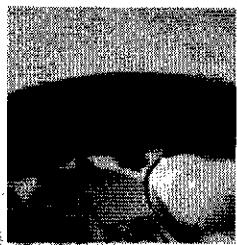
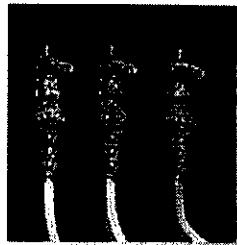


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*Shidduchim, Shandas, and Shaping the Future:
Family and Social Life in Modern Jewish History*

Early Modern Europe

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January 29th, 2013



THIS COURSE IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF:

אסתר חנה זל בת צבי ופרומה עלקא פיניא בת מאיר ופשה לאה זל נח בן אברהם ופיינא זיל
תהא נשמות צדירות בצלב החיים MAY THEIR SOULS BE BOUND IN THE EVERLASTING BOND OF LIFE

Introduction to Family Life in Modern Jewish History

I. Defining History

- a. What is history?
- b. What questions to ask
- c. Where to look for answers
- d. Traditional history
- e. Social history

II. Types of Sources

- a. Primary
- b. Secondary

III. I. Studying Memoirs

- A. What is a memoir?
- B. Differences between memoir and diary
- C. Issues with memoirs

- 1. Accuracy—memory
- 2. Nostalgia
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- 4. Influence of present on past:
 - a. Knowing end influences what to include
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5. Who is intended audience?
6. Was it intended to be published?
7. Why did the author write it?
8. Look at text: Edited? Translated?

IV. The World of *Gluckel of Hameln*

- A. Early Modern Europe
 1. Relationship with non-Jewish rulers
 2. Mercantilism
 3. Instability of life
 4. Money as the key to stability
 5. Different level of trade
- B. The Religious world of Ashkenaz
 1. Jewish time
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 3. Creating Jewish geography
 4. Language

BOOK ONE

IN MY great grief and for my heart's ease I begin
this book the year of Creation 5451 [1690-91]
—God soon rejoice us and send us His redeemer!
I began writing it, dear children, upon the death
of your good father, in the hope of distracting my
soul from the burdens laid upon it, and the bitter
thought that we have lost our faithful shepherd.
In this way I have managed to live through many
wakeful nights, and springing from my bed short-
ened the sleepless hours.

This, dear children, will be no book of morals.
Such I could not write, and our sages have already
written many. Moreover, we have our holy Torah
in which we may find and learn all that we need
for our journey through this world to the world
to come. It is like a rope which the great and
gracious God has thrown to us as we drown in the
stormy sea of life, that we may seize hold of it and
be saved.

The kernel of the Torah is, Thou shalt love thy
neighbour as thyself.¹ But in our days we seldom
find it so, and few are they who love their fellow.

men with all their heart—on the contrary, if a man can contrive to ruin his neighbour, nothing pleases him more.

The best thing for you, my children, is to serve God from your heart, without falsehood or sham, not giving out to people that you are one thing while, God forbid, in your heart you are another. Say your prayers with awe and devotion. During the time for prayers, do not stand about and talk of other things.² While prayers are being offered to the Creator of the world, hold it a great sin to engage another man in talk about an entirely different matter—shall God Almighty be kept waiting until you have finished your business?

Moreover, put aside a fixed time for the study of the Torah, as best you know how.³ Then diligently go about your business, for providing your wife and children a decent livelihood is likewise a *mitzvah*—the command of God and the duty of man. We should, I say, put ourselves to great pains for our children, for on this the world is built, yet we must understand that if children did as much for their parents, the children would quickly tire of it.

A bird once set out to cross a windy sea with its three fledglings. The sea was so wide and the wind so strong, the father bird was forced to carry his young, one by one, in his strong claws. When he was half-way across with the first fledgling the

wind turned to a gale, and he said, «My child, look how I am struggling and risking my life in your behalf. When you are grown up, will you do as much for me and provide for my old age?» The fledgling replied, «Only bring me to safety, and when you are old I shall do everything you ask of me.» Whereat the father bird dropped his child into the sea, and it drowned, and he said, «So shall it be done to such a liar as you.» Then the father bird returned to shore, set forth with his second fledgling, asked the same question, and receiving the same answer, drowned the second child with the cry, «You, too, are a liar!» Finally he set out with the third fledgling, and when he asked the same question, the third and last fledgling replied, «My dear father, it is true you are struggling mightily and risking your life in my behalf, and I shall be wrong not to repay you when you are old, but I cannot bind myself. This though I can promise: when I am grown up and have children of my own, I shall do as much for them as you have done for me.» Whereupon the father bird said, «Well spoken, my child, and wisely; your life I will spare and I will carry you to shore in safety.»

Above all, my children, be honest in money matters, with both Jews and Gentiles, lest the name of Heaven be profaned. If you have in hand money or goods belonging to other people, give more care to them than if they were your own, so that, please

God, you do no one a wrong. The first question put to a man in the next world is, whether he was faithful in his business dealings.⁴ Let a man work ever so hard amassing great wealth dishonestly, let him during his lifetime provide his children fat dowries and upon his death a rich heritage—yet woe, I say, and woe again to the wicked who for the sake of enriching his children has lost his share in the world to come! For the fleeting moment he has sold Eternity.

When God sends evil days upon us, we shall do well to remember the remedy contrived by the physician in the story told by Rabbi Abraham ben Sabbatai Levi. A great king, he tells us, once imprisoned his physician, and had him bound hand and foot with chains, and fed on a small dole of barley-bread and water. After months of this treatment, the king despatched relatives of the physician to visit the prison and learn what the unhappy man had to say. To their astonishment he looked as hale and hearty as the day he entered his cell. He told his relatives he owed his strength and well-being to a brew of seven herbs he had taken the precaution to prepare before he went to prison, and of which he drank a few drops every day. «What magic herbs are these?» they asked; and he answered: «The first is trust in God, the second is hope, and the others are patience, recognition of my sins, joy that in suffering now I shall not suffer

in the world to come, contentment that my punishment is not worse, as well it could be, and lastly, knowledge that God who thrust me into prison can, if He will, at any moment set me free.»

However, I am not writing this book in order to preach to you, but, as I have already said, to drive away the melancholy that comes with the long nights. So far as my memory and the subject permit, I shall try to tell everything that has happened to me from my youth upward. Not that I wish to put on airs or pose as a good and pious woman. No, dear children, I am a sinner. Every day, every hour, and every moment of my life I have sinned,⁵ nearly all manner of sins. God grant I may find the means and occasion for repentance. But, alas, the care of providing for my orphaned children, and the ways of the world, have kept me far from that state.

If God wills that I may live to finish them, I shall leave you my Memoirs in seven little books. And so, as it seems best, I shall begin now with my birth.

1

My good mother brought me into the world, the year of Creation 5407 [1646-47], in this city of Hamburg. Even if our sages say, it is better not to be born,⁶ meaning that men have so much to endure in this sinful world, still I thank and praise

my Creator that He made me according to His will and beg Him to take me under His holy charge. My father gave his children, girls and boys, a secular as well as a religious education. And who-ever came hungry to my father's house went forth fed and satisfied.

Before I was three years old, the German Jews, I am told, were all driven out of Hamburg. There-upon they settled in Altona which belonged to the King of Denmark, who readily gave them letters of protection. This city of Altona lies barely a quarter of an hour from Hamburg.

About twenty-five Jewish families were previously settled in Altona, where we had our synagogue and cemetery. After we newcomers had remained there for some time, we finally succeeded with great difficulty in persuading the authorities of Hamburg to grant passes to Altona Jews, so we might enter and do business in that city. Such a pass was valid for four weeks, it was issued by the burgomaster and cost one ducat; when it expired another had to be procured in its stead. However, if you got to know the burgomaster or his officials, the old pass might be renewed for a second four weeks.

This meant, God knows, a great hardship for our people, for all their business lay in Hamburg. Naturally, many a poor and needy wretch would try to slip into the city without a pass. If the offi-

cials caught him, he was thrust into prison, and then it cost all of us money and trouble to get him out again. In the early dawn, as soon as our folks were out of synagogue, they went down to Hamburg, and towards evening, when the gates were closed, back they came to Altona. Coming home, our poor folks often took their life in their hands because of the hatred for the Jews rife among the dockhands, soldiers and others of the meaner classes. The good wife, sitting home, often thanked God when her husband turned up safe and sound.

In those days we were hardly forty families all told. No one was very rich, but everyone earned an honest living. Chayim Fürst was the richest among us, with a fortune of 10,000 Reichsthalers, then came my father, of blessed memory, with 8000, others followed with 6000, and a few more with 2000. But great love and a close community spirit reigned among them, and in general they all enjoyed a better life than the richest man today. If a man were worth only 500 Reichsthalers, he could well be satisfied; and everyone was happier with whatever he had than nowadays when even the rich can never get enough. Of them, indeed, it is said: none dies seeing the half of his wishes fulfilled. As for my father, no man had a greater trust in God; and if it hadn't been for the goin', he would have further increased his fortune. But,

thick and thin. Moreover he enjoyed the aid of the Almighty, for he was a righteous God-fearing king who had always dealt kindly with us Jews. Although we lived in Hamburg, each of us had only to pay his six Reichsthalers tax to the king, and we were quits.

Later, the Dutch rushed to the support of the Danes. Their ships sailed up the sound, the backbone of the war was broken and peace ensued. But Denmark and Sweden have never been on good terms, and even when they declare themselves friends and allies, one is always ready to pick a bone with the other.

2

At that time my sister Hendele, of blessed memory, became engaged to the son of the learned Reb Gumpel of Cleves. She received 1800 Reichsthalers as her dowry, in those days a handsome sum, more than anyone had ever been dowered in Hamburg. Naturally her match was considered the most important in all Germany, and the whole world admired its excellence and the size of the dowry. But my father's business was good, and he trusted in the Lord that He would not forsake him, but enable him to do as well by his other children in their turn. He lavished hospitality on all sides, in a way unknown today among people who have fortunes of 30,000 Reichsthalers.



JEWISH COSTUME IN GLÜCKEL'S DAY

BRIDE AND BRIDESMAIDS
Fürth—1706

was the fashion to wear solid gold chains; and gifts, if the occasion demanded, were all of gold. What though, to tell the truth, the gains were smaller than in jewels, my husband began by dealing in gold, and plying his trade ran from house to house, to buy up the precious metal. Then he turned it over to goldsmiths, or resold it to merchants about to be married; and he earned thereby a tidy profit.

However much my husband toiled, and truly the whole day he ran about upon his business, still he never failed to set aside a fixed time to study his daily «portion» of the Torah. He fasted, too, a great part of every day the Torah was read forth in the synagogue [Mondays and Thursdays], at least until he began to make long business journeys, with the result that even in his youth he became sickly and needed much doctoring. Yet, for all that, he never spared himself, and shirked no pains to provide his wife and children a decent livelihood.

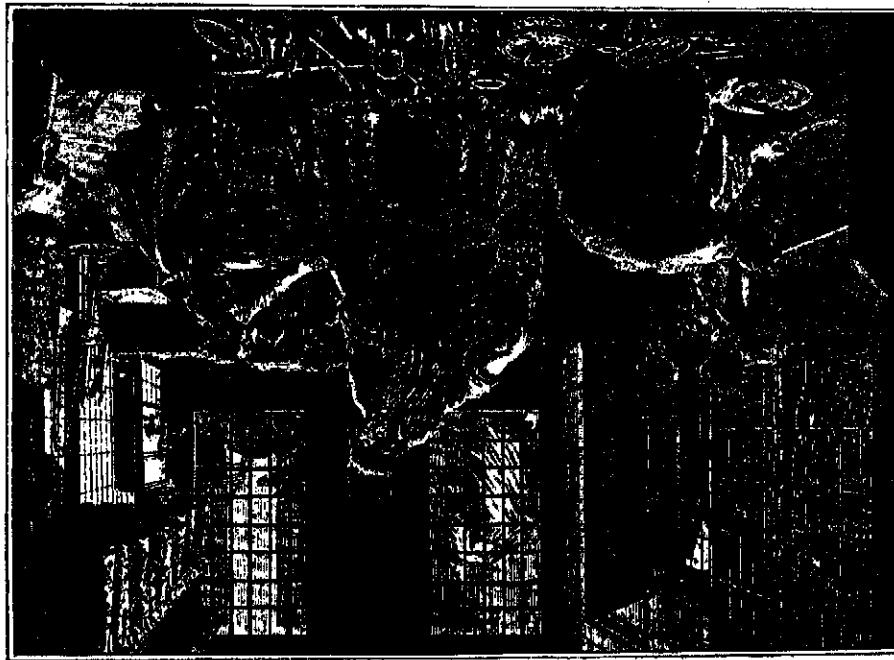
So good and true a father one seldom finds, and he loved his wife and children beyond all measure. His modesty had no like, throughout his life he never once gave thought to holding public office; on the contrary, he would not so much as hear of it, and he was wont to laugh at people who harbored after such things. In brief, he was the perfect pattern of a pious Jew, as were his father and brothers.

Even among the great rabbis, I knew but few who prayed with his fervour. If he were praying in his room, and some one came to fetch him forth where something could be bought up cheap, neither I nor any servant in my whole house would have the heart to go to him and speak of it. Indeed, he once missed a bargain in this way, to the loss of several hundred thalers. He never regarded these things, but served God faithfully and called upon Him with diligence; and He repaid him for all, two and threefold over. A man so meek and patient as my beloved husband will not be found again.

All that he had to contend with, and often, from friends and strangers, he bore in patience. When many times, in human weakness, I could no longer contain myself, he laughed away my impatience and said, «Foolish little woman—I put my trust in God and give small heed to the talk of men.» May his merits be our aid in this world and the world to come!

4

Immediately on our arrival in Hamburg I came with child, and my mother along with me. In good time the Lord graciously delivered me of a young daughter. I was still a mere girl, and unused as I was to bearing children, it naturally went hard with me; yet I rejoiced mightily that the Most High had bestowed on me a healthy, lovely baby.



whole house was aroused and everyone badly alarmed. However, freight soon vanished in laughter, and the word went round, «A little more, and we'd had to summon the blessed King Solomon himself.»

S

We remained altogether one year in the house of my parents. We were assured two years, it is true, but since my father's house was cramped, my husband had no wish to stay on; yet he did not take a penny for the second year's board. So we rented a lovely house, paying fifty thalers a year, and we moved with manservant and maid into our own home, where the Most High has mercifully kept us to this day;⁸ and if God had not all too soon taken from me the crown of my Head, I do not think there would have been a happier or more loving couple in all the world!

And so, as young folks, we set up our own home, and scrimped and pinched to be sure, but all as it should be, and kept up a nice decent house.

Our first manservant was Abraham Cantor of Hildesheim; we had him to look after the children. Later, he left us for some years and went into a little business of his own. Then he married a Hamburg widow, and when she died, a young girl from Amsterdam, and continued to live in Hamburg. We advanced him money and sent him to Copen-

BOOK THREE

1

*I*T PASSES belief, all the strange things that can happen to us poor sinners.

I was about twenty-five years old.¹ My blessed husband worked manfully at his business, and although I was still young, I too did my share. Not that I mean to boast, but my husband took advice from no one else, and did nothing without our talking it over together.]

Then it was that a young man named Mordecai, who had been with my brother-in-law Leffman in Hanover, came to Hamburg and stayed in our house. We found him to our liking, so we engaged him to travel for us wherever there was business to be done.

Being from Poland, the young man spoke excellent Polish, and accordingly we sent him to Danzig where we heard that seed pearls were plentiful, at that time a favourite article in the jewel trade. We gave him a letter of credit on Danzig for several hundred thalers and advised him somewhat on how

to buy his pearls. If we had been able to dispose of stones in Danzig as well as buy them, we should have earned more; but in those days everyone was so set on the pearl trade, we gave no thought to other business.

So Mordecai proceeded to Danzig, and began buying pearls and sending them on to Hamburg. He bought, I might add, to good advantage and brought in a nice profit. But he had no will to remain in Danzig, for he was already of an age to marry. Back he came then, and was betrothed to the daughter of Tall Nathan; the wedding was stipulated for a half-year later.

My husband wanted him to return to Danzig in the interval before his marriage. But, alas, it was God's will that he had no mind to undertake the journey. «It is not six months,» he said, «until my wedding. The time would be up before I could go and return. I would rather travel about Germany buying-in wine.» My husband said to him, «How in the world do you come to such an idea? I will have nothing to do with your wine business!» «Very well,» answered Mordecai, «I will buy on my own account.»

What though my husband pleaded and stormed, and even set Mordecai's future father-in-law upon him to dissuade him from his unhappy plan, nothing would deter him. The good man, it appeared, was fated to make place for another. For if God

once had another servant whom the children dubbed Clumsy Sam. So we came to Hildesheim. My blessed parents-in-law had great joy in us, for my husband was their youngest child and things were then, God be praised, going well with us.

We brought with us what we felt sure would prove in Hildesheim a handsome and impressive gift. After spending three happy weeks together, we returned home safe and sound.

My father-in-law gave us, on our departure, a small tankard worth perhaps twenty Reichsthalers, but as dear to us as though it were worth a hundred. At that time, you must know, my father-in-law was a wealthy man, possessed of more than 20,000 Reichsthalers, and had all his children married. And our journey had cost us over 150 thalers. Yet we were as pleased as we could be with the twenty-thaler tankard, not like children are today, who want all they can get from their parents, stripping them to the bone, without considering whether or not they can afford it.

So we came home and found our other children in good health.

My father-in-law continued to live for some while in Hildesheim. But in four or five years he found it had cost him nearly 10,000 Reichsthalers. Although he kept a modest house, still the expenses were great, and the good folks saw that no purpose

lay in remaining there. So they moved into the home of my rich brother-in-law, Leffmann Behrens, in Hanover, and there they died at a ripe old age and with a good name—but more of this at another time.

3

Our business prospered. And Zipporah, my eldest child, was now a girl of almost twelve. Whereat Loeb Hamburger in Amsterdam, the son of Reb Amschel, proposed her marriage to Kossmann, the son of Elias Cleve,¹ of blessed memory.

My husband was accustomed to travel to Amsterdam twice a year, and now, after writing the marriage broker he was coming to see what could be done, he set forth six weeks in advance of his usual time. The country was at war² and Elias Cleve had left his home in Cleves and moved with his people to Amsterdam.

As soon as my husband reached Amsterdam, rumours spread through Hamburg that the march had been arranged. It was mail-day when people read their letters at the Bourse. Many refused to believe the rumours, and betting ran high around the Bourse; some said one thing, others said another, as to whether the marriage would take place. For Elias Cleve was a great prince in Israel, he had the name of a man worth at least 100,000 Reichsthalers, and the name did not belie him. Whereas my hus-

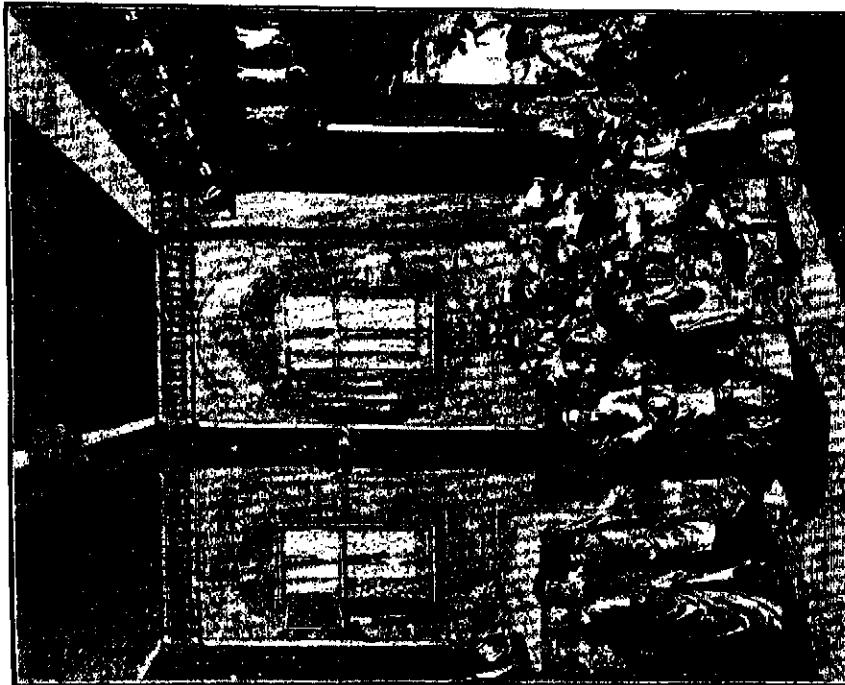
band was still young, our fortunes had only begun to rise, and our little home swarmed with children—God be with them! But whatever the Most High decrees must come to pass, whether we mortals like it or not; and forty days before the birth of every child, a call goes forth in Heaven: «Such-and-such a child shall be given the daughter of So-and-so.»

Well, my blessed husband concluded the match with the rich Elias Cleve and settled on our daughter a dowry of 2200 Reichsthalers in Dutch money. They fixed the wedding for a year and a half later in Cleves. My husband likewise undertook to contribute 100 Reichsthalers towards the wedding expenses.

When time for the marriage drew near, I with a babe at my breast, my husband, my daughter Ziporah the bride, our Rabbi Meir, who is now the rabbi of Friedberg, a maid-servant and our man Elegant Sam—in sum, a great retinue—set forth for the wedding.

We sailed from Altona in company with Mordecai Cohen, Meir Illus and Aaron Todelche. I cannot begin to tell what a merry voyage it was. And after a gay and delightful trip we arrived safely in Amsterdam.

It was still three weeks before the wedding, and we put up with the aforesaid Loeb Hamburger. We ran through more than twelve ducats a week, but



BETROTHAL CEREMONY
A Vase Is Broken to Solemnize Signing of the Contract

we gave no thought to it, for during the time we passed in Amsterdam my husband earned a half of the dowry.

Fourteen days before the marriage we set forth «with timbrels and with dances» twenty strong, for Cleves, where we were welcomed with all honours. We found ourselves in a house that was truly a king's palace, magnificently furnished in every way. The livelong day we had no rest for the elegant lords and ladies who came to have a peep at the bride. And in truth, my daughter looked so beautiful that her like was never seen.

Then came the great preparations for the wedding. At that time, Prince Frederick was in Cleves.⁴ His older brother, Prince Elector Karl, still lived, and Prince Frederick was then a young lord about thirteen years of age. Not long after, Karl died and Frederick in turn became Prince Elector. Prince Maurice of Nassau and other titled personages and great lords were likewise in Cleves, and they all signified their desire to witness the nuptials.

Naturally, Elias Cleve, the father of the groom, made fitting preparations for such notable guests. On the marriage day, immediately after the wedding, there was spread a lavish collation of all kinds of sweetmeats and fine imported wines and fruits. You can readily picture the bustle and excitement, and how Elias Cleve and his people set themselves to wait upon and cater to their distinguished com-

pany. There was not even time to deliver and count over the dowries, as is customary. So we placed our own dowry in a pouch and sealed it, and Elias Cleve did likewise, that we might tally the sum after the wedding was over.

As the bridal pair were led beneath the *chuppah* [wedding canopy] out it came that in the confusion we had forgotten to write the marriage contract! What was to be done? Nobility and princes were already at hand and they were all agog to see the ceremony. Whereat Rabbi Meir declared that the groom should appoint a bondsman to write out the contract immediately after the wedding. Then the rabbi read a set-contract from a book. And so the couple were joined.

After the ceremony, all the distinguished guests were ushered into Elias Cleve's enormous salon with its walls of leather tooled in gold. There stood the mighty table laden with dainties fit for a king. And the company were served according to their rank.

My son Mordecai was then a child of about five; there was not a prettier boy in all the world, and we had him dressed in his neatest and best. All the nobility wanted to eat him up on the spot, and the Prince in particular, God heighten his fame! never let go his hand.

When the guests of honour had eaten of the fruit and cakes and had done justice to the wine, the

table was cleared and removed. Then appeared masked performers who bowed prettily and played all manner of entertaining pranks. They concluded their performance with a truly splendid Dance of Death.

A number of prominent Sephardim likewise attended the wedding, among them one Mocatta, a jeweller, who wore a beautiful small gold watch set with diamonds and worth no less than 500 Reichsthalers. Elias Cleve wanted to buy the little watch from Mocatta for a gift to the Prince. But a good friend who was standing by said to him, «What for?—why give the young Prince such a costly present? If, to be sure, he were already Prince Elector, well and good.» But, as I have said, the Prince Elector died soon after, and our young prince succeeded to the title and now he is Elector himself. And after that, every time Elias Cleve met his prudent friend he cast it in his teeth. In truth, if Elias Cleve had given the little watch, the young Prince would have always remembered it, for great lords never forget such things. But there is no point in grumbling over what is past.

As it was, the young Prince and Prince Maurice and all the noble-born guests departed in great content, and never a Jew received such high honour in a hundred years. And the wedding was brought to a happy end.

He begged her to move with him to Hamburg, but the good woman would not think of it, nor would she leave her pious husband, even in death. Two years later she died, at the age of eighty-two, and was buried next to my father-in-law. The like of this dear couple, blessed of God, will not be found again. May we enjoy the reward of their merits! If only my husband and I could thus have lived out our old age together—but the Most High pleased otherwise.

13

Some time later, my husband found himself in Amsterdam. There he received a proposal for the marriage of our daughter with Moses Krumbach,¹⁹ the son of the rich Abraham Krumbach of Metz. But he had to decide all too quickly. And not till after the betrothal could he write me what was done.

The engagement was concluded in Cleves by Elias Cleve (the father of my son-in-law Kossmann) who had received authority to sign in the name of Abraham Krumbach.

Before my husband wrote me that my daughter Esther was betrothed, I had received letters from several hands, warning me not to conclude the match, for the lad had many, many failings. And then came my husband's letter telling me that the betrothal was signed.

You may well imagine my distress and the sort of joy I took in the match. But I could do nothing until my husband's return.

The next week my husband came home, thinking I should welcome him with open arms and that we would rejoice together over the match. Instead, I greeted him with a heavy heart and could scarcely open my mouth.

My husband remarked at once that something ailed me, but neither of us wished to mar the joy of our reunion. Thus several days passed without our speaking of the marriage.

Meanwhile my husband received a letter from a good friend, who wrote him that he heard the match was on foot and urged him not to enter into it, at least not without first having a look at the young man.

Sorely alarmed, my husband now said to me, «Glückchen, you too must have known of this, for I have marked your uneasiness.» Whereupon I showed him all the letters I had received before his return. My husband became badly frightened and fell into a gloom. For the young man seemed to have every possible defect. And we had nothing to suggest to each other, for the match was signed.

So I wrote to Frau Jachet, the mother of the lad—I still remember the expressions I used. First, I sent her and her family our friendly greetings. Then I told her we had received sundry letters

informing us that her son was afflicted with certain failings. We felt sure it was a lie, and therefore besought her to send the bridegroom, as customary, to a betrothal feast at the home of the bride. And when we had seen, as well we hoped, that liars and slanderers were at work, we would welcome the groom with the greatest joy and pleasure, and neither handsome gifts nor high honours would be spared. But if, God forbid! the truth were otherwise, I begged her not to send us her son, for we would never, so horribly, deceive our child. And should she think to send her son nevertheless, trusting that in any case our friendship and kinship would prevail on us to overlook his failings, as sometimes happens, I begged her not to do so. If the reports over her son, God forbid! were true, we must each find reasons for consoling ourselves, and I gave her leave to think all the evil in the world of my daughter . . . and no end of such phrases.

You can imagine how this letter struck in the crop of the excellent Frau Jachet. She answered in unvarnished wrath and contempt: she had meant, indeed, to have the bridegroom visit the bride, but now that she saw how matters stood, well, if we wished to see her son, we must come ourselves to Metz or send some one in our stead.

Considerable time now passed in exchanging dis-

agreeable letters, to no conclusion. Moreover, the war raging between the King of France and the Reich hindered our visiting one another.

Meanwhile we celebrated our daughter Hannah's marriage with high festival.

I have also forgotten to mention that, a long while before, we happily celebrated the wedding of my son Nathan and Miriam the daughter of the departed Elijah Ballin. My son-in-law Kossmann Cleve and my daughter Zipporah came to the festivities, and we paid all their expenses and made them gifts besides. Jacob Hannover and his wife Suisse were likewise present and many other out-of-town guests, so that it was a truly notable wedding.

This same year saw more than 10,000 Reichs-thalers *bamko* pass from our hands. But praised be the ever-faithful God, who never failed to restore us our losses, and handsomely! Had He only pre-

served to me the crown of my head, there would not have been a happier couple in all the world. But because of my great sins and in order that I learn to bow unto His will, the Almighty took my husband to a better and eternal life, and left me in this passing world of woe. We beg our Creator that our end come in accordance with His will and favour, and, please God, He bring us to Paradise.

When my husband returned from Hanover after visiting the grave of his father, he found me with child. And throughout my pregnancy he kept hoping I would give birth to a son, that the name of his blessed father be renewed—and praise God, I did.

I will now, my dear children, tell you a true story, which may stand you in good stead. When young women are with child and see a bit of fruit or the like and feel the slightest yearning for it, let them eat of it at once; otherwise, God forbid, they put their own life in danger or run the risk of deforming their unborn babe—and I know whereof I speak.

I had always laughed and made sport of it when I heard that a woman had come to grief from an unfulfilled desire. I never believed it for a moment; more than that, often enough when I have been with child, and going to the market saw all kinds of fine fruit, and finding it too dear for me, have let it go unbought, I noticed that I never suffered the least harm.

But all days are not alike.²⁰ This came home to me when I was in the ninth month with my son Joseph. My mother had business on foot with a lawyer living on the Pferdemarkt. So she asked me to accompany her. Although the distance was great

and it was close to the time for afternoon prayers—it was, I recall, the beginning of the month of Kislev [November or December]—I had no mind to refuse my mother, and I was still up and about. So we went downtown together. Opposite the lawyer's house stood a shop where a woman sold meddlars. I was always mighty fond of them, so I said to my mother, «Don't forget, on our way home I must buy some meddlars.» We then visited the lawyer and did whatever business it was.

But when we finished, it was nearly dark, and hastening on our way we forgot all about the fruit. When I reached home the meddlars came to my mind, and I began thinking about them, and it annoyed me I had forgotten to buy them. However, I paid little enough heed to it, no more than when you want to eat something or other that is not in the house.

I went to sleep in excellent spirits, but about midnight my labours began to come upon me. The midwife was summoned, and I gave birth to my son Joseph. The news was quickly carried to my husband, and he had great joy that his father's name lived so soon again.

But the womenfolk who were by me in my labours put their heads together and kept whispering among themselves. I remarked their behaviour, and wanted to know the reason. At last they

told me that the babe was covered from head to toes with brown spots. I made them bring a light to my bed, to see for myself. I saw that not only the child was spotted, but he lay in a lifeless heap, moving neither hand nor foot, as though God forbid, his soul were already taking leave of him. Nor would he suck, nor so much as open his mouth. My husband came and saw it too, and he fell into despair.

This all happened on a Wednesday night, and the circumcision was due a week from Thursday; but we had small hopes of it coming to pass, for the child grew feebler every day. Sabbath came, and, it is true, we celebrated the *Zochor Feast*²¹ on Friday night, but we remarked no improvement in the child.

On the close of the Sabbath, while my husband said the *Habdalah* prayers,²² my mother sat in my room with me. And I said to her, «Please have my Sabbath-woman²³ come to me, I want her to run an errand for me.» My mother asked me what I wanted done, and I told her, «I have been thinking all this while what the reason could be for the brown spots and the feebleness of the babe. And I wondered if my wanting medlars and not getting them were to blame. I came that very night to bed with child. So I'm going to have the woman fetch me a few shillings' worth of medlars, I'll press them

to the baby's lips, and, who knows? God may take mercy on us, and with His help the child shall recover.»

My mother waxed very angry with me, and said, «Will you never tire of your nonsense? It is storming tonight as though the heavens would fall, and the woman, be assured, will not set foot outdoors. Moreover, the whole thing is sheer folly.»

But I said to her, «Mother dear, do me the favour and send forth the woman. I will give her whatever she asks, if only I get the medlars—else my heart will know no peace.»

We thereupon called the woman and sent her out for the fruit. She hurried off, but it was a long way and a stormy night not fit for a dog. I thought she never would return, for as always when you wait for something, every second becomes an hour. But at length she returned, along with my medlars.

Because of their bitter taste I knew they were not proper food for a mere babe. Still I ordered the nursemaid to unswathe the child, place it before the fire, and run a bit of the pulp of a medlar around its mouth. Everyone laughed at my folly, but I stood by it, and the nurse must do as I bade. As soon as the fruit touched its lips, the child opened its little mouth so greedily you would have thought it wanted to swallow it all at a gulp, and

BOOK FIVE

1

IBEGIN this fifth book, dear children, with a heavy heart, for I mean to tell, from beginning to end, of the sickness and death of your beloved father.

The evening of the 19th of Teber, 5449 [January 11, 1689], your father went into town to arrange certain business with a merchant. When he was close to the merchant's house, he stumbled and fell over a sharp stone, and hurt himself so badly we were all alarmed.

He came home in great agony. I chanced to be visiting my mother, and I was called back at once. I found my husband groaning by the fire, and badly frightened, I asked him what had happened. He told me he had fallen, and feared there was much for me to do. He was unable to stir, and I had to empty his pockets myself. For when he set forth he had laden them with jewellery.

We did not at once, God help us! know the real nature of his injury. He had long suffered from

a rupture, and in stumbling he had fallen on the ruptured spot and badly twisted his bowels.

A bed stood always ready in the lower room, but he did not wish to use it, and we had to bring him upstairs to the bed-chamber. It was a bitter cold night, as though the skies would freeze together, and we remained by his side through the cold hours, doing our best for him. But we could stand it no longer, it did him no good either to lie there in the cold, and at last he saw the harm of it, and we brought him downstairs once more. We worried along in this way until past midnight, and still he grew no better. I saw my sorrowful fate staring me in the face, and I begged him, in Heaven's name, to let us call a doctor and attendants. Whereat he said, «I would rather die than let the world know of it.» I stood before him and wept and screamed, «What talk is this?» I said, «Why shouldn't people know? It has come through no shame or sin.»

But my talk proved all of no avail. He clung to the foolish fancy that it might do his children harm; people would say that the weakness was in the blood. For he never had thought of else than his children. And so we had to contend with him the livelong night, and applying every manner of poultice.

When day broke, I said to him, «Praise God the night is over, now I will send for a doctor

and a rupture-cutter.» But he would not listen to it, and bade me send for the Sephardi Abraham Lopez, a physician and chirurgeon-barber. I had him fetched at once.

When he came and saw the injury, he said, «Have no fear. I will lay on something that will heal him forthwith. I have dealt with hundreds like him, and it has never failed me.»

This was early Wednesday morning. Dr. Lopez applied his remedy, thinking it would shortly heal him. But, God have mercy! when noontime came, he said, «My cure, I see, is not enough—I will go and bring a rupture-cutter whom I know to have a clever hand.» The rupture-cutter came and worked the entire day in the hope of easing the injury. But the longer he laboured, the worse it became.

Thursday I brought in another rupture-cutter and two more physicians, one of them Dr. Fonseca. When I talked with him and related all the circumstances, he told me, «There is little I can say—or do. Alas, the bowels are so badly twisted he will not be able to evacuate.» And what should have gone off naturally broke, God help us! through the open wound. Every aid failed him, and still he refused to have strangers about him and begged us all to keep it a secret. As for me, I knew and saw my fate before my eyes.

So Thursday passed, day and night, in bitter

distress. Friday Dr. Lopez brought us a Berlin doctor, for many years physician to the Elector. He too gave him something to take and laid on a bandage, alas, to no purpose.

It was Saturday morning when my brother-in-law Joseph first learned that something was wrong with my blessed husband. He came running to our house and begged to be let into the sick-room. When my husband heard him, he said, let him enter.

As soon as Joseph saw him, *nebbich*, he knew what it meant. He struck his head against the wall and tore his hair and with bitter tears he cried aloud, «Woe unto me that I must lose a brother-in-law like him!» And he cast himself on my husband's bed, and with streaming eyes begged his forgiveness for aught he had done.

My husband answered him from the bottom of his heart. «My beloved brother-in-law,» he said, «I forgive you and all living men, and give me, I pray, your forgiveness too.» Whereat my brother-in-law sought to calm him and bade him be patient, God would yet come to his aid. And my husband replied, he was content to be in God's hands.

As for myself, he did not tell me a half of his illness, but he kept ever at his side my son Loeb, then a lad of sixteen. When I was out of the room, he called the lad to him and told him how matter stood, and the boy wept sorely. But as soon as my

husband marked I had returned, he quickly said to the boy, «Silence, for the mercy of God! Your mother comes—let her not see your tears!» Even at death's door he thought of nothing but to spare me pain.

Saturday morning, after meal-time, my mother came and flung herself upon him, and kissing him between her tears, she said, «My son, must you now abandon us? Is there naught I may do for you?» Whereat he answered, «You know I have loved you like a mother—I have naught to ask or to say—only comfort my poor Glückelchen.» That was the last word he spoke to her.

But who is now my comforter? To whom shall I pour out my soul? Whither shall I turn? All his life my beloved companion hearkened to my troubles, and they were many, and comforted me so that somehow they would quickly vanish. But now, alas, I am left to flounder in my woe.

Later, more doctors and rupture-cutters came, but they could do nothing. By the close of the Sabbath, no one remained but Dr. Lopez and myself.

Towards midnight Dr. Lopez sent for a chirurgeon, in the hope that the wound was fit; but he came and saw at a glance that nothing could be done, and he departed.

Whereat I said to my husband, «Dearest heart, shall I embrace you—I am unclean?» For I was

then at a time I dared not touch him. And he said, «God forbid, my child—it will not be long before you take your cleansing.» But, alas, it was then too late.¹

Upon the advice of Dr. Lopez I now summoned Feibisch Levi who knew how to be with a man in his dying hour. He arrived towards two in the morning, when I also called in our teacher, a most trustworthy man.

Feibisch Levi went at once to my husband. «Reb Chayim,» he said, «have you any last wishes to give us?» Whereat my husband answered, «None. My wife knows everything. She shall do as she has always done.» And then he asked Reb Feibisch to bring him the works of the learned Rabbi Isaiah Hurwitz.²

After he had read in them for about half an hour, he turned to Reb Feibisch and our teacher. «Don't you see,» he said, «how near I am? Let my wife and children leave. It is high time.» Whereupon Reb Feibisch thrust us by main force from the room.

Reb Feibisch now sought to engage him in further talk. He gave no answer, but began speaking to himself. They could only see his lips moving. So it was for nearly another half-hour, and then Reb Feibisch said to Dr. Lopez, «Abraham my friend, lay your ear to his mouth, perchance you can hear what he is saying.» Dr. Lopez did so, and

after a space he heard him say, «Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!» With that, his breath ceased and he had breathed away his pure soul.

Thus he died in purity and holiness, and they saw from his end the man that he was.

2

What shall I write, dear children, of all our bitter grief? I had always stood so high in his eyes, and now I was abandoned with eight of my twelve forlorn children—and one of them, my daughter Esther, betrothed! May God have mercy on us and be the Father of my children, for He is the Father of the fatherless! I truly believe I shall never cease from mourning my dear friend.

Sunday, the 24th of Tebet, 5449 [January 16, 1689], he was buried with all honour. The entire community was struck with horror and grief at the sudden blow of it.

With my children gathered around me, I sat upon the ground for the seven days of mourning, and a sad sight it must have been to see me sitting thus with my twelve fatherless children by my side. We immediately secured our ten men for the daily prayers in the house of mourning, and we engaged scholars to «earn» Torah day and night through the whole year—be it not to my reproach! And the children diligently said *kaddish* for their

departed father. And there was not a man or woman who did not come, daily, to comfort the bereaved among us.

And, alas, there was no dearth of tears. We passed the seven days of mourning as you may only too well imagine. «I fed on the bread of tears and drank tears in great measure» . . . «What thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem?»⁵

I was «cast down from heaven unto the earth.» Thirty years I had enjoyed my beloved husband and he had bestowed on me all that a true wife could want. And he had, as I might say, thought of me after his death, so I could lift my head in honour. But what does this all avail me? The decrees of Heaven cannot be changed.

Still, dear children, our good friend died the death of the righteous. He lay but four days on his bed and kept his mind undimmed until he breathed his soul away. «Let my last end be like his,»⁶ and may his merits stand us in our need!

He had the good fortune to leave this sinful world in honours and riches, and lived to see no unholiness in his children. For «the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.»⁶

But when his soul took wing, there flew with it all my glory, wealth and honour. And I remained behind with my single and married children, steeped in care and woe which every day grew