatically shot a long spit across the room. Instead of joyful anticipation, Salamon confesses, he felt like the sacrificial lamb taken to the altar.[[27]](#footnote-28)

Salamon’s fears proved to be well-grounded. He wittily describes his first day in Rabbi Katina’s yeshivah. Salamon, who turned out to be the rabbi’s youngest student, was virtually petrified by the rabbi's appearance. The rabbi, he tells his readers, looked like the Angel of Death: he was thin like the cows in Pharaoh's dream, his bones protruding from his skin. He wore a long black beard and equally long *peot* (sidelocks). His eyes appeared to be shooting mortal arrows from under his thick bushy brows.

Salamon is most critical of his teacher’s sphere of expertise. He speaks with obvious contempt of the rabbi whose “soul and spirit were poor and thin, immersed as he was in the books of the Talmud, and all his knowledge was only in them.”[[28]](#footnote-29) This teacher, recalls Salamon, hated the Torah and its language and produced only halakhic matters and reproof for his students. The atmosphere of ignorance and resentment towards the Bible, biblical Hebrew, the Aggadah, and anything beyond the halakhah that reigned in the yeshivah world of his youth are recurring motifs in Salamon’s autobiography, and they reflect the critical stand common to most of the writers of the Haskalah.[[29]](#footnote-30)

For an entire week, nobody paid attention to Salamon. While older students were conversing with the rabbi on halakhic subjects, Salamon sat quietly, forgotten by the rabbi and completely ignorant of the subject matter under discussion. Finally, on the Thursday night, the rabbi decided to test his new student's knowledge.[[30]](#footnote-31) Without warning, Salamon recalls, the rabbi darted toward him like a wolf after his prey. The boy went numb with fear, but the rabbi was determined to make him speak. To “help” him regain his senses, the rabbi cursed and hit him with his walking stick, pulling on his ears and hair. Although this proved ineffective, the rabbi was not discouraged by the boy’s reaction, and he continued to use the same “pedagogical” means in the following weeks. One day, after the rabbi slapped his face, Salamon retaliated by pulling hard on his beard. When the rabbi recovered from the initial shock, he grabbed the boy and threw him out into the yeshivah's dark yard. In the meantime, adds Salamon, the other students were having the time of their lives watching the scene. The young boy was first terrified by the darkness, sitting alone in the cold yard and recalling the horror stories he heard as a child. However, as the custom of throwing him to the street became a weekly routine, he learned to entertain himself. He would build a small fire, bake potatoes that he had hidden in the yard beforehand, and smoke a pipe, happily puffing clouds of smoke out of his mouth and nose.[[31]](#footnote-32) Probably marked for life by his first experience as a yeshivah student, Salamon signed all his books as: “The youngest among the students, lowly Mózes Salamon of Khust.”

It seems that Salamon never got used to his first rabbi, and after his bar mitzvah he parted with his parents and left Khust for good. Despite his expectations, leaving his hometown did not change his life for the better. In the years to come, he would wander from yeshivah to yeshivah hoping to find a more hospitable place for his studies. His first stop would be in the town of Csenger, in the picturesque Szatmar valley in Maramureș. For some time he studied there with the “Miracle Rabbi,” Rabbi Asher Anshel Jungreisz (1806–1873).[[32]](#footnote-33) The rabbi, says Salamon, was extremely popular both as a teacher and a man of extraordinary spiritual power. This power made people from all over the region seek his advice concerning all their problems. After telling his readers about the love and veneration Rabbi Jungreisz enjoyed among local Jews, Salamon adds a spicy episode from the rabbi’s life. Apparently, the rabbi was venerated not only by honorable citizens but also by people on the fringes of society. One day burglars who had stolen money from the local priest’s house made a donation to the synagogue using this money. Following an investigation, the rabbi was arrested, put in jail, and accused of collaboration with the burglars. His reputation was tarnished .

Salamon’s description of the hardships of the yeshivah students in Central Europe in the second half of the 19th century is quite illuminating. He does not elaborate about the learning process in those yeshivahs; instead, he describes the harsh conditions of their lives. They were literally starving for food, living in appalling poverty, and wearing dirty clothes teeming with lice. One day, Salamon tells us, he was so hungry that he drank the lamp oil. Yet nothing deterred him from dedicating his whole being to the study of the Torah. These hardships took their toll, however, and Salamon became seriously ill and almost died.[[33]](#footnote-34)

After his recovery, Salamon decided to begin his travels again. This time he turned to the town of Dés (Dej) in Transylvania to study with Rabbi Menachem Mendel Panet (1818–1884).[[34]](#footnote-35) The rabbi had nothing but praise for this young honest man who loved him like his own son. Thanks to Panet’s loving care, Salamon writes, he was respected by his fellow students. At some point things started to go better for Salamon, and he began earning money. It is not clear what kind of job Salamon had. He tells his readers that he earned money by “cruelly chastising” young children. The expression “cruel chastisement” appears in Jerimiah 30:14. Did Salamon harshly discipline children in the *ḥeder*, or did his “self-enslavement” to biblical purism cause him to taint himself?

Proud of his new status, Salamon bought himself expensive clothes and hurried home hoping to impress his parents. Tired and hungry, he knocked on the door, but he could not anticipate his mother’s reaction: she burst into laughter upon seeing him. Salamon was so hurt and humiliated by this welcome that he turned on his heels and went away without crossing the threshold. He swore that he would not return until no one dare laugh at him. He kept his promise, he adds, but in retrospect he understands that his reaction was childish, and it deprived him of years of parental love and care.[[35]](#footnote-36)

Salamon’s next stop would be in the town of Ungvár (Uzhhorod) in the Maramureș region. He did not stay there long, but it was enough time to witness a plague that struck the town. Salamon decries the ignorance of this community. Instead of turning to doctors, they took advice from a swindler who went by the nickname of “the Rabbi from Turkey” (although he came from Poland). Apparently, this impostor, who pretended to be a rabbi, convinced them that drinking unfiltered alcohol would cure them. As a result, tells Salamon, scores of children, women, and men died of poisoning.[[36]](#footnote-37)

After years of wandering from yeshivah to yeshivah, Salamon found himself in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš, then a town in western Hungary (now in Slovakia.)[[37]](#footnote-38) Liptovský SvätýMikuláš apparently had a bad reputation among ultra-Orthodox Jews because of its association with the maskilim. Salamon recounts how he almost died of dread when a *hasid* whom he met along the way wondered why he was going to that town, unless he wanted to eat pork (!).[[38]](#footnote-39) In hindsight, Salamon characterizes this *hasid* as an ignoramus who sanctified anything written in “the Chaldean language” (Aramaic), whether it was true or false. Salamon assumes the *hasid* was probably angry with the cultivated Jews of Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš who held him as a fool because he could not read the Bible.[[39]](#footnote-40) Salamon’s critique of the *hasid* reflects the typical Maskilic attitude towards Hassidism: ignorance of the foundations of Judaism, such as the Bible, and blind faith in mystical/ “primitive” matters (the “Chaldean Language” is probably a euphemism for the Kabbalah).[[40]](#footnote-41) Although Salamon does not deny that “many fools and religion transgressors” resided in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš, he objects that one should blemish a community of prominent scholars and writers because of some marginal cases.[[41]](#footnote-42)

Once in Liptovský SvätýMikuláš, Salamon saw for the first time in his life wigless Jewish women and beardless Jewish men in the streets. Their sight, he recollects, made him recoil in dread as if he had seen a lion. He was most surprised when those same beardless men filled the synagogue near the time of the prayer. Moreover, after the prayer, they stayed to study the Torah. The lesson was given by Rabbi Issachar Dov bar Sinai of Mikuláš (d. 1861). Salamon purposely gives a detailed description of his appearance. The rabbi was a man of impressive stature, whose head, beard, and brows were as white as snow. This description stands in stark contrast to that of his first rabbi in Khust. Contrary to that first teacher, whom he called “the Angel of Death,” this one looked to him like “God’s Angel.”[[42]](#footnote-43) We know from other sources that Rabbi Issachar was a close student of the Hatam Sofer and the author of the halakhic book *Minḥat ‘Ani*.[[43]](#footnote-44)

Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš became the place that transformed Salamon from a narrow-minded yeshivah student into a learned rabbi and intellectual. The person that influenced him most was Rabbi Issachar Dov bar Sinai of Mikuláš. Salamon describes Rabbi Issachar with great love and respect. A true man of learning, a person of high moral standards, he loved Salamon like his own son. Rabbi Issachar taught Salamon the Torah and gave him the rabbinic *semikhah* (rabbinic ordination). It is interesting that among Rabbi Issachar's outstanding qualities, Salamon mentions the impeccable cleanliness of his clothes. We may assume that cleanliness was not the strongest attribute of traditional Jewish society.

During this period, Salamon went through an emotional crisis as a result of unrequited love. It took him considerable time to get over this chapter in his life. Eventually, he married a woman by the name of Rachel Leah, but the marriage was childless. Salamon pays tribute to his father-in-law, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Hahn, who played a formative role in his life. He describes him as a pious Jew, a man of outstanding moral qualities, and a man of general culture. For years, says Salamon, he had believed that only the study of Torah was important, and he had feared and resented general culture. As a result, he did not know, nor did he think it necessary to know, how to write or to express himself in writing: Salamon said he was “mute like a fish.”[[44]](#footnote-45) His father-in-law proved to him that he was wrong. He encouraged Salamon to embark on an intensive intellectual and cultural journey. It seems that, contrary to many maskilim who discovered Western culture in their early youth, Salamon became open to it only in his late twenties.

In this part of Hungary in the second half of the 19th century, acquiring general culture was essential in order to serve as a rabbi. A man lacking general education, Salamon explains, is like someone building his house on sand.[[45]](#footnote-46) He began a new chapter in his life, a period of self-education. This period, which lasted for years, was accompanied by extreme financial hardship. Salamon thanks his modest wife who for years silently endured poverty and deprivation. Despite all this, he considers the acquisition of general culture as one of the greatest achievements of his life. Salamon tells us that, among other things, he acquired writing skills in “the language of learning,” probably German.[[46]](#footnote-47) Eventually, this difficult period paid off. We know from other sources that in 1867 Salamon was appointed to the position of rabbi of the small town of Thurdossin, a post he held for 45 years until his death.[[47]](#footnote-48)

Salamon wrote his autobiographical poem in 1888 at the age of 49 as the summation of his life. He could not have known that he had another 24 years ahead of him, during which he would develop another aspect of his creative personality. Over those years, he would engage in religious discourse and produce five polemical essays. In the closing stanzas of his autobiography, he solemnly begs his readers to believe that he had served God all his life, had striven to do good, and had never sought honor or wealth. He assures them that he loved human beings, rejoiced in their achievements, and felt pained by their failures. He did all he could to make their life better and to bring peace to their dwellings. But even if he had made some mistakes, he continues, he hoped that God would pardon him because we all fight our evil inclination and there is no winner in this fight.[[48]](#footnote-49)

**Conclusion**

Despite its modest length, Mózes Salamon’s autobiographical poem *The Days of My Life* contains all the characteristic traits of a Maskilic autobiography, both in its formal literary aspect and its content. Although Salamon hoped to preserve the story of his life for future generations, he was equally committed to the mission of helping to bring change to the Jewish collective. His outspoken critique of the Jewish institutions of his youth and their leaders are not just the complacent reminiscences of an achiever. They are a warning call to those who do not understand the threat these negative social phenomena pose to the future of the Jewish people in a changing world. Salamon’s purposeful comparison between the backward society of his youth and the cultural atmosphere of his mature days is meant to convince his fellow Jews that adopting the cultural values of European civilization does not mean deserting Jewish faith and tradition: one can be both an enlightened member of European society and a truly religious Jew.

 For Salamon, no real change can be achieved without a fundamental shift in the existing educational paradigm. This paradigm, designed to limit the scope of yeshivah students’ knowledge of halakhic matters, and to isolate them from modernity, paradoxically alienated them from essential aspects of Jewish heritage such as the Bible, the Aggadah, and the Hebrew language. Salamon’s poem, heavily loaded with biblical expressions, is at times part of a self-sacrificing effort to revive the language of the Bible that had been consigned to oblivion by the religious establishment of his era.

1. To mention just a few studies: Shmuel Werses, “Darkhei HaAutobiographia BiTekufat HaHaskalah,” *Megamot VeZurot BeSifrut HaHaskalah*, Jerusalem: Magnes University Press 1990, 249–260; Alan Mintz, *Banished from their Fathers’ Table: Loss of Faith and* *Hebrew Autobiography*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1989; Moshe Pelli, “The Literary Genre of the Autobiography in Hebrew Enlightenment Literature: Mordechai Ginzburg's 'Aviezer,'” *Modern Judaism* 10 (1990), 159–169; Marcus Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone: Origins of Jewish* *Autobiography*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2006; Ariel Levinson, *Patterns of Secularization in Hebrew* *Modern Autobiographies* (Hebrew), Ph. D. Dissertation, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone*, 412–414. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See, for example, Moseley’s musing over the elusive nature of autobiography as a literary genre. M. Moseley, *Being for Myself Alone*, 1-13. See also, Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf. *Handbook of Autobiography / Autofiction*. Handbook of Autobiography – Autofiction, Berlin: De Gruyter 2019, 73–74. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Shmuel Werses, “Darkhei HaAutobiographia BiTekufat HaHaskalah,” 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Pelli, “The Literary Genre of Autobiography,” 163–164. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Moshe Pelli, *Haskalah veModernizm*, Bnei Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2007, 54–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Michael K. Silber, “The Historical Experience of German Jewry and Its Impact on Haskalah and Reform in Hungary,” in Jacob Katz (ed.), *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model,* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. *Netiv Moshe: Maamar Meḥhkari ‘al Netivot haTorah uveyḥud ‘al Qal vaḤomer,* Vienna, 1896; *Netiv Moshe: Maamar Meḥkari ‘al Qabbalah ve‘al Mishpat Talmidei haḤakhamim*, Vienna, 1897; *Netiv Moshe: Maamar Meḥkari ‘al Koaḥ haḤakhamim,* Budapest, 1898; *Netiv Moshe: Maamar Meḥkari ‘al Mishpat haNashim baEmunah,* Vienna, 1899; *Netiv Moshe: Maamar Meḥkari uMusari ‘al Otot haEmunah,* Vienna, 1901*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Egyenlőség, 24 Sept. 1899, pp. 9–10 (https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/egy/1899/09?e=-------en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI--------------1). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. MózesSalamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim, Hegionim, Shirim, Meshalim veSippurei Limmudim*, Turdossin, 1910. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Ibid, Introduction, p. 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Ibid., ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. In the more general sense, a makama is an epic story written in rhymed prose. It was first used in Arabic literature and later adopted by Medieval Jewish authors. It was revived in the Haskalah and in modern Hebrew literature. Nurit Govrin, “Signon haMaqama baSifrut haIvrit baDorot haAḥaronim,” in *Qriyat HaDorot*, Tel Aviv: Gvanim, 2002, v. I, 369–397. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Ibid., 394, n. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Picaresque (*pícaro* – rascal in Spanish) is a classic literary genre designed as an autobiography of a vagrant of low social origins making his way to social respectability. J. A. Garrido Ardila, “Origins and definition of the picaresque genre,” Juan Antonio Garrido (ed.) The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 1–23. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Cited from I. Parush, *The Sin of Writing*, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. MózesSalamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanza 69*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Iris Parush, "Mabat Aḥer 'al "Ḥaiei ha'Ivrit haMetah'": haBa'arut Hamekhuvenet baLashon ha'Ivrit baḤevrah haYehudit haMizraḥ Eiropit baMeah ha-19 veHashpa'atah al haSifrut ha'Ivrit veQoreha," *Alpayim* 13(1996), 93–101. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. I. Parush, *The* *Sin of Writing*, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Using a concept borrowed from Funkenstein and Steinzaltz, Parush coins this phenomenon as *deliberate ignorance* (*ba’arut mekhuvenet*). I. Parush, *The* *Sin of Writing*, 228–230, 242. Amos Funkenstein, Adin Steinsaltz, *Sociology of Ignorance* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Misrad Habitaḥon 1987. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim, stanzas* 1, 64– 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Mózes Salamon, *The Path of Moses: A Scholarly Essay on the Case of Women in Religious Faith*, Julia Schwartzmann (ed.), Brill: 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Menachem Keren-Kratz, “HaḤinukh haYehudi baMaḥoz Marmarosh (Hungaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia),” *Dor leDor* 45 (2021), 183–199. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. I. Parush, *The Sin of Writing*, 224. The descriptions of the ḥeder in Haskalah literature are very numerous, and many of them are negative. David Assaf and Immanuel Etkes (eds.), *The Ḥeder: Studies, Documents, Literature, and Memories* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University 2010, 81–85. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanzas 16–17*.* Although the *melameds’* violent ways with their students were a fact of life, one should remember that they belonged to the lowest social stratum of the learners’ community, underpaid, undernourished, and teaching in appalling conditions. Mordekhai Adler, *Goral haMelamdim o haḤeder*, Wien 1883. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Rabbi Ya’kov Katina (d. 1890) was the author of several halakhic and musar books, the most famous of them being Yakov Katina, *Raḥamei haAv* (Warsaw, 1874). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanza 24*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Ibid., stanza *26.* [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Yaacov Shavit, Mordechai Eran, *Milḥemet Haluḥot* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003), 35–45. Iris Parush, "Mabat Aḥer al "Ḥaiei ha'Ivrit haMetah,'" 93-101. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Apparently, these Thursday night tests were a routine practice in the yeshivahs. I. Parush, *The Sin of Writing*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanzas 24–37*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Ibid., stanzas 49–56. Asher Anshel Jungreisz was the author of *Menuḥat Asher* (Sigat, 1876). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Ibid., stanza 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Panet was a halakhic author and the second leader of the hassidic court of Dej. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanzas 70-72*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Ibid*.,* stanzas 76-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Ibid., stanzas 81-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Ibid., stanza 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Ibid., stanza 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Shmuel Verses, “Magical and Demonological Phenomena as Treated Satirically by Maskilim of Galicia” (Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 17 (1994), 33–62. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Salamon, *Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim,* stanza 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Ibid., stanzas 89–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Yisakhar Ber Ben Sinai Lamdan, *Minḥat ‘Ani* (Vienna, 1857). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim*, stanza 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Ibid., stanza 103. Salamon bases this conviction on Leviticus Rabbah 1:6 – “One who lacks knowledge has nothing.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Ibid., stanza 107. We know that he spoke and wrote both in German and in Hungarian. In the Repository of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences are extant letters that he wrote in those languages. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Yehoshua Robert Buchler (ed.), *Pinkas haKehilot: Slovakia,* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem 2003, vol. 11, 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Salamon*, Netiv Moshe: Divrei Yamim*, stanzas 114–115. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)