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

**Background**

Within the vast field of scholarship dedicated to autobiographies 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 wrote at some point of their lives either an autobiography, a memoir, or a literary creation with autobiographical elements,[[2]](#footnote-3) these writings deserve a special interest both as pioneering literary creations and as ego-documents valuable for the research of social history.

While there is a great deal of disagreement among scholars regarding the very definition of autobiography as a literary genre,[[3]](#footnote-4) there is a consensus on some common features of the Haskalah movement first-person retrospective description of the lived life. Thus, it has been agreed that apart from the objective of preserving the story on one’s life for future generations, these autobiographies were books with a social mission. Their authors were determined to use their life experience as an encouragement and guidance for younger generations’ transition into the modern world.[[4]](#footnote-5) Further, some of the authors described in their autobiographies the process of secularization they went through and expressed doubts about religious faith and religion itself. Many expressed a harsh critique of the religious institutions of their time in general and of the religious educational system in particular. The latter dealt specifically with the educational system of the yeshivahs, [[5]](#footnote-6) the violent methods of the educators, and the traditional pattern of the dissemination of knowledge. The authors of the autobiographies, inspired by the ideals of the European Enlightenment, judged this system, based on passive oral learning, as unproductive, retrograde, and even harmful. They urged their contemporaries to substitute this system with an active one, that would among other things encourage writing as a legitimate mean of self-expression. In fact, the whole project of the Haskalah literature was a forceful realization of this much needed change.

The maskilic effort to initiate change through a critical representation of the events of one’s life went hand in hand with these authors’ humanistic struggle for the revival of the Hebrew language in general, and of the biblical Hebrew specifically. The biblical lexical stratum chosen by the authors in their writings served as a challenge to the educational system that had supressed, or simply forgotten, the Bible and its language during centuries of solely halakhic learning. In other words, the autobiographies were part of the ideological struggle to free the Hebrew from the chains of the halakhah and to turn it into the language of self-expression and of the 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 for younger generations to learn from. However, contrary to many authors of the period disillusioned with religion, Salamon was truly dedicated to the Jewish religion 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 do we know about this modest member of the Haskalah movement?

Rabbi Mózes Salamon was born in 1838 in Khust, a town in Nort-Eastern Hungary (today it is part of Ukraine). He spent most of his professional life as the rabbi of a tiny community of the town of Thurdossin in the North-Western part of Hungary (today 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 an ultra-orthodox one, but during his lifetime he slowly shifted from ultra-orthodoxy to main-stream orthodoxy (Status Quo), and later to Neolog Judaism. Throughout these transitions he remained all his life an orthodox Jew. We know from external sources that in 1899 he run for the position of the rabbi of Pest’s Neolog community, after the death of its longstanding leader rabbi Samuel Löw Brill. Within the framework of the competition for the position he gave two public lessons. Eventually his candidacy was rejected by the community, who found his command of the Hungarian 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 rather early age of 49, Salamon wrote a short autobiography. However, he published it only 23 years later together with a collection of his poems and short stories.[[10]](#footnote-11) The autobiography entitled *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. One may assume that the decision to write the story of his life in form of a poem was part of Salamon’s maskilic effort to revive the biblical poetic tradition that was lost among the Central and East European Jews. Thus, in his short introduction to the collection Salmon decries “the days of misery and darkness” that the Jewish people lived through for centuries when the rabbinic scholars "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 about time to rediscover the sense of the beautiful, and especially the beauty of poetry.

Salamon modestly describes his literary creation as an act of clearing away boulders in order to prepare the ground for younger writers. He adds that he decided to publish the story of his life to show what he had to go through in order to reach his goal and to become the man he has become.[[12]](#footnote-13) He expresses hope that his readers will learn from his experience that one should begin his education when he is still young when learning is easy, because it will be much harder at a mature age. The vital importance of general education and the 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 of 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) as it exhibits several of its features. Thus, it is written in a 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) The very choice of the maqama as the literary form should be understood as Salamon’s maskilic-humanistic tribute to the Golden Age of the medieval Hebrew poetry. The same can be said of his language: his maskilic infatuation with the biblical Hebrew leads him to adopt the so-called *biblical purism* trendthat plagued the literature of the Haskalah. In the words of one of this trend’s critics, 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 biblical allusions to the point of imposing itself 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 an autobiographical story not fully committed to facts. In favour of the autobiographical story speaks the very decision to write in rhymes, which is a sign of a literary design. Furthermore, the poem is built 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 string 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 him constantly being on the move from town to town, from one yeshivah to another, is his search for a sound educational environment, deep down he is driven by some intrinsic restlessness. He admits that he must be constantly on the move, like a sailor that is never steady on dry land and only the sea brings him stability.[[17]](#footnote-18) Gradually, the hero’s experiences and his intrinsic drive for self-accomplishment forge him into a grown-up man proud of his intellectual and social achievements.

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

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

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

Similarly, like other maskilim, he criticizes the problematic attitude of the yeshivah culture toward writing, both as a technique and as a mean of self-expression. The conscious distancing of the learners' community from writing was at least partly motivated by the fear of the subversive power of writing 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 praise and love of his pen. The pen, Salamon exclaims, is his lover and his good angel that has never forsaken him. More than that, the pen is the one that made him the man he is.[[21]](#footnote-22) Although the word *pen* (‘*et*) is in Hebrew of masculine gender, Salamon addresses it in feminine. This poetic feminine personification of the pen reflects Salamon’s sensibility to the aesthetic aspects of his poem.

In hindsight we must admit that Salamon's intellectual journey from a typical representative of the Central European ultra-orthodoxy 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 does not write about himself, no one will remember him after he dies. Naturally, he begins his narrative with his childhood in Khust, a town in the Marmaros region in the North-Eastern part of Hungary. In those days Marmaros was a poor backward scarcely populated part of the country and, accidentally, the cradle of the Central European ultra-orthodoxy. When Salamon was growing up, Marmaros’ 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 most of all dignity and knowledge. The family was poor to the point of sending him as a little boy to earn his living as a pedlar. Salamon humorously confesses that he was ready to sell whatever he found on his way. He adds that he did not fit for this line of work that was more suitable for swindlers than for 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*. Like other authors of this period Salamon describes the harsh atmosphere of the ḥeder.[[24]](#footnote-25) His educational experience with the *melamed* included being hit with whatever the melamed had at that moment under his hand and all his body was as the result covered with bruises of all colors.[[25]](#footnote-26) Even as a grown-up man, says Salamon, he cannot forgive his teachers their violent ways that scarred his body and his soul.

However, this painful experience did not deter Salamon from learning. One afternoon, he tells us, when his father decided to put his knowledge to test, he impressed him so much with his progress and his love of the Torah that he decided on the spot 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 a 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 the rabbi Katina’s yeshivah. Salamon, who turned out to be the rabbi’s youngest student, was virtually petrified by the rabbi's sight. 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 sidelocks (*peot*). His eyes were shooting mortal arrows from under his thick bushy eyebrows.

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, tells Salamon, who hated the Torah and its language, had only halakhic matters and reproof for his students. The atmosphere of ignorance and resentment towards the Bible, the biblical Hebrew, the Aggadah, and to anything beyond halakhah which reigned in the yeshivah world of his youth is a recurring motif in Salamon’s autobiography and it reflects the critical stand common to most of the writers of the Haskalah.[[29]](#footnote-30)

For the entire week nobody paid attention to Salamon. While older students were conversing with the rabbi on halakhic subjects, he sat quietly, forgotten by the rabbi and completely ignorant of the subjects matter of the discussion. Finally, on Thursday night the rabbi decided to test his new student's knowledge.[[30]](#footnote-31) Without warning, Salamon recalls, he darted toward him like a wolf after his prey. The boy went numb with fear, but the rabbi, was determined to make him speak. In order to “help” him regain his senses the rabbi cursed him and hit with his walking stick, pulling along the way 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 him on 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 put on a little 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 will 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 Marmaros. 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 as 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, he adds a spicy episode from rabbi’s life. Apparently, the rabbi was venerated not only by honourable citizens, but also by people on the fringes of society. One day burglars, who stole money from the local priest’s house, made with this money a donation to the synagogue. Following an investigation, the rabbi was arrested, put in jail accused of collaboration with the burglars and his reputation was smeared.

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

After his recovery he decided to hit the road 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) He has nothing but praise for this young honest man that loved him like his own son. Thanks to his loving care, Salamon writes, he was respected by his fellow students. At some point things went better for him and he even began earning money. It is not clear what kind of job Salamon was carrying out. He tells us that he earned money by “cruelly chastising” young children. Now the expression “cruel chastisement” appears in Jer 30:14. Did he really harshly discipline children in the ḥeder, or his “self-enslavement” to the biblical purism makes him taint himself?

Proud of his new status, he bought himself expensive clothes and hurried home hoping to impress his parents. When tired and hungry he knocked on the door he could not anticipate his mother’s reaction: she burst into laugh 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 would dare laughing 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)

His next station would be in the town of Ungvár (Uzhhorod) in Marmaros region. It seems that he did not stay there for too long, but long enough to witness a plague that struck the town. Salamon decries the ignorance of the community that instead of turning to doctors 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 they would be healed by drinking unfiltered alcohol. As the result, tells Salamon, scores of children, women, and men died of poisoning.[[36]](#footnote-37)

After years of wandering from yeshivah to yeshivah Salamon somehow found himself in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš, then a town in Western Hungary, today Liptovský Mikuláš in Slovakia.[[37]](#footnote-38) Liptovský SvätýMikuláš had apparently a bad reputation among ultra-orthodox Jews, because of its association with the maskilim. Salamon tells that he almost died of dread when a *hasid* whom he met on his way there wondered why he was going to that town, unless he fancied 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 that this 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 there were “many fools and religion transgressors” in Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš, he objects that one should not 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 of the town. Their sight, he recollects, made him recoil in dread as if he saw a lion. He was most surprised when those same beardless men filled the synagogue toward the time of the prayer. Moreover, after the prayer they stayed to study Torah. The lesson was given by rabbi Issachar Dov bar Sinai of Mikuláš (d. 1861). Salamon purposely gives a detailed description of his looks. 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)

Eventually Liptovský Svätý Mikuláš became the place that transformed Salamon from a narrow-minded yeshivah student into a learned rabbi and an 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 Torah and gave him the rabbinic *smikhah*. It is interesting that Salamon mentions among Rabbi Issachar's outstanding qualities the impeccable cleanness of his clothes. We may assume that cleanness was not the strongest side of traditional Jewish society.

It seems that during this period Salamon went through an emotional crisis, apparently because of an unreturned love and it took him much time to get over this chapter in his life. Eventually he got married to a girl 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 and a man of outstanding moral qualities he was also a man of general culture. For years, says Salamon, he had believed that only the study of the Torah was important, and he had feared and resented general culture. As a result, he did not know, nor thought it necessary to know, how to write, to express himself in writing, and “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 yearly youth, Salamon opened up to it only in his late twenties.

We understand that acquiring general culture was essential in the second half of the 19th century in this part of Hungary in order to serve as a rabbi. A man lacking general education, Salamon explains, is like someone building his house on the sand.[[45]](#footnote-46) Thus he began a new chapter in his life, a period of self-education. This period, which apparently took years, was accompanied by extreme financial hardship. Salamon thanks his modest wife that for years silently endured poverty and deprivation. Despite all this he considers the acquisition of general culture as one of the biggest achievements of his life. Salmon tells us that among other things, he acquired command of the writing skills in “the language of learning,” probably, German.[[46]](#footnote-47) It seems that eventually this difficult period paid off. We know from other sources that in 1867 Salamon won the position of the rabbi of the small community of the town of Thurdossin which 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 know that he had another 24 years ahead of him, during which he would develop another aspect of his creative personality. In the course of those years he will engage in a religious polemic and produce five polemical essays. In the closing stanzas of his autobiography he solemnly begs his readers to believe that all his life he served God and strove to do good, that he never sought honour or wealth. He assures them that loved human beings, rejoiced in their achievements and pained their failures. He did all he could to make their life better and to bring peace to their dwellings. But even if he made some mistakes, he continues, he hopes that God will pardon him because we all fight our evil inclination, but there is no winner in this fight.[[48]](#footnote-49)

**Conclusion**

Despite its modest sizes Mózes Salamon’s autobiographical poem *The Days of My Life* contains all the characteristic traits of the maskilic autobiography, concerning both its formal literary aspect and its content. Although Salamon certainly hopes to preserve the story of his life for future generations, he is equally committed to the mission of helping to bring change to the Jewish collective. His outspoken critique of Jewish institutions of his youth and their leaders are not just complacent reminiscences of an achiever. This is a warning call to those who do not understand the threat of these negative social phenomena for the future of the Jewish People in a changing world. Salamon’s purposeful comparison between 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 the 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 change of the existing educational paradigm. This paradigm, designed to limit the scope of yeshivah students’ knowledge to the halakhic matters and to isolate them from modernity, paradoxically alienated them even from essential aspects of Jewish heritage itself such as the Bible, the Aggadah, and the Hebrew language. Salamon’s poem, heavily loaded with biblical expressions, is part of this at times self-sacrificing effort to revive the language of the Bible consigned to oblivion by the religious establishment of his time.

1. To mention just a few researches: 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 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: The 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, Chekhoslovakia),” *Dor leDor* 45 (2021), 183-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. I. Parush, *The Sin of Writing*, 224. The descriptions of the ḥeder in the 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 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 routinely 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)