

Timely Titles

By: RABBI MENDY GOLDBERG

לזכות
הת' מנחם מענדל שיח'ל
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות כ"ט אייר
ה'תשפ"ג שנת הקהל

נדפס ע"י משפחתו
משפחת פעלדמאן
פלארידא. טעקסאס

SEFER HATOLDOS ADMUR MAHARASH



“On Beis Iyar, in the year 5594*, the youngest child of the Tzemach Tzedek was born in Lubavitch, and he was given the name Shmuel.” Thus begins the classic biographical work—*Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash*.

When the Rebbe Maharash was a child, he once performed exceptionally well on a test, earning lavish praise from his teacher, who gushed effusively over his impressive command of the knowledge. However, his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, remained unimpressed and calmly remarked, “For Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes, this is nothing extraordinary.”¹

If there is one hallmark that characterizes the tenure of the Rebbe Maharash, it is that his personal life was extraordinary. He possessed many unique talents and exceptional qualities, and had a penchant for exotic interests (see “A Leaf From The Book”). Overall, the pattern of his life and personality was distinct from that of the other Rabbeim.

An especially famous departure from convention was the Rebbe Maharash’s lavish conduct. The Rebbe Maharash carried two golden watches, with golden chains hanging out of each chest pocket. His cigarette holder was made of gold and his snuff was kept in a gold box. All utensils in the Rebbe Maharash’s household were made of solid gold, his chariot was decorated with gold, and even his cane was capped with a golden ball. Naturally, this demonstration of extravagance puzzled many people. In fact, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (the Rebbe’s grandfather) was once asked why the Rebbe Maharash used gold in such a flippant and extravagant manner instead of appropriating it for charitable purposes. Reb Meir Shlomo responded with a refrain, “*Petach, petach*, (fool, fool) for what do you think this gold was created? For me and for you? Perhaps for the *goyim, lehavdil?* It was all created for him!”²

The uniqueness of the Rebbe Maharash also extended to his physical condition; throughout most of his life he suffered from various ailments and illnesses. Yet despite his pain, he still maintained good spirits and a pleasant manner. This was acknowledged in a letter to Zalman Shazar, where the Rebbe marveled at the results of a handwriting analysis conducted on a sample of the Rebbe Maharash’s script by graphologist Ruth Zucker.³ The Rebbe writes that he was amazed to see how in certain aspects the graphologist was on target, especially regarding her deduction that “the Rebbe Maharash suffered all his life both physically and spiritually, and this fortified him.” The Rebbe confirmed her conclusion from a family tradition that even in his youth he suffered terribly, but was still always seen with a smile on his face, greeting others with his characteristically positive disposition.

Finally, it is especially noteworthy that the Rebbe Maharash was the only one of the Rabbeim for whom the Rebbe personally penned a biographical treatment, entitled “*Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash.*”



OVERVIEW



Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash is primarily a biography of the Rebbe Maharash, together with a comprehensive index of his *maamarim*. The appendices feature a piece of a *maamar*, selections of *sichos*, and a directory of other places these *sichos* can be found.

👉 **Eleh Toldos:** Over the course of about 20 pages, we are treated to a brief biography of the Rebbe Maharash that delves into the story of his life. Culled from the Friediker Rebbe's *sichos* and diaries, the material is presented in a concise and organized fashion, weaving together a tapestry of anecdotes and events from his life. The main text is interspersed with footnotes where the Rebbe provides important background and helpful context.

The Rebbe's footnotes to the sefer also clarify some historical difficulties, for example: On the very first page there is a seeming discrepancy regarding the birth year of the Rebbe Maharash. It is presented here as 5594* while other sources allege it to have been 5593*. The Rebbe resolves this contradiction by suggesting that the earlier date refers to when the Rebbe Maharash was conceived.

The narrative begins with the Rebbe Maharash's auspicious birth and the events that occurred during the *bris*. As the story unfolds, we are treated to a glimpse into the Rebbe Maharash's childhood, where his exceptionally prodigious talents are revealed and develop throughout his early years. At this point, the Rebbe provides a succinct timeline that chronicles the significant events of the next few years.⁴ It covers the Rebbe Maharash's marriage (and subsequent passing of his first wife), his second marriage, learning schedule, various efforts and travels for communal affairs. It marks when he began to say Chassidus in public and then when he formally accepted the mantle of *nesius*.

This timeline is interrupted by a letter of the Friediker Rebbe that recounts an episode of a fire in the Rebbe Maharash's house in Lubavitch, and then continues to describe more communal activism and diplomatic endeavors, with another letter and *sicha* of the Friediker Rebbe documenting his encounters in S. Petersburg. Following this, the text describes the Rebbe Maharash's schedule of saying Chassidus, his *yechidus* arrangements, and some of the unique and extraordinary talents he possessed. After recording his passing, the text concludes with a summary of basic biographical information outlining the children and descendants left behind, his sons, daughters, and in-laws, and the *sefarim* he wrote.

👉 **Facsimiles:** Singled out in the table of contents are several facsimiles that were added to the previous section for illustrative purposes. The first one featured is a facsimile of the Rebbe Maharash's signature, which appears underneath a contract for selling *chametz*. On the other side of the same page, there is a negative photograph⁵ of two columns from one of the Megillos the Rebbe Maharash wrote for his sons (see sidebar - "The Megillah"). Another double-sided page has photographs of the Rebbe Maharash's three surviving sons: Raza, the Rebbe Rashab, and Reb Menachem Mendel. [Avrohom Sender had passed away in childhood, see "A Leaf From the Book"]. The other side of that page features photographs of the Rebbe Maharash's two daughters, Rebbetzin Devorah Leah Ginsburg and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Horenstein, as well as a photograph

of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's husband, Reb Moshe Horenstein.

👉 **Reshimas Maamarei Dach:** Presented in chronological order is a comprehensive list of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim*. At the time of printing of this work, the list was still incomplete as there were still manuscripts that had yet to be discovered or attributed to the Rebbe Maharash. In the foreword, the Rebbe entreats the readers to submit any manuscripts that aren't listed here so they can be included in future collections. As indicated in the timeline above, although the Rebbe Maharash only formally accepted the *nesiv* in the summer of 5626*, he had already begun to say Chassidus that winter at the behest of the Tzemach Tzedek. Thus, this list of *maamarim* begins in the winter of 5626* (before the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek).

👉 **Appendix A:** Here, the Rebbe included a recently discovered conclusion to a previously published *hemshech* "Yonasi bechagvei hasela 5640*." This was copied from a handwritten manuscript of the Rebbe Maharash that was only obtained after the *hemshech* was published.

👉 **Appendix B:** This is a partial collection of short teachings, anecdotes, and sayings of and about the Rebbe Maharash. These vignettes were culled primarily from the diary and notes of the Frieddiker Rebbe and are arranged in the order of their appearance. While most of these teachings are not by the Rebbe Maharash himself but about him, the Rebbe still frequently referred to them as 'his *sichos*.' For instance, in a letter encouraging someone to read Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash, the Rebbe writes: "Particularly part two [i.e.



הורנהייט משה אבינו, רבבטצין חייא מושקא, רבבטצין דבורה לאה גינסבורג



רבמנחם מענדל, רבבש"ט, רבבזא

1. THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE REBBE MAHARASH'S DAUGHTERS AND ONE OF HIS SONS-IN-LAW FEATURED IN THE BOOK. L-R: REB MOSHE HORENSTEIN, REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA HORENSTEIN, AND REBBETZIN DEVORAH LEAH GINSBURG.

2. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THREE OF THE REBBE MAHARASH'S SONS. L-R: REB MENACHEM MENDEL, THE REBBE RASHAB, AND RAZA.

this section -ed.], which contains **his *sichos*** [emphasis added] as they will undoubtedly inspire your learning and performance of *mitzvos*."

👉 **Appendix C:** Following the previous section, here, the Rebbe included an index to other places where one can find teachings and stories of the Rebbe Maharash, including various *sichos* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Hatomim journal, Toras Shalom and other similar *kuntreisim*.

BACKGROUND

In the early 5700s*, the internally-focused branch of Kehos called "Otzar Hachassidim" initiated a project to gather and restore the *maamarim* of the Rebbe Maharash. These *maamarim* were collected from loose manuscripts and published in chronological order. Most of these *sefarim* were not retyped, but instead published as photocopies of original manuscripts penned by Reb Shmuel Sofer, the chief copy editor of Lubavitch. The Rebbe himself spearheaded this oper-

ation, working diligently to collect every extant manuscript.

In 5705*, Kehos published the first installment of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim* (Likkutei Torah-Toras Shmuel 5631*), the *hemshech* "V'hechrim." In the introduction, the Rebbe writes that the Rebbe Maharash had a very rich life, but acknowledges that for some reason, many details about his personal life were not made public. "It is my hope that after completing the series of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim*, we

*📅 5626-1866, 5640-1880, 5700s-1940s, 5705-1945, 5631-1871

will be able to follow it up with a volume that is a biography of the Rebbe Maharash, which would establish a comprehensive timeline of his life and activities.” Following this, the Rebbe provided a brief biographical sketch as a preview.⁶

Two years later, in Tammuz of 5707*, the eagerly-anticipated biographical work finally came to fruition. Using diaries and *sichos* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Rebbe meticulously crafted a basic biography of the Rebbe Maharash, to accompany the series of *maamarim* of Toras Shmuel. Earlier that year, while the Rebbe was in Paris, in preparation for this biography he had taken the opportunity to investigate and interview elder Chassidim to gather valuable information and insights about the Rebbe Maharash. The cost of printing was generously underwritten by philanthropist Reb Shmuel Karakovsky as a tribute to his late father. The Rebbe was deeply appreciative and wrote him a letter expressing the great merit of this sponsorship.

Over time, more material about the Rebbe Maharash came to light. When the author, Reb Avrohom Chanoch Glitzenstein, undertook to write a series of biographies of Rabbeim “Sefer HaToldos,” the Rebbe encouraged him to continue his research and use newly discovered *sichos* and memoirs to expand upon the original biography of the Rebbe Maharash. This new expanded version was published in 5736*.

Despite being incorporated into the Glitzenstein “Sefer HaToldos” series, the original edition remains popular as a standalone work, and has since been reprinted by Kehos. This recent print also contains bonus material, namely: suggested citations, biographic and bibliographic indexes, and cross-references to other sources that provide additional information — all compiled by Rabbi Aharon Leib Raskin. A selection from Reshimas Hayoman about the Rebbe Maharash was also appended to a later edition. As well, Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash was translated into English by Rabbi Shimon Neubort for Sichos In English, making the life and legacy of the Rebbe Maharash accessible to the broader public. **T**

1. This is the version of the story as brought here in Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash. However, in the Hayom Yom of Beis Iyar the Tzemach Tzedek is recorded to have responded “Why the surprise that Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes performed well?” See Hayom Yom HaMevuar (Raskin) for a comparison of the various *nuschaos*.
2. For a discussion of this wealthy lifestyle and behavior see the sicha of Purim 5728.
3. For more about the Rebbe’s attitude towards the graphological analyses of Ruth Zucker, see Derher Teves 5783, “Timely Titles — Sefer HaKan.”
4. A breakdown of this timeline was featured in Derher Iyar 5778.
5. In the later edition this was replaced by an improved scan.
6. This can now be found in the *hosafos* of Toras Shmuel 5631.

THE MEGILLAH

As mentioned in the overview, the biography contains a facsimile of a Megillah written by the Rebbe Maharash. However, this particular Megillah diverges from the traditional Megillah format used by *anash* in those days, in two distinct ways. Firstly, the column of text does not always begin with the word “*hamelech*,” and secondly, the ten sons of Haman are not grouped together in a single column. In Otzar Minhagei Chabad, Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine enumerates further differences between the Megillah of the Rebbe Maharash and the conventional style.

In a letter addressed to Rabbi Isser Frankel, an accomplished author of many biographies, the Rebbe included a postscript in which he expressed his strong disapproval of the practice of reproducing scans of text written in *ksav stam* in books of *halacha* and *aggadah*, let alone historical books and biographies — as it shows a lack of sensitivity to the holiness of the script. By contrast, the Rebbe explains that the scan of the Megillah printed in Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash is an exception to this rule for two reasons: Firstly, Hashem’s name is not mentioned, and secondly, the intention behind reproducing the Megillah here was also to demonstrate to the general public the correct way of writing a Megillah.



THE FACSIMILE OF A MEGILLAH WRITTEN BY THE REBBE MAHARASH, FEATURED IN THE BOOK.

A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

SEFER HATOLDOS ADMUR MAHRASH
His Special Talents

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אדמו"ר מהר"ש

שגילו לו. בביקורו על אוהל אביו וחונתי אדמו"ר ה"צמח צדק", קודם נסיעתו לשם הי' שואל אותי אם יש לי מה לבקש או לברר, ובחזירתו הי' אומר לי כך ענה אבא.

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נוסף על גאונותו וגדלו בכל מקצעות התורה, בנגלה ובנסתרה, הי' בעל חושים נפלאים וזכרון נעלה ביותר. איזה דוגמאות:

בסוף ספר הון עשיר — לבעל ה"משנת הסידים" — יש שיר רשום בתוי נגינה. אדמו"ר מהר"ש קראם, ואמר שנגון הרשום עורר אותו על נגון — ונגון נגון הידוע מאז בין החסידים בשם "אינס צוויי דריי פיר" — נגון "אין סוף". פעם בקשו אותו לחזור מאמר ששמעו ממנו לפני חמש שנים, ויהרהר במחשבתו רגעים אחדים ויאמר את הדרוש אות באות.

בניו הר"א ומהרש"ב למדו פעם בחדרם בצוותא חדא סוגיא מסובכת. אביהם נכנס לחדרם ויעמוד מרחוק וישמע את פלפולם. ויאמר: יש כאן רש"י חמורה, ואמר הלשון בעל פה, וש לעיני בה היטב. ויתחיל להציע הענין ולפלפל משך זמן רב. וסיים שזה כמו כ"ח שנה מעת עסקו בענין זה.

הי' בקי בכמה לשונות: רוסית, צרפתית, לאטיין כו'. ידיעות רבות בפרט היו לו בחכמת הרפואה.

מפני הבריאות ציוו עליו הרופאים להתעמל ולעסוק במלאכת יד, והיו בבית הרב כמה כלים שנעשו על ידו והם מעשה אומן עד להפליא. מהם: מנורה גבוה כקומת איש בעלת יב—יג קנים, שולחנות עשויים מחתיכות קטנות של עץ ואבן "מאזאיק" וכיו"ב.

בקי הי' ואומן בכתיבת סת"ם. לכל אחד מבניו נתן מגילה כתובה בכתי"ק — בזה הנמצאת אצל כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א הכתב יפה ובהיר כאילו זה עתה נכתבה. לא כל העמודים מתחילים בתיבת "המלך" ועשרת בני המן אינם כתובים בעמוד בפני עצמם — כן ישנם מזוזות גכת"ק.

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בסוף שנת תרמ"ב חלה, ובאור ליום השלישי יג לחדש תשרי שנת תרמ"ג נסתלק ומ"כ בליובאוויטש באוהל אביו אדמו"ר ה"צמח צדק".

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כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א מספר אודותיו:

הוד כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק האט מיר געזאגט — דערציילט דער פאטער (*) — אז מיין עלטערער ברודער הגאון הצדיק ר' אברהם סענדר איז געווען א מופלא אין חושים און א בעל מוחין ומדות. ער איז נפטר געווארן ווען ער איז אַלט געווען אַכט יאָר.

אין די אגרות הקדש מכ"ק אבותינו רבותינו הקדושים איז פאראן א צעטל וואָס כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק מהר"ש האָט געשריבן צום רבי'ן צמח צדק, אין וועלכן ער איז תולה פטירת בנו הקדוש אברהם סענדר אין א געוויסער סיבה. ענטפערט אים דער רבי צמח צדק אז עס איז ניט אַזוי און דער רבי זאָגט, אַז הילד הצדיק אברהם סענדר — איז געווען די נשמה פון אַלטן רבי'ן.

(*) הכונה על כ"ק אדמו"ר מהרש"ב נ"ע.

Besides his genius and his great knowledge of all areas of Torah — both revealed and hidden — The Rebbe Maharash possessed outstanding talents and an excellent memory. A few examples follow:

At the end of the *sefer* Hon Ashir (by the same author as Mishnas Chassidim), there is a song marked with its musical notes. The Rebbe Maharash read them and then remarked that the song written there inspired him to sing a certain melody. He then sang the *niggun* long known among Chassidim by the name "Eins Tzwei Drei Fir," or the "Ein Sof Niggun" [today also known as "Lechatchila Ariber" -ed].

Chassidim once requested that he repeat a *maamar* they had heard from him five years earlier. He thought for a few minutes and then proceeded to repeat the *maamar* word-for-word.

His sons Reb Zalman Aharon and the Rebbe Rashab were once studying a very complex Torah subject in their room. Their father entered the room and stood aside, listening as they discussed the *pilpul*. He remarked, "There is a difficult Rashi here," and recited the text by heart. "This needs to be examined closely," he said. He then began suggesting solutions to the subject, and continued with the *pilpul* for some time. He then concluded by saying that it was 28 years since he had last reflected on this subject.

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(*) המונה על כ"ק אדמו"ר מהרש"ב נ"ע.

He was fluent in several languages: Russian, French, Latin, etc. He was also particularly knowledgeable in the science of medicine.

For reasons of his health, the physicians instructed him to engage in physical work and handicrafts. Thus, there were in the house of the Rebbeim several objects that he had made by hand; they are of the most wonderful craftsmanship. Among these was a candlestick as tall as a man, with twelve or thirteen branches. There were also tables fashioned of small pieces of wood and stone mosaic, etc.

He was an expert and gifted scribe of Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzos*. He gave each of his sons a Megillah that he himself had handwritten. In the one that my father-in-law the Rebbe Shlita possesses, the writing is as beautiful and clear as if it had just now been written. Not all columns begin with the word *hamelech* and the ten sons of Haman do not appear in a separate column by themselves. There are also *mezuzos* that he wrote with his own hand.