



The Seforim Shrank

Reviewed by Rabbi Chaim Serebrowski

The Seforim Shrank features reviews and synopses of newly-released seforim. Rabbi Chaim Serebrowski, selects and reviews a sefer that was recently published, sharing with Yated readers information about its contents and the background of its author. Suggestions may be submitted by authors, publishers and distributors to seforimshrank@yated.com.

Magid Harakiah By Rabbi Daniel Glatstein



When Rabbi Daniel Glatstein delivered his first *shiur* over 10 years ago, he never envisioned the success the *shiur* would one day have. Now, after expanding steadily throughout the years, his thought-provoking *shiurim* are finally available in a new format, printed with pristine clarity in the new sefer, *Magid Harakiah*. The first volume has just hit the market, covering the subject of *Adar*, *Purim* and *Megilas Esther*. Although the sefer was written over the course of a year, the content stems from over 10 years of Rabbi Glatstein's *shiurim*.

Rabbi Glatstein learned at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, where he eventually received *smicha*. After becoming a *rov* in Kew Garden Hills, he began delivering weekly *shiurim* in his *shul*, as well as at Kollel Agra D'Pirka in Rav Noach Isaac Oelbaum's *shul* and in a number of other locations. When he moved to the five towns, the *shiur* continued every week in his new *shul*, Kehilas Ahavas Yisroel of Cedarhurst.

The *shiur*'s unique style draws a diverse audience from the surrounding neighborhoods. It is common to have *baalei teshuvah* sitting side-by-side with *rabbonim*, and beginners alongside advanced *talmidei chachomim*; Israelis, *chassidim*, *Sefardim*, and *kollel yungeleit* often sit together, trying to dissect the *shiur* in unison.

The *shiurim* are always accompanied by comprehensive *maarei mekomos* sheets, which are frequently used by other *rabbonim* when delivering *shiurim* on the subjects.

As the *shiurim* gained popularity, they expanded in scope as well. The Kol Halashon *shiurim* hotline began live-streaming audio of the *shiur*, and TorahAnytime started videotaping it and posting it on its website. The new mediums elevated the *shiur*'s reputation and popularity, as people all over the world were now able to access the *shiur* on their phones and computers. Over the last two years, *shiurim* from Rabbi Glatstein were listened to hundreds of

thousands of times.

Rabbi Glatstein undertook the monumental task of transforming the oral *shiurim* into a cogent and profound manuscript, carefully ensuring the clarity of the presentation and the accurate portrayal of the concepts presented. Rabbi Ahron Jacoby, renowned for his writing skills, was commissioned to facilitate the transcription and editing process, and his meticulous style and professional touch are readily apparent on each page. Aware of the *shiur*'s popularity and the high quality level of its content, Oz Vehadar, in a unique venture, undertook to publish the sefer. The layout of the sefer is remarkably fresh and clear, in the trademark style of Oz Ve'hadar publications.

The sefer is comprised of 40 *maamarim*, each one subdivided to make it more easily comprehensible. Each segment has a concise subtitle, giving insight as to what is in it.

The *maamarim* are extremely creative and comprehensive. The thoughts presented are often tantalizing on a variety of levels, delving into the core factors of *Adar*, *Purim* and *Megillas Esther* and purveying the intrinsic *lomdus* within. Chevron *rosh yeshiva* Rav Dovid Cohen writes in his *haskamah* that the sefer can serve as an opening to draw people into the deep concepts of *Adar* and *Purim*. The *sugyos* dealt with by Rabbi Glatstein truly personify the Torah that is often learned by *bnei Torah* during that period of the year, and his *chiddushim* come across as fresh and enlightening to *talmidei chachomim* of any background.

Magid Harakiah spans the whole gamut of topics, often touching on the *halacha*, *lomdus*, *mussar* and *hashkafah* of *Chodesh Adar* and *Purim*. Sources quoted in the *maamarim* weave together *Rishonim*, *Acharonim*, *sifrei Kabbolah*, *chassidus*, and contemporary seforim. Many subjects of *machshavah* are discussed, based on the words of the *Chasam Sofer*, the *Chida*, the *Ben Ish Chai*, Rav Yonason Eibschitz,

and others.

The *shiur*'s variety is well reflected in the *haskamos* the sefer has garnered, including from *roshei yeshiva* and *rabbonim*, *Sefardim* and *chassidim*. *Haskamos* were given by Rav Dovid Cohen, *rosh yeshiva* of Chevron; Rav Yeruchem Olshin, *rosh yeshiva* of Bais Medrash Govoa; Rav Dovid Harris and Rav Akiva Grunblatt, *roshei yeshiva* of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim; Rav Pinchos Friedman, *rosh kollel* of Belz; Rav Noach Isaac Olbaum, *rov* of Khal Nachlas Yitzchok in Queens; Rav Asher Weiss, *rosh kollel* of Minchas Asher; Rav Yisroel Reisman, *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas; and Rav Yitzchok Yosef, *mechaber* of *Yalkut Yosef*. (Interestingly, Rav Yitzchok Yosef submitted six pages of his own *chiddushim* along with the *haskamah*, and they appear at the end of the sefer.)

The sefer can prove to be a valuable resource to *rabbonim* and *maggidei shiur* in preparation of their own *shiurim*, as well as to anyone else seeking illumination of the *inyonim* of *Adar*, *Purim* and *Megillas Esther*.

In the final *perek* of *Megillas Esther*, the *posuk* tells us that Achashveirosh levied a tax on his entire kingdom. The Brisker Rov questions the connection of this tidbit to the *neis* of *Purim* and wonders why it was important enough to be included in the *megillah*. *Magid Harakiah* accentuates the question with an insight of Rav Yechezkel Abramsky. Rav Abramsky writes that the *megillah*'s intention in the very next *posuk*, where it states that the remainder of the entire story is recorded in the chronicles of Poras and Modei, is specifically to highlight that nothing in the *megillah* is nominal and that everything written was essential for publicizing Hashem's divine plan.

To answer the Brisker Rov's question, *Magid Harakiah* (*maamar* 15) identifies a theme that threads through the *megillah*. Rabbi Glatstein begins by quoting a *Gemara* in *Megillah* (16a) that takes issue with a seemingly

extra word in *Megillas Esther*.

When Haman went to Achashveirosh to request that he give permission to hang Mordechai, the *posuk* (*Esther* 6:4) states, "Litlos es Mordechai al ha'eitz asher heichin lo - To hang Mordechai on the tree that he prepared for him. The word "lo," for him, is apparently superfluous. Why couldn't the *posuk* just say "al ha'eitz asher heichin - on the tree that he prepared"?"

In response, the *Gemara* notes a hidden meaning in the words. "Asher heichin lo - lo heichin," prepared for him - for himself he prepared it. Although Haman intended to prepare it for Mordechai, he was actually preparing a gallows that Haman himself



would hang from.

Rooted in the *Gemara*, Rabbi Glatstein explains that this concept, that Hashem brings salvation through the negative intentions of those who seek to destroy us, is a recurring theme throughout history and is found numerous times in the *megillah*.

The *posuk* (*Esther* 3:13-14) speaks of the letters Haman sent out to all provinces informing them that they should prepare to kill the Jewish nation on the 13th of *Adar*. The Vilna Goan explains, based on the wording of the *pesukim*, that Haman sent two distinct letters, an explicit one to the rulers and another, more ambiguous one, for the general public. He explains that Haman feared that should the Jews learn of the decree, they would attempt to intercede, so he did not identify the Jews as the target of ex-

termination in the public letter. The Vilna Goan points out how this ultimately allowed the Jews to destroy Amaleik, as Achashveirosh gave Mordechai the right to redirect that command towards Amaleik, as it was impossible to rescind a king's decree. Thus, Haman's reasoning was ultimately the catalyst for the downfall of his own nation.

In another illustration of this concept, the Dubno Maggid gives insight into Haman's thought process of preparing the tree for Mordechai before garnering permission to have him hung. He explains that Haman feared that Achashveirosh may grant permission, but may later withdraw it before the gallows would be prepared. He therefore built it in advance of asking permission, so that it would be ready for use as soon as permission was given. This, too, served as a gear in Haman's demise, because in a moment of anger, Achashveirosh decreed that Haman hang from the gallows. Had there been a delay in order to build the gallows, perhaps Achashveirosh would have been appeased and could have repealed his decision. It was only due to Haman's mindfulness that he himself was hung.

Using this recurring concept, Rabbi Glatstein offers an enlightening answer to the Brisker Rov's question as to the relevance of Achachveirosh levying a tax. He points to a *posuk* in *Sefer Ezra*, where it states that Daryaveish, who was a son of Achashveirosh, made his royal treasury available to help fund the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdosh*. He explains that those resources were augmented by the taxes raised by Achashveirosh. Thus, although Achash-

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veirosh halted the rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdosh*, he unknowingly facilitated its rebuilding as well. This is portrayed in the final *perek* of the *Megillah*, effectively bringing the *Megillah* full circle.

In another *maamar* (8), Rabbi Glatstein introduces a fascinating concept brought by *mekubalim*. They write that the *gezeirah* of Haman was never abolished, only delayed. This is indicated in the *posuk* which states, “*Ki chisav asher nichtav b’sheim Hamelech venechtom bitabaas Hamelech ain lehashiv*,” meaning that the decree of

the King cannot be overturned. *Meforshim* say that every mention of *Hamelech* in the *Megillah* refers to Hashem, and thus this *posuk* implies that Hashem’s decree was never repealed.

Rabbi Glatstein quotes *Shaalos Uteshuvos Shevet Hakehasi* (1:203), who writes that the decree was postponed, and it eventually manifested during the period of the Cossacks, beginning in the year *Tach* (5408). He notes that this is alluded to in the *Megillah*, as the letters *tof*, of “*vatichtov*” (9:29), and *ches*, of “*chur*” (1:6), are written in a larger font, indicating the significance of the year *Tach*. The *Shevet Hakehasi* adds that for this reason,

we fast each year on *Taanis Esther*, as we attempt to stave off the *gezeirah* for another year.

Rabbi Glatstein ties in the oft-told story of the Nuremburg hangings with this concept.

Seconds before Nazi propaganda minister Julius Streicher was to be hung, he famously shouted the words, “Purimfest 1946.” The optics of 10 Jew-haters swinging from the gallows apparently brought to his mind the story of *Purim*. Remarkably, however, the year *tof shin zayin* (5707), during which the hanging took place, is clearly annotated in the *Megillah*. When the names of the 10 sons of Haman ap-

pear, three letters are written in a smaller font, a *tof*, a *shin*, and a *zayin*. Those three letters cryptically tell of another instance of *mechi’as Amaleik*, one that would take place 2,300 years later.

Rabbi Glatstein makes an interesting observation. He conjectures that perhaps here, where letters stand out to signify the 10 hanging Nazis, the letters are written smaller to show the suppression of *Amaleik*, whereas in regard to the unusual *tof* and *ches*, which signify a year when *Amaleik* reined freely, the letters are larger.

Sefer Magid Harakiah is available at most seforim retailers or by emailing magidharakiahorders@gmail.com.

THE TWELVE PROPHETS

By Dr. Mendel Hirsch - Reviewed by Avraham Sofer

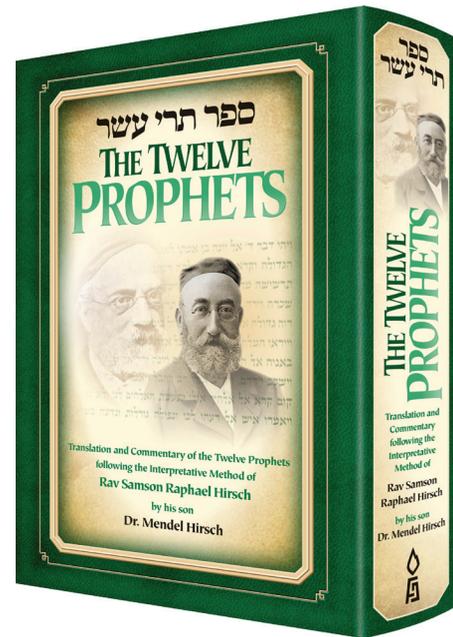
The appearance of *The Twelve Prophets* by Dr. Mendel Hirsch comes as a most welcome and timely event in Jewish publishing. Here, in one convenient volume, readers can become familiar with the breadth, depth and scope of *Trei Asar*.

Dr. Mendel Hirsch was the oldest son of Rav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch. In the *semicha* he received from his father, Rav Hirsch stated the following: “Although he has delved into other branches of knowledge, his heart and spirit remain true to Hashem, and his steps are firm in the G-dly paths. He has learned to distinguish between the teachings of the living G-d and human wisdom, and delights solely in the love of his religious heritage.”

Dr. Hirsch was an educator par excellence. In 1876, Rav Hirsch appointed him headmaster of the Realschule, when the *rov’s* health precluded him from maintaining that position. Dr. Hirsch authored several *seforim*, and in his work on *Trei Asar* he followed fully in the footsteps of his father, creating a commentary built upon his father’s unique methodology.

Rav Hirsch was an innovator on many levels, and in his commentaries, his focus was on

deriving – not only layers of meaning from the sacred text, but a Torah-based philosophical outlook emanating from *Lashon Hakodesh*. Since this is the original Divine language of



creation, it follows that Divine wisdom, values, lessons about life and the universe are to be derived through an analysis of the letters, root words, and the structure of the words themselves.

This, too, became the approach of Dr. Mendel Hirsch in his commentary to *Trei Asar*. A good example of this appears on page one, in the introduction to the *novi* Hoshea. There the author points out how the word “prophet” (one who foretells the future) does not at all convey the meaning of the Hebrew word *novi*. The discussion deals with the word *chozeh*, which yields the concept of a “vision,” and then returns to the phonetic source for *novi*, as it relates to a verb which means “to gush or bubble forth,” designating the prophet as the source through which the word of G-d comes to light and reaches the world. It is this approach that forms the foundation of Dr. Hirsch’s commentary.

Another important dimension to this vital work is the presence of an introduction prior to each prophetic text. These introductions provide a much-needed context to each

phetic work that follows. What do we know of each prophet? What do we know of the time, place, and circumstance in which each *novi* lived? These insights and information provide an indispensable framework for the verses and commentary that follow.

In sum, the prophecies in *Trei Asar* cover a span of over 350 years, from the middle of the era of the first *Bais Hamikdosh* to the early years of the second *Bais Hamikdosh*. *Chazal* tell us that there was an abundance of prophets and prophecies during the era of the first *Bais Hamikdosh*. However, only those prophetic works with messages of import for all time are the ones recorded in our *sifrei nevi'im*. What they have to say is as relevant today as when the words were first uttered. They address the basic themes – the conflicts and challenges, the hopes and aspirations – of Jewish life and the human condition throughout time. And here is a text – a one-volume guide – that makes the meaning and messages of *Trei Asar* accessible to all readers.

Dr. Hirsch’s commentary serves as an open invitation to experience the richness, profundity, and depth of these prophetic texts.

This Purim, At the Tombs of Mordechai and Esther

Zalman kisses his son on the forehead and closes the bedroom door behind him. “Finally, the kids are all asleep,” he thinks. A heavy silence hangs throughout the apartment, as the young father faces

out to work. Someone has to pay the rent. And right now, he’s the only “someone” his kids have.

This Purim, nothing could bring this young family more simcha, than a little bit

suffer in poverty and rely on the help of organizations like Vaad HaRabbanim to pay their most basic expenses.

This year, as part of a massive *matanos l’evyonim* campaign, Vaad HaRabbanim

uted on the day of *Purim*. Messengers will operate through the cities of Bnei Brak, Yerushalayim and more, handing out cash to those who need it most. Recipients are determined before the date by a rabbinical council who reviews their details. The event’s reputation precedes it, as each year the most esteemed *rabbonim* in Israel are seen participating.

In addition to the regular program, a group of emissaries will gather to pray at the tombs of Mordechai and Esther in Iran. Surrounded by *kedusha* in the resting place of the main players of the *Purim* saga, the emissaries will pray for all those who donate to the campaign.

The story of *Purim* is that of hidden miracles, of Hashem’s *chesed* being carried out through the guise of nature. Those who participate in Vaad HaRabbanim’s *matanos l’evyonim* program are choosing to become a messenger of Hashem, by bringing comfort to those who desperately need it, on one of the holiest days of the year.

Donations can be sent to: 221 Regent Drive, Lakewood, NJ 08701. Write checks to Vaad HaRabbanim L’inyanei Tzedukah. Online: www.vaadharabbanim.com. Tax ID: 37-1456890. Fax: (1877-722-2646). International Toll Free Number: 1888-36-36-248. All donations are tax deductible.



another night alone. Since his wife’s passing, he has spent most evenings in silence, processing his grief. A babysitter comes to watch the sleeping children and he heads

of help. And when a shaliach from Vaad HaRabbanim comes knocking at their door, that’s exactly what they’ll get.

Hundreds of families in Israel currently

has begun to collect funds to be distributed to many of the poorest families in Israel. In keeping with the strictest observance of the *mitzvah*, the money will be distrib-