

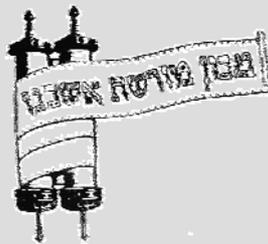
YERUSHASEINU

5772

**The Annual Journal of Toras Ashkenaz
Research, Review, and Recollections of Ashkenaz
Heritage and Customs**

Including the Beis Kenesses Minhag Calendar for the Year 5772

Sixth Yearbook



**Machon Moreshes Ashkenaz
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Generation after generation [the Holy Language] was our heritage, from when we came to *Eretz Yerushaseinu* – the land bequeathed to us, through the kindness of our holy ones; used for the missions of our kings, the singing of our Levites and the music of our Priests, in the hands of our prophets for their visions and in the mouths of our chiefs for their reasoning, until the exile of Jerusalem to Babylonia in the days of Zedekiah.

Rav Saadiah Gaon, introduction to Sefer HaEgron

The Land of Israel, chosen by *Hashem* as his own inheritance, is referred to by Rav Saadiah Gaon as *Eretz Yerushaseinu*. Nevertheless, wherever Israel was exiled, both the *Shechinah* and the Torah went into exile with them; and since the Torah, which is called ‘heritage’, went into exile with them, the land of their exile became *Eretz Yerushaseinu* – the land of our heritage. When they moved again to a different exile, and thence to yet another, the Torah of that *Eretz Yerushaseinu* was preserved with them. Thus, the *Poskim* coined expressions such as: “Custom of *Ashkenaz*”, “Custom of *Tzorfath*”, “Custom of *Sefarad*”, “Custom of Catalonia” etc.

Even in recent times, when by grace of God, a large part of the Jewish People have returned to *Eretz Yerushaseinu* – the cradle of our forefathers, the Torah brought from *Eretz Yerushaseinu* – *Ashkenaz*, has not been forgotten, nor have its sons turned their backs on the customs of their fathers in *Ashkenaz*. For it was not the land of *Ashkenaz*, upon which they wandered, that became sanctified by the holiness of the fathers, but rather it was the customs and usages of *Ashkenaz* which formed the solid ground under their feet, even when they found no physical resting-place for the sole of their feet; these were the source of fresh water from which our ancestors quenched their thirst, here they took root and from them they grew fruit, maintained by us to this day.

Yerushaseinu, as a Yearbook, was designated to give expression to this heritage. It describes the splendour of the missions of our kings, lends a

hearing ear to the melody of the singing of our Levites and to the resonance of the music of our Priests, celebrates the visions of our prophets and the reasoning of our chiefs – casting this tremendous legacy, in all its many shades, into the format of “generation after generation”, ensuring its observance in our generation and its transmission to coming generations.

*

Here is the place to convey thanks and blessings to all who have helped bring this worthy goal from thought to reality – those who have raised the teachings and memory of the great men of all generations from the abyss of oblivion, those who have created for them form and content, and those who have contributed their time and money – all have combined to achieve a sublime objective.

May they all receive heavenly blessings, and merit to see again, speedily, the visions of our prophets coming true before our eyes, when *Hashem* returns the captivity of his people, and the synagogues of Babylonia will be re-erected in the Land of Israel, speedily in our days.

5772/2012

The Editors

Rav Breuer: The Man

INTRODUCTION

And there arose a new generation which did not know Yosef...

Over thirty years have passed since the *petirah* of *Moreinu HaRav* Dr. Yosef Breuer. Although Rav Breuer is widely recognized as having been the main proponent of *Torah im Derech Eretz* in his time, the current generation knows little more about him than his pivotal role in rebuilding the Hirschian *Kehillah* in America. His many other exemplary traits remain largely unknown, such as his *gadlus* in Torah, his overwhelming humility, and his role as the warm, loving father of his *Kehillah*.

Those who knew Rav Breuer speak about the absolute awe and reverence in which he was held. Even the youth who grew up in the *Kehillah*, to whom German was a foreign language and who therefore could not understand Rav Breuer's speeches or read his essays, immediately realized when meeting Rav Breuer that they were in the presence of a *tzaddik*. But this was a *tzaddik* whose feet were firmly planted on the ground. His bearing and demeanor, his incomparable personal integrity and honesty gave him the ability to bridge the generation gap, and his fearless independence helped young people to identify with his message. The youth of the *Kehillah* knew without a doubt that their *Rav* could not be swayed: not with money, not through the bestowing of honor and not by threats. Rav Breuer charted his own course, faithful only to the dictates of the *Shulchan Aruch* and the legacy to which he was heir, not to the whims of the affluent or the pressures of the powerful.

An excellent biography of Rav Breuer has already been published;¹ however, it focuses primarily on the historical context of Rav Breuer's life accomplishments.² This article, by contrast, hopes to provide a glimpse of Rav Breuer's personality – to flesh out the portrait painted by the biography so that readers can get a sense of the man behind the legacy.

Secondary focus is on other aspects of Rav Breuer's life that have tended to be neglected or overlooked. For example, both before coming to America and in his first few years there, Rav Breuer was a teacher and *rebbe* – an occupation to which he devoted 30 years – and after his father's *petirah*, he assumed the role of *Rosh Yeshivah* of the Frankfurt

¹ Dr. David Kranzler and Rabbi Dovid Landesman, *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, Feldheim Publishers, 1998.

² For other short biographies of Rav Breuer, see the article written by Rav Breuer's son, Marc Breuer, in *Moreshei Tzvi – The Living Hirschian Legacy: Essays on "Torah im Derech Eretz" and The Contemporary Hirschian Kehilla*, Feldheim Publishers, 1988, pgs. 40-44, which can also be found in *The Book of Jeremiah: Translation and Commentary*, by Rav Dr. Joseph Breuer, Feldheim Publishers, 1988, pgs. vi-xi, and most recently published in *A Unique Perspective: Rav Breuer's Essays 1914-1973*, Feldheim Publishers, 2010, pgs. 1-6. See also the article written by Dr. Ernst L. Bodenheimer together with Rabbi Nossan Scherman, in *The Jewish Observer*, May 1981, pgs. 3-10, which can also be found in *The Torah World: a Treasury of Biographical Sketches*, Mesorah Publications, 1982, pgs. 223-238. See also "Toldos haMechaber," in *Sefer Divrei Yosef al Sugyos haShas*, published posthumously by the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation, 1990.

Yeshiva. This article provides an overview of the Frankfurt years, including brief descriptions of Rav Breuer's *shiurim* and *derech* in learning.

Rav Breuer was also a prolific writer, and I have included excerpts from his articles and essays so that readers will be able to get a sense of Rav Breuer's *hashkafah* in his own words.³

As stated previously, the main objective of this article is to expound on the personal side of Rav Breuer. Nevertheless, given that the philosophy of *Torah im Derech Eretz* was such an integral part of Rav Breuer's world outlook, I include a concise and informative chapter about this Torah-true *hashkafah*. Rav Breuer would often repeat what his father told him shortly before he passed away: "The path which Rabbiner Hirsch ז"ל charted for us will be *mekarev ha-geulah*."

*

Through personal interviews with members of the *Kehillah*, I was able to obtain many previously unpublished stories and memories of Rav Breuer. To the best of my ability, I have included only firsthand information. Sources are cited for most of the stories, unless the person who relayed the information did not wish to be quoted or the story describes a common occurrence.

*

It need not be stated that no biography can truly capture the essence of such a great man, his purity of thought and intentions, his inner feelings and his toil in learning. Nevertheless, as Rav Breuer wrote in an article about his father, Rav Shlomo Breuer,⁴ "To appreciate the depth of his person, it behooves us to offer a brief biographical review of his life." It is in this spirit that this article is written.

ויהי נועם ה' אלקינו עלינו ופועל ידינו ירצה.

Yerushalayim, Kislev 5772

Yakov Lorch

FOREBEARS

Rav Yosef Breuer was born on the 3rd of *Nissan*, 5642 (1882), in Papa, Hungary. His father, *HaRav HaGaon* Rav Shlomo Breuer,⁵ was the *Rav* of the *Kehillah* in Papa. A brief biographical review of the elder Rav Breuer's life will give us some insight into the atmosphere into which Rav Yosef was born.

Rav Shlomo Breuer was born in Pilisvorosvar, Hungary. His father, Mordechai Breuer, was a *ben Torah* who had learned in several *yeshivos* and gained comprehensive Torah knowledge.⁶ For most of his life, he struggled to make a living as a shopkeeper. As Rav Breuer put it, "He would usually sit with a *sefer* in his hand, annoyed at any customer who 'disturbed' him."⁷

³ For a complete bibliography of Rav Breuer's writings, see *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, pgs. 273-281.

⁴ *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pg. 25.

⁵ For more on Rav Shlomo Breuer, see Rav Yosef Breuer's article "Rav Dr. Salomon Breuer, His Life and His Times," *ibid.*, pgs. 25-39. See also R. Yaakov Rosenheim, *Ksavim: Mivchar Maamarim u'Neumim*, vol. 1, Agudath Israel World Organization, 1970, pgs. 243-250.

⁶ *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pg. 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 26.



Rav Shlomo Breuer

When Rav Shlomo Breuer was only four years old, his father brought him to learn with his maternal grandfather, Rav Shimon Wiener, in Lovosbereny.⁸ Rav Wiener had been born in Mattersdorf, where he had grown up assisting the elderly predecessor of the *Chasam Sofer*, Rav Yissachar Baer Bloch.⁹ When the *Chasam Sofer* came to Mattersdorf, Rav Wiener became his first *talmid*.¹⁰ Rav Wiener later went to Nikolsburg on foot to learn with the famous Rav Mordechai Banet, and ultimately received *smichah* from both of his *rebbeim*.¹¹

Rav Wiener was overjoyed to accommodate his young grandson in his home, and he nurtured him “with the wealth of his knowledge and the depth of his Jewish soul.”¹² After several years, young Shlomo Breuer’s parents so longed for him that he returned home. However, the isolated village of his youth could not provide the resources for the increased learning he craved, so Mordechai Breuer decided to take his 12-year-old son to the Yeshiva in Nitra. As Rav Yosef Breuer later described it, “This march through the mounds of snow in the deep of winter, mounds so high that the father had to carry his son on his shoulders, was an experience indelibly etched in the memory of Rav Breuer, and he told and re-told it many years later. He pictured the *mesirus nefesh* of his father, the unpretentious *ben Torah*, carrying his child to learn Torah.”¹³ Dissatisfied with the Nitra Yeshiva, Shlomo Breuer returned to learn with his grandfather for a few more years until he was old enough to enroll

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. For *chiddushei Torah* of Rav Wiener and the text of the *smichos* he received, see *Sefer Divrei Yosef*.

¹² *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pg. 26. In a rare pamphlet called *מכתב צוואה*, printed in two editions (one with a Yiddish translation, one with a German translation) in Pressburg 1871, Rav Shlomo Breuer published the *tzavaah* and a sample of *chiddushei Torah* of Rav Shimon Wiener, with a sample of his own *chiddushei Torah*. Rav Shlomo Breuer prefaces his *chiddushei Torah* with the following words: “הגם כי לא כדת הוא להדל אישים כמוני לבוא אחר המלך אאזמ”ו דצוק”ל הכ”מ אף גם להציג לפני קורא נעים דבר מה ממך שכלי, אכן תקותי חזקה כי כל איש אשר נודע לו איך היתה נפש אאזמ”ו דצוק”ל הכ”מ קשורה בנפשי יבין זאת כי נפשו תתערך בפרי עשתונותי אם אניח אותם בטנא פירותיו המתוקים, וידיני לכה זכות.”

¹³ *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pgs. 26-27.

in the Yeshiva in Pressburg, which was then headed by the *Chasam Sofer's* son, the *Ksav Sofer*.

After a few years of study in Pressburg, Shlomo Breuer left the Yeshiva and travelled to Vienna in order to obtain a university education. While there, he encountered a Jewish scholar who was so hostile toward traditional Judaism that Shlomo Breuer decided to return immediately to Pressburg. He continued learning until he felt strong enough to once again pursue a secular education. He ultimately received a doctorate from the University of Heidelberg, although he did not attend formal classes, and, after passing his exams, never opened another secular work in his life.¹⁴

In 1876, at the age of 26, Shlomo Breuer married Sophie [Tzipporah], the youngest daughter of *HaRav* Shmshon Raphael Hirsch.¹⁵ After his marriage, Rav Breuer was offered the *rabbanus* of the community in Papa, Hungary. Rav Hirsch was *niftar* in *Teves* 5649 (1888), and in 1890 Rav Shlomo Breuer was offered Rav Hirsch's position of *Rav* of *K'hal Adas Yeshurun* in Frankfurt, Germany.

In 1893, Rav Shlomo Breuer founded the Frankfurt Yeshiva, the first institution devoted purely to Torah study that had been seen in Germany for nearly seventy years.¹⁶ With the founding of the Yeshiva, Rav Shlomo Breuer wished to restore the glory of Torah learning to Frankfurt. His goal was not to create a training program for those who wished to enter the rabbinate, but rather to create an environment of learning *lishmah* based on the traditional, time-honored model. In the Frankfurt Yeshiva, *talmidim* could dedicate several years purely to learning. They were taught to understand that Torah learning is the essence of a Jew, and that one must always continue to make time for learning no matter what profession or path he would choose in the future.¹⁷

At first, the members of Rav Shlomo Breuer's *Kehillah* did not understand the need for a full-time Yeshiva, since Rav Hirsch had never opened one, and they were reluctant to accept such an innovation. In fact, the Yeshiva's initial enrollment consisted solely of *bachurim* from Hungary and Rav Shlomo Breuer's own sons. This lack of support from the Frankfurt community did not deter Rav Breuer from spending the greater part of his day teaching in the Yeshiva and relentlessly promoting the need for it.¹⁸ Eventually, his vision and dedication paid off. As time went on, the *baalei batim* of Frankfurt began to understand the importance of serious Torah learning, and many of them enrolled their sons in the Yeshiva.

¹⁴ See Isaac Breuer, *Darki*, Mossad Yitzhak Breuer, Jerusalem, 1988, pg. 27; *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pg. 28.

¹⁵ For more on Rav Hirsch, see Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Architect of Torah Judaism for the Modern World*, Mesorah Publications, 1996.

¹⁶ *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, pg. 55.

¹⁷ See Rav Yosef Breuer's article "The Frankfurt Yeshiva," where he describes the goals of the Yeshiva. This article, originally published in *Jüdische Monatshefte*, 1920, can be found in *Mitteilungen*, vol. V, Fall 1997; *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, pgs. 248-260; *A Unique Perspective*, pgs. 46-56.

¹⁸ Interestingly, the elderly last-surviving daughter of the *Chasam Sofer* wrote a letter of congratulations to Rav Shlomo Breuer upon his arrival in Frankfurt, in which she remarked that it must be Divine Providence that had brought her father's Torah back to his birthplace. See *The Living Hirschian Legacy*, pg. 32.



Rav Shlomo Breuer

As Rav Yosef Breuer put it, “Among all the institutions of [Rav Hirsch’s] *Kehillah*, the Yeshiva can truly be called the finest heir of his scholarly legacy. Regardless of what great work has been done in the past or will be done in the future in the realm of Jewish scholarship, it always was and always will be *Yeshivoth* that guarantee genuine Jewish study.”¹⁹ The immense effort invested by Rav Shlomo Breuer in order to bring true Torah scholarship back to Frankfurt was ultimately successful. Dayan Eliezer Posen, former *dayan* of *K’hal Adas Yeshurun* in Frankfurt and a *rebbe* in the Frankfurt Yeshiva, remarks:

Rabbi Breuer stressed the duty of Jewish parents to give their sons the opportunity to become *Talmidei Chachamim*. The Frankfurt Yeshiva brought back for the *Kehillos* in Germany the type of *Ben Torah* that had become all but extinct at the end of the 19th century. And it was the Frankfurt Yeshiva that gave its *talmidim* their strength of character, their “*Yiddishkeit*” which they could not lose throughout the vicissitudes of the war and post-war years. We may find former Frankfurt *talmidim* in all centers of Orthodox Jewish life, great and small; in *Eretz Yisrael*, its cities and Orthodox *Kibbutzim*; in England, in America, in South America and in South Africa. We find them as *baalei batim* whose entire life is still stamped by the years they spent at the Yeshiva of Frankfurt. And when one day, before the Throne of Him, שהליכות עולם לו, the question will be raised: “In whose זכות did this or that *Gadol* of German origin come to be who he is now?,” is it so certain that the answer will not be בזכות the Frankfurt Yeshiva?²⁰

REBBE, TEACHER, ROSH YESHIVAH

As a child, young Yosef Breuer attended the Hirsch *Realschule* (the elementary and high

¹⁹ *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, pg. 252; *A Unique Perspective*, pg. 49.

²⁰ Dayan Dr. Eliezer Posen, in *Ateres Tzvi – Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume*, Feldheim Publishers, 1962, pgs. 153-154.

school founded by Rav Hirsch), and afterwards joined the Frankfurt Yeshiva, where he was privileged to be a *talmid muvhak* of his father. In 1903, Rav Breuer received *smichah* from his father and from Rav Koppel Reich, the Chief Rabbi and *Av Beis Din* of Budapest, who had been Rav Shlomo Breuer's *chavrusa* in Pressburg. In 1905, Rav Yosef Breuer obtained a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Strasbourg. When he returned to Frankfurt after receiving *smichah*,²¹ he joined the staff of the Hirsch *Realschule*,²² where he taught *Gemara*, *Mishnah* and *Navi*, as well as history and German literature. Rav Shimon Schwab, who had been Rav Breuer's *talmid* in the *Realschule*, recalled, "He was the best teacher in the entire school... He taught *Navi* like no one else... He spoke it like he was the *Navi*... My appreciation for *Nach* – for *Tehillim* – that comes from what I learned from him... I never had a teacher make such an impression on me."²³ In 1906, Rav Breuer also began to teach in



Rav Breuer and Rav Schwab at the wedding of Jacob Breuer

the Frankfurt Yeshiva, and he innovated an afternoon program for *Realschule* students to make it possible for them to continue their Talmudic studies in the Yeshiva. Due to this

- 21 When the *Ridvaz*, Rav Yaakov David Willowsky of Tzefas, was in Frankfurt to raise funds for the printing of his *perush* on the *Yerushalmi*, Rav Breuer escorted him to donors' houses to collect funds (Rav Yaakov Horowitz, in *HaModia*, 9 Iyar 5740). [The *Ridvaz* brings *divrei Torah* in his *perush* to the *Yerushalmi* which he heard from Rav Shlomo Breuer; see the *Yerushalmi* at the end of *Mo'ed Katan*, p. 42, addendum to p. 54b: "כליל החכמים כש"מ שלמה נ"י ברייער הגאבד"ק פפד"מ יצ"ו ראיתי להציג כאן מה ששמעתי דבר נחמד מפי ידי"ג הרב הגאון הצדיק המפורסם החו"ב פאר ישרון".] Later, when the *Ridvaz* was in Antwerp visiting Jacob Eisenmann, he suggested Yosef Breuer as a *shidduch* for Mr. Eisenmann's eldest daughter Rika.
- 22 Rav Schwab recalled that Rav Breuer's students in the elementary school in Frankfurt referred to him as *דוד שחור*, since he had a long black beard. One day, one of the students wrote *דוד שחור* on the blackboard in big letters, and the class awaited Rav Breuer's reaction when he entered. When Rav Breuer walked into the room, the class stood up, and Rav Breuer glanced at the blackboard. Without missing a beat, he turned around and asked the class, "If *שחור* means black, why does *שחר* mean morning? And if *שחר* means morning, why does *לשחר* mean to search?" Heard from Ben Ettlinger. (See the Hirsch Chumash on *Bereishis* 19:1 for the explanation).
- 23 *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy*, pg. 76.

program, many students postponed their career training or university studies and enrolled in the Yeshiva for a year or two.²⁴

On *Lag Ba'omer* 5671 (1911), Rav Breuer married Rika Eisenmann,²⁵ the daughter of Jacob and Dina Eisenmann of Antwerp.²⁶ Jacob Eisenmann was a prosperous businessman who had been a *talmid* of Rav Hirsch in Frankfurt, and who later became one of the early leaders of the Orthodox community in Antwerp.²⁷ Dina Eisenmann was a daughter of Liepman Philip Prins,²⁸ a Dutch businessman who retired to Frankfurt to devote himself to learning.

Rika Breuer's optimism and inner strength were key factors in enabling Rav Breuer's future accomplishments. Although she was busy raising a family during the early years of their marriage – her three sons and five daughters were all born and educated in Frankfurt – she had been her father's secretary in Antwerp and thus possessed a strong business sense. This skill, which proved invaluable after the family settled in America, was also helpful from the outset of the Breuers' married life. Rebbetzin Breuer (or "*Frau Rabbiner*," as she was known), was committed to the Rav's *kedushah*, and she took on the entire responsibility for the family's finances²⁹ so Rav Breuer did not need to be distracted from his learning and teaching.

The relationship between Rav Breuer and his wife was marked by the closeness and understanding that comes from shared goals. For instance, during the summer of 1914, Rebbetzin Breuer traveled to Antwerp with her two young children to spend the vacation period with her mother. Rav Breuer joined them later on when the Yeshiva began its summer break. Shortly after Rav Breuer arrived, World War I broke out. Rebbetzin Breuer was concerned that international travel might become difficult – so, at her suggestion, Rav Breuer returned to Frankfurt that same night, in order to take care of the Yeshiva. This commitment to the Yeshiva required tremendous *mesiras nefesh* on Rebbetzin Breuer's part, which she accepted without complaint.

²⁴ Ibid., pgs. 57, 76.

²⁵ For more on Rika Breuer, see *Zikaron l'Rivkah – In Remembrance of Rika Breuer*, private publishing by the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation, 2003.

²⁶ In an indication of the high esteem in which Rav Breuer held his father-in-law, he dedicated his commentary on *Sefer Yirmiyah* to his memory: "...True disciple of his great teacher/ Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch ז"ל/ Dedicated fighter for Jewish ideals/ Motivated by a strong sense of duty/ Exemplary in his personal integrity/ Upright in his professional life/ Compassionate and generous/ Truth he loved/ Falsehood he hated/ Half-truths he scorned/ לזכר עולם יהיה צדיק."

²⁷ Jacob Eisenmann was committed to his Frankfurt origins, and insisted that all his children be fluent in German so that they could read and understand the works of Rav Hirsch. For more on Jacob Eisenmann, see Rav Moshe Aron, *The Eisenmann Family*, Jerusalem, 1996. Regarding Jacob Eisenmann's involvement in *Agudas Yisrael*, see R. Yaakov Rosenheim, *Zichronos*, Second Edition, Netzach Publications, 1979, pgs. 113, 121, 123. Jacob Eisenmann also built and founded a *Shul* in Antwerp, see Els Bendheim (ed.), *The Synagogue Within: Antwerp's Eisenmann Schul*, Ktav Publishing House, 2004.

²⁸ For more on Liepman Philip Prins, see *Liepman Philip Prins: His Scholarly Correspondence*, edited and annotated by Mayer Herskovics, General Editor Els Bendheim, Ktav Publishing House, 1992, and *Liepman Philip Prins: His Scholarly Contribution, Insights and Essays*, edited and annotated by Mayer Herskovics, General Editor Els Bendheim, Ktav Publishing House, 1999.

²⁹ It should be pointed out that as Rav Breuer was completely uninvolved with his personal finances, he carried no money with him at all, save for the few coins the Rebbetzin gave him for *tzedakah*.