

RABBI SOLOMON LATZ

The name of this faultless and good man is closely connected to the history of the City of Posen, with the glory of Israel, greatest of the Rabbis, the genial and righteous man, Rabbi Akiba Eger.

Rabbi Solomon, son of Benjamin Latz, was the type of Jew which is a blessing in itself, with his pious and quiet life, and who does good work with quietude and humility. Truly, the Jewish world at that time was not lacking in exalted types such as these.

The generation of one hundred and fifty years ago was rich in types of Jews who distinguished themselves with qualities good and fruitful in many activities of life. Integrity and straightforwardness were the holy rules in the life of the Jewish people. Rabbi Solomon Latz was the simple and good Jew in the most profound and beautiful sense. If he was successful that his name shall endure for generations in the Posen Region, it was through a great act of his, and that act is connected with the personality and activities of Rabbi A. Eger.

The date, year, and place of birth of Rabbi Solomon we do not know. They had not yet started to have civil birth records, to list also, those born among Jews in the district of "Great Poland" (such is the name of the Posen District). When a Jewish child was born it was listed in the book of the "godfather" or "Mohel" and those, as was customary among Jews, were not particular if such a book were lost. The heirs of the godfather or Mohel, in particular, were careless in preserving such books for the future. The troubles which a community had to go through, and which destroyed more than once that which was built with great effort, were also factors that such books passed from hand to hand until lost.

In the period when Rabbi Solomon was born, family names had not yet been introduced among all Jewish families, with a few exceptions. This is also a reason for a lack of a birth certificate of R. Solomon, son of Benjamin Latz. Concerning the place of his birth, we rely on what people say. We know from tradition that R. Solomon was born in Posen. In the document which the community presented to his heirs on the 3rd of February, 1829, and attested by the municipal seal (found in Government archives in Posen under no. CXVIII157) is written that his son Samuel Latz is 51 years old. His eldest son, then, was born in 1778. Assuming that, as was the custom, he married at 18, he was born about 1760. This much is known that he was an old man when he died in 1828. Neither is there a birth certificate of his wife, Blume, but the above document says that her father's family name was David, and that she preceded him in death by eighteen years. Seemingly, she was not older than fifty at the time of her death.

R. Solomon married a second time. According to a German document in the Government archives (Letter B) she was of the Shapiro family. No children were born.

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R. Solomon's avocation was that of supplying leather materials for saddlers. It is said that he, himself, knew the trade of saddlery, and was engaged in it in his youth. But there is no support for that. In the German documents on his personality (same archives) he is registered as a merchant, and in some places, with an honorary name (honorable merchant), and really, he was that! All the abundant material in the archives relating to his last years, pictures him as honest and truthful in all of his transactions. His business relations with non-Jews were a model. All respected and honored him. Fortune smiled at him; his wealth grew by leaps and bounds from year to year.

Opportunity also favored him to succeed in business; the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte, which traversed this area, caused a great demand for saddles which were needed for war purposes.

Whether R. Solomon was also a scholar¹ is not known to us. In his time the learning of the Torah was very popular in Posen and surrounding territory. Every Jew devoted time to learning, and saw all his world in it. That an ordinary Jew should be an excellent scholar was a natural occurrence, and a matter of course on the Jewish Street, especially in the city from which flowed the learning of Rabbi Eger. That did not excite any wonderment. It was not paraded because such was the mode of life in the camp of Israel. A man like Rabbi Solomon who was, according to the inscription on his tombstone, one of the early comers to the synagogue, and late leavers, was certainly imbued with the voice of learning from the hundreds of scholars who were engaged in learning day and night in the City of Posen. It could not be otherwise that R. Solomon devoted time for learning on coming to the synagogue with other heads of families, to whom R. Eger delivered his lectures every day. The fact, also, that he was a "Parnos" in the community and his called MOREINU (on his tombstone) a title that is not so easily acquired, proves conclusively that he was counted among the class of scholars. There is no doubt that he was more or less an academic personality. He took the gaon, Rabbi Elazer Zilz for a husband to his daughter Breinche. This Rabbi was of the great men of Torah, and one of the close friends of Rabbi Eger. Even before Eger's coming to Posen he corresponded with him about interpolation and decisions. Called him the greatest of the scholars of Posen. (See decision I Eger nos. 71 & 72)

Rabbi Elazer was of the elite of Talmudic Posen, lovable and pleasant in manner and charm of speech. He who has such a son-in-law is certainly deserving of him.

It is characteristic that in all the transactions of Rabbi Solomon with non-Jews, he could not read or write German, even to sign his name in that language. The notary who verified his testament in the home of R. Solomon when he was on his deathbed, adds at the end of the testament that he attests the signature of the testator because he could not sign in German. This does not minimize in the least the importance of R. Solomon. On the other hand, it adds luster to his Jewish individuality. He was so much permeated in it that he disregarded altogether the knowledge of the language of the land. Even gentiles saw no blemish in that, because they had sufficient practical experience of his truthfulness and honesty from their contacts with him in business. In his testament is recorded that he resided in his home on Dominikannerstrasse #127. This Street is still so named today, and is next to Jewish Street, and on it stands a beautiful synagogue which is no longer used. The reason is because there are few Jews in Posen and few who attend services.

In the Jewish communal record is mentioned that R. Solomon was always on the alert to do favors far and near, was supporting secretly all needy and unfortunate. His profound sentimentality was awake by doing favors to relatives, and friends of his and his wife's. He was the type of a quiet Jew, blessed with qualities which are a glory to an Israelitish man; qualities whose possessor uses for the welfare of his community, to fulfil what is written in the Torah, "And thou shall do the right and the good."

Among those who rejoiced and who were exultant when Posen succeeded to receive Rabbi Eger in its midst, was R. Solomon Latz. The so-called "Advanced" showed great opposition against Eger before his admirers succeeded in setting him up on the rabbinical seat in this celebrated city. They wrote denunciations, and laid impediments before the authorities. But all in vain. The majority of Jewish Posen considered it a great delight to see R. Eger officiate as Chief Rabbi of the Posen Region.

These tragic events (which, this is not the place to enumerate) left in the heart of R. Solomon Latz, who was a witness thereof, a bitterness toward all those men who dared oppose a personality like R. Eger. Having been "parnos" he came to recognize them from close contact, as some of them were in the communal regime. He, as a pious and orthodox Jew, noticed that they were not sufficiently loyal to Jewish tradition. Their endeavor to introduce reforms in the community were noticed from year to year, even during the life of R. Eger.

R. Solomon Latz was not of the fighters of the community. His natural humility deterred him from entering into a strife with the heads of the community desiring innovations. According to public record he was one of the close friends of R. Eger. The latter visited him once at his house when he was ill. R. Solomon saw in R. Eger the crown of Talmudic and moral perfection at once. On reaching old age he decided to leave a useful commemoration to the City of Posen. He decided to establish two institutions which would be, in a religious and communal sense, a blessing amidst the community. He was apprehensive of only one thing; lest the public regime penetrate, in the course of time, into the management of the institutions, and inaugurate such reforms that would grieve a pious Jew.

R. Solomon gave deep consideration to try to prevent the new chieftains of the community, whose influence was growing, from the management of his institutions.

On the first month of the year 1829 he made his will. This will is fascinating with its inner religious expression. We see in it his true character, his spiritual modesty. He relates the noble motives which prompted him to this decision, when his day drew toward eve. This will is found in a special file in the Government archives in Posen. It is written in German with Hebrew letters. He signed ^{it} in Hebrew. I render it here in full version and in a Hebrew translation: (S. B.)

VERSION of TESTAMENT OF R. SOLOMON
son of Benjamin Latz, his memory to a blessing.

I have already attained old age. For this I praise God and hope for his mercy and kindness that he will graciously let me live on earth. But a man does not know when he will be forced to make an exit from this world. Therefore, it is the duty of all who have wealth to express their last wish in the arrangement of their property. Also, I am convinced that my heirs will divide my property amongst themselves peacefully and with full accord. All my heirs are dear to me, equally. Therefore, I see no reason, at present, to arrange the manner of the division. I leave this, however, still in my authorization. Truly, it should not be forgotten that the good Lord does not bless with property solely for the purpose that a man may look at it, and that it should be left after him without performing some true charity. And for this reason I am determined, after long consideration, and at a time when I am in my best spiritual powers, to arrange as my wish the following, for the happiness of my soul:

In order to thank the merciful God for his kindness to me during all my life, to pray for forgiveness of sins, (for what man lives and does

not sin) in order to purchase happiness to my soul, and that there might be left a charitable institute which would prove a glory for my heirs after me, I have decided to appropriate two notes in my possession. One, amounting to 3000 thaler, with accrued annual interest on house on Market #69, and second, amounting to 3540 thaler, with accrued interest on house #243 Breslauer Street, that by these funds should be established a hospital for the poor and an institute for ^{Study of Talmud} Talmud learning. Not knowing what manner is more desirable and agreeable to such institutions to the end that it pleases God and favors my soul, I have relied on the person of Chief Rabbi from here (Eger), trusting his great piety, his charities and his accurate knowledge of the manner of suitably establishing and arranging above institutions, and which leads to the happiness of the soul. In this, my will, it is my intent that he, after my death, receive into his possession the two above mentioned notes, principal and interest, and to do with it as he pleases, according to my wish, and with no interference on the part of any one else.

He, the ^{Gavon} Master-Chief Rabbi Eger, agreed to this; and so with his agreement I arrange here my last wish, not to be altered, that after my death, Master Rabbi Eger should have the absolute right to collect the amount of these two loans, 3000 reichsthaler on house #69 Market and 3540 reichsthaler on house #243 Breslauer Street, according to the documents which secure the loans, that he should take possession of them in order to enable him to collect the principal and interest, and to issue receipts accordingly. He may transfer the two loans on the mortgage record, or leave them with the borrower until liquidation, if he finds that this is desirable. I give full authority to Master Chief Rabbi Eger to use above amounts to establish and arrange a hospital for poor Jews, and a house of Talmud learning, without intervention

from others. To his own wish I leave the right to appropriate from the total amount the amount needed for the founding of the hospital. But he should at least appropriate for it two-thirds of the sum of the amounts. To him alone, his piety, his wide Talmudic erudition and understanding, I give implicit trust, and am confident that he will establish the two institutions, that he will extend them, will arrange for maintenance and management, and whatever the Master Chief Rabbi Eger will do or will not do, is my wish.

Lastly, I am convinced that Master-Chief Rabbi will attract, at his choice, one or two of my heirs to ^{give counsel} ~~make~~ advices in connection with the above amounts and arrangements. But I leave this to his pleasure. He, the Master-Chief Rabbi, need furnish no bond to insure the accomplishments of the arrangement of the institutions. Explicitly, I free him ^{from} ~~of~~ this. Also, I plainly assert here that the two said amounts, together with the interest, which I appropriated for these two charitable institutions, are not yet half of my property. The balance of my property is far ^{greater} ~~more~~ above this total amount. I have accordingly signed with my own hand. To my last arrangement of above, I have decided, before signing, on a change, as follows: that the sum for the two institutions, one for 3000 thaler with accrued interest on loan on house on Market #69, should go all, and the second sum of 3540 thaler with interest on house #243 Breslauer, and the mortgage for security, should be given only in the amount of 3000 thaler, for the benefit of the two institutions. The balance of the second total should go to my heirs with what I leave to them of my property. Except this one change, the arrangement of this, my last will, remains in its validity.

Lastly, I decided also on the manner of dividing the balance of my property, besides those devoted to the above institutions. My last

wish is: my children, namely, Samuel Latz, Breinche Zilz, and Gittelche Wittkowsky, all of age, and my grandchildren, the children of my daughter, whose death occurred during my lifetime, Michle, wife of Abraham Moses Cohn of Pilchne, whose names are Moses and Abraham, both minors. I appoint herewith guardians for my grandchildren, the merchants, Mr. Moses Bradig and Mr. Solomon, from here. I am of the absolute conviction that my adult heirs will in no way injure, at time of division, the rights of my grandchildren who are not of age. Therefore, I arrange here explicitly, that after my death everything should remain in its present position, namely, that my property, whether in cash or property, should not be divided immediately. On the other hand, all my estate after me, whether in real estate, actual cash, and other kinds of property, should fall as legacy of my adult heirs; but these my adult heirs should show to the guardians, without the guardians' intervention, the value of the inheritance; and accordingly estimate the amount due to my two grandchildren, and which is one-fourth part of the total amount of the legacy. They should specify that amount to the Chief Rabbi. Whether it be in secured notes or hypothecary deposits, it should be deposited with the guardians until the grandchildren reach maturity.

Posen, January 2, 1829.

To this testament is attached a rider, also in Hebrew letters, and which was written two days after the first. (Government archives, Posen, Letter B)

By special confirmation of my testament of the 2nd of this month and year, written and deposited at a royal court, I hereby ordain in addition, with regard to my estate, the following:

To my present second wife, Malkah, whom I married in 1813 without

civil marriage (marriage license) and who did not bring in anything, and which marriage with her cannot have any civil effect, shall give my heirs after my death, besides the 150 thaler which I granted her already, an additional sum of 450 thaler which I herewith allow.

I fix that in case that one of my grandchildren, Moses or Hirsch, the children of my late daughter, Malkah married to Avrohom Kohn, God forbid, should die, their parts of the estate shall come back to my children still alive. As I do not have any claims to anyone of my heirs from a loan or from any other kind of money affairs or any other kind of business, I therefore order that none of them may sue the other for this reason, at the court or at the rabbi colleague, but to divide all my estate into equal parts in the best way without any fight. In case my children and heirs should act contrary to my last will as to my ^{last} ~~decrees~~ in the first testament of the 2nd of this month, they shall be excluded from the legitimate portion of my inheritance, and whatever then is left over of my estate shall hereafter be added to my legacy to the hospital (test. of 2nd of this month) and be enlarged hereby.

The hospital and the Talmudistic school to which I bequeathed the amounts according to my first testament of the 2nd of this month, shall have my name. I appoint two testament executors, the merchants residing here: Mr. Solomon and his brother Mr. Ephraim Mendel; and give to them full authority to do all the means and ways which they think are the best and most serviceable to carry out both my last decrees.

Posen, January 4, 1829.

Humility, politeness and charity, these three, distinguish the maker of these wills. It is seldom that a man appropriates a large portion of his wealth for public needs. His greatness is not only in that he was charitable, but also the constructive manner in which he left his money for his posterity.

Six thousand reichsthaler were at that time six thousand American dollars, eighteen thousand German marks. A very enormous amount according to the value of money and necessities of life of before 110 ^{thous} years. The value of the reichsthaler was five times higher than in our time. Only an open-hearted Jew could donate such an enormous amount.

This testament proved how much he loved and honored R. Eger. His confidence in the Rabbi was boundless.

As his politeness, so his ^{inception} cleverness and caution. With all his security that there will be no discord among his heirs, he still fears that perhaps some controversy might arise amongst them. And, as a practical man he warns them with active means: They may lose their part of the legacy, and that it reverts to whom? Naturally, to his only beloved subject - Hospital and Lecture ^{House} House.

Thirteen days after making his will and admonishing his household, Rabbi Solomon, son of Benjamin, died. Great honor was done to him at his death. Rabbi Eger walked after the casket and eulogized him. R. Eger at once began to fulfil the wish of the deceased. He bought a property and founded the hospital and lecture house. Israel Wittkowsky, son-in-law, added 200 reichsthaler; Samuel Latz, son of R. Solomon, added 250 reichsthaler.

Rabbi Eger worked out the plans by which the two enterprises should be conducted. The plans are of such a nature that the institutions are not dependent upon the community. The administration of the hospital was so arranged that it was self-supporting, without the assistance of the public. The management was marvelous because of the watchful eye of R. Eger. His tender care caused him much grief. The regime did not cease to disturb its autonomous existence, bent upon bringing it under the domination of the community. So great was the lust for prestige and victory that they were not ashamed to degrade their great Rabbi who could not diverge from the absolute wish of the deceased. The lawsuit which the regime instituted on the strength of a statute of 1833, according to which any institution of a public nature belongs to the public, was of no avail. Rabbi Eger emerged victor. The regime complained that there was disorder and chaos in the hospital. The Government sent an investigator who found that orderliness reigned supreme in the hospital. The sick were satisfied, and the denouncers should be severely reprimanded.

The conduct of the public regime constitutes a tragic chapter for R. Eger in the hospital matter. It embittered him until, although quiet like a dove, never showing anger, began to become enraged and almost evinced ^{lost patience} unendurance. In his memorandum to the Government he pointed out that he would not deviate from his position, even an hair's breadth. The Government saw ^{the} his justice. ^{of his son} Rabbi Eger prepared seventy-eight provisions in the constitution of the management of the hospital and lecture house. This document was signed by him in Latin letters; and his son Rabbi Solomon also signed it. The document was in two copies, one in the Government archives, and one in the office of the "Home for Aged" in the name of Solomon Benjamin Latz in Posen. This home is autonomous to the present day, and does not belong to the community

leaders, and they have no voice in its management. I reproduce here-
with the preface to the constitution in its original language, German.
The preface is like a history of this home. (Vorwort)

FOREWORD

The merchant here residing

SOLOMON BENJAMIN LATZ

who died on January 17, 1829, has bequeathed with his philanthropic feeling for the welfare of the sick Jewish people, and for the Talmud students, in his testament of January 2nd and addendas of January 4th 1829, two amounts, each one of 3000 thaler for the purpose of building a hospital for poor Jews, and a school for Talmudistic students (Cet hamidrosch), and he has decided that at least two-thirds of these legatees are to be used for the hospital, and not more than one-third for the school. At the same time he has given full authority to the late Chief Rabbi Jacob Moses Eger to raise the amounts as mentioned and to use them for the purposes as told. He has appointed him to decide everything so far as the furnishing and further administration of both institutions are concerned according to his own will, and finally has decided that everything Chief Rabbi Eger shall do in this request will be his own will.

This legacy has been approved by the royal government by decree of 4.4 1829 in all his original and soon an amount of 550 thaler by the son of the founder, the late merchant Samuel Solomon Latz, and 300 other thaler by the son-in-law of the founder, the late merchant Israel Marcus Wittkowsky. Hereafter, the Chief Rabbi Eger has purchased the property No. 306 in the old section of the city and the wall surrounding the lot. After leaving an amount of 2000 thaler to the fundamental fund for the purpose of buying lots, and building both institutions. He furthermore ordered that most of it be taken for the hospital, and the smaller separated part of it for the school. At the same time, he ordered them to buy beds, mattresses, dressers, all the necessary outfit for the rooms and the kitchen, apparatus for baths, and curing

methods for eighteen people to be taken in. For the school he ordered all the books and utensils necessary. Hereafter he appointed five directors for the hospital: the merchants, Solomon Levy, Naphtali Moses, Joseph Handyke, Moses Wolff, and Benjamin Wittkowsky; and two directors for the school: The Rabbi Solomon Levy, and the merchant Wolf Graetz, and he charged them with all the affairs under him and his successor.

After all this was done the late Chief Rabbi Eger has written a document of February 4, 1837, on account of the authority given him in the testament of the founder, and addenda.. This document states how to handle the management and the utilization of both institutions with special consideration of the spoken instant demand and will of the testator against him, error in spite of the repeated defense, as he informed the president of the congregation by letter of Adar 22 (March 23, 1835). It says: The Jewish congregation of this city does not have any privilege of using these institutions, and furthermore, the congregation will be excluded forever from any interference with the supervision and administration of these institutions. The Chief Rabbi Eger has presented these documents to the royal government as the highest supervisor for confirmation. By suggestion of the royal government these decrees have been made more plain and complete by several postscripts. After this was done both institutions were recognized by high decrees of May 6th as independent from the corporation here on account of the rights and duties according to _____ of the general common law.

Hereafter, these documents have been summarized and reformed to one statute, telling all about the supervision and administration of these institutions.

XVI

Under the seventy-eight enumerated rules, Rabbi Solomon Eger, son of R. Akiba, signed his name, and in the regulation book of the government archives, with a little variation, Rabbi Akiba Eger himself signed. It is clear from this preface That R. Eger attempted to persuade Mr. Latz to not entirely eliminate the public regime from the management of the institutions; but Mr. Latz was determined. The subsequent actions of the regime against R. Eger are even more obnoxious. The preface unequivocally provides that never shall the regime have any authority to interfere in the operation and management. This will of the noble testator is adhered to to the present day. Even in long course of time, decades after the demise of R. Eger, there came men into the management entirely different from what Mr. Latz imagined, no change was made. They came not as representatives of the community, but as men competent in the management of the institutions; and be it said to their credit they scrupulously fulfilled every point of R. Eger's regulations.

In the course of time the community acquired a large and beautiful hospital. There was no special need for the hospital of Mr. Latz. A suitable site in the Jewish Street was bought, and a beautiful structure, famous in the pre-war Germany, was erected on it. It was built in 1899 and dedicated in 1911. It cost 315,000 marks. It is four stories high and has all conveniences. It is able to accomodate one hundred and twenty old people, and is called LATZ HOME FOR ^{OLD} OLD. In the structure there is also a lecture house, very beautiful, which contains a library of two thousand books, and is called House of Solomon. On a marble plate at the entrance to the building are engraved these words in German: This House of Solomon was founded in 5531 by Solomon Latz, and in the year 5595 was started in operation by Chief Rabbi Akiba Eger. Their memory be blessed; their work remain for all time.

XVII

In the hall all by the entrance where the picture of Solomon Latz hangs, is engraved on the wall: This Home came into existence by the legacy of the merchant, Solomon Benjamin Latz, in Posen, amounting to 6000 thaler. On a large heavy marble plate are engraved the names of other philanthropists. Some contributions amounted to 40,000 or 30,000 marks. Amongst them are mentioned the contributions of the descendants of Mr. Solomon Latz, (all in German) the relatives of the founder, Miguel Latz and Arnold Farber of Mexico, and Julius Latz in Posen, 5000 marks. Opposite this plate is seen another plate inscribed in Polish: To the praised memory of our cordial benefactor, the deceased Miguel Latz, Los Angeles, California.

This institution is self-supporting from the funds left by philanthropists. The vicissitudes of time did not affect it. About eighty aged men and women are kept there, with all conveniences. As to form and spaciousness there is no equal to it in all Poland, amongst our better Jews. The townspeople also come to religious services at the Lecture House, besides the old inmates. Services are held three times a day. Two or three of them ^{study} learn daily a Talmudic lesson, but the voice of Torah is no longer heard like in former days. The heart of the Jewish youth is not for Talmud, not even for scripture. Times have changed in this respect, and not for the better.

I hereby submit birth records of the children of R. Solomon. It is found in Government archives in file bearing name Acta von Solomon Benjamin Latz. Acta L., 17N; .. X. VII 57.

The community presented this certificate to the heirs of the deceased and verified by its seal and signatures of the heads of the community. The Municipality signed also. His first wife and his second wife are also mentioned.

\$25,000 FOR CHARITY

Mrs. Ana Davila de Latz, who died last June 21, bequeathed \$25,000 of her \$850,000 estate to charities, under the terms of a will filed yesterday for probate.

The 88-year-old woman was the widow of Miguel Latz, who had been a prominent figure in the political life of Mexico before his emigration here twenty-five years ago.

Among the charitable requests were: Los Angeles Orphan asylum, \$5000; Children's Home Society, \$2000; Little Sisters of the Poor, \$2000; Children's Hospital, \$2000, and \$10,000 for charitable purposes in Magdalena, Sonora.

The following are the descendants of the late merchant, Solomon Benjamin Latz and his deceased wife, Blume, nee David:

One son, local merchant, Samuel Solomon Latz, 51 years old.
 One daughter, Berta (Breinche) widowed Lazarus Zilz, 49 years old.
 One daughter, Gette, wedded Israel Marcus Wittkowsky, local merchant, 46 years old.
 Children of the deceased daughter, Michle, nee Solomon Benjamin Latz, wedded Abraham Moses Cohn, namely,
 One son, Moses Abraham Cohn, born 7 Iyar 571, Jewish style, May 1, 1811
 One son, Hirsch Abraham Cohn, born 13 of Sivan 573, Jewish style, June 11, 1813, *Salomon*
 both of whom are minors living with the mother of Abraham Moses Cohn in Berlin.

That these are the rightful heirs of the deceased is hereby attested that the deceased Solomon Benjamin Latz lived with Malke, nee Simon Spiro, in second marriage, no children, Posen, February 3, 1829.

(Signatures heads of Community of Posen)

(Signature of Magistrate)

* * * * *

Inscription on tombstone in Posen Cemetery

UPRIGHT AMONG NOBLEMEN

S-hining everywhere was his name
 O-n earth and heaven in one accord
 L-last he left and first he came
 O-n every day to serve his Lord.
 M-an with righteous piety permeated
 O-f charity far and near which he donated.
 N-oble and loyal in all transactions
 P-ublic welfare ruled his actions.
 The sage, "Parnos and Moreinu"
 Solomon Zalman, son of R. Benjamin
 May his memory be blessed.

Died in good name Saturday, 13th Shevat, buried Sunday, 14th Shevat.

MAY HIS SOUL BE BOUND IN THE CLUSTER OF LIFE

Note: "Parnos and Moreinu" mean "Public Leader and our Teacher"

Inscription on his wife's tombstone
 (His grave is quite distant from that of his wife)

H. I.

A pious woman, Mrs. Blume, wife of R. Zalman, son of Benjamin, his

Mr. Samuel Latz died three years after his father's death, 54 years old. On his tombstone is inscribed; Celebrated Samuel Latz, son of exalted Solomon Latz, his memory blessed, died Sunday evening and interred on the morrow, Monday, Jebeth 15, 592.

If the
 S-un of thy success on earth was shining
 A-and now thy body to dust is returning,
 M-uch hast thou given from thy wealth
 U-ntil the sick were restored to health.
 E-ver thy sun shines and brings
 L-ife and healing in its wings.
 M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Susa Latz died the third day of Passover 657. May her soul be bound in the cluster of life. Here rests in God our beloved mother, grand, and great grandmother, Susanna Latz, nee Barat. Born July 5, 1819, died April 19, 1897. Peace to her ashes.

We do not understand why the grave of Samuel is far from that of his father. Close to her father is the grave of Gitele Wittkowsky. She was sixty-three years old at her death.

Inscription

Pious woman, Mrs. Gitale, wife of dear and noble Israel Wittkowsky, and daughter of celebrated Solomon, founder of Coture home, "Beth Shlomo" died Monday 5th day of Passover 606 and found rest ~~with~~ the graves of the dearest of her family.

G-rand to her husband was she a spouse
 I-n Torah she camped, and kindness did render
 T-aking, when wealthy, good care of her house,
 A help to her husband, to the children tender,
 L-oving her work though weary and tiring
 E-ating no bread of sluggishness in her days
 May sleep now be pleasant in retiring
 While in rest with her parents she stays.
 M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

On her husband's tombstone near by:

Here rests the scholar Rabbi Israel, son of Mordecai Wittkowsky, his memory be blessed, leader of our community, died and interred in good name Monday, 20Elul 591.

I-nto thy grave lowered and left
 S-tar of thy life we saw was cleft.
 A-ich gifts ever were thy favor
 A-ll thy ways with modesty savor
 E-re thy splendor departs, son of Mordecai
 L-o, thy friends, admirers, bitterly cry.
 M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

The record of Samuel's family is also attested by the Jewish community and the municipality, in archives Octa L 18168. The Jewish community


attests that Samuel Solomon Latz, a local merchant, who passed away 19th inst, being married to Pauline, nee Jacob Kaul, had children as follows:

Son, David Latz, born AC 16 576 J. Street, August 10, 1816.
 Son, Beno, born 9 Tebeth 578 J. Street, December 18, 1817.
 Daughter, Bertha, born Sivan 7 589 J. Street, June 8, 1829.

(Signatures of leaders)

(Municipal Seal)

Posen, December 25, 1831.

Samuel Latz resided at 387 Gerber Street. On June 10, 1831 he made his will, found in same archives. He was wealthy. His will is very lengthy. Among the rest he writes: I have been married to my wife Pauline, nee Kaul, about sixteen years. Three children have been born, David, Beno, and Bertha. He left some money to the other members of his family. He writes in his will; I make the children of Coth[?] my  uncles, my legatees, namely, Fabian Benjamin Latz, Salkind Latz, Victor Latz, and Samuel Benjamin Latz' children, Leib Latz and Wolf Latz. He left 50 reichsthaler to every one.

It is clear that R. Solomon Latz had two brothers, Fabian and Samuel, as both are called by their father's name, Benjamin. Seemingly, there was no other man in the city by the name of Benjamin Latz. We cannot tell who was older, Solomon or FabianLatz. It is obvious from the official record that in 1830 Fabian was seventy-five years old. The record, Acta No. 153 in the archives, attests before the municipal poor chest that the businessman Samuel Faibush Latz died on April 3rd this year, childless, and that his father, seventy-five years of age, is in very needy circumstances. Samuel Solomon, in his will, mentions only three sons of his Uncle Fabian, - Salkind, Victor, and Joel, and not the fourth, Samuel, for the reason that Samuel had died before the will was made in June 1831. He died in April, 1830[?]. Had no children. This is attested by the community and municipality (153). Submitted for approval: That Samuel Faibush Latz died on 3rd of April, 1830. He was

was married to Feila, nee Hesh Gotthelf. There were no children.

(Seal of Community)

(Seal of Municipality)

Faibush Benjamin had one daughter, Malka. He lived in Posen, 84 Martin. Wolf, the son of Samuel Benjamin, married Malka, his uncle's daughter. This we learn from officail document "L" that Wolf Samuel Latz, local resident and ex-liquor dealer, who married Malka, nee Faibush Latz, had children as follows:

Son, Samuel Latz, born February 11, 1810.

Son, Hirsch Latz, born December 23, 1814.

Twins, Jacob, born April 18, 1823; Abraham, born April 17, 1823.

Daughter, Henneschen Latz, married Hyman Scherbel, residing at Lissa, born May 11, 1808.

Daughter, Lisette, born May 2, 1817

Daughter Ernestine, born July 21, 1821

Daughter, Yetla, born October 2, 1827.

(Signature of Community)

(Signature of Municipality)

Wolf, son of Samuel Latz, lived in Posen, 42 Schw. Martin Street

The following are inscriptions on tombstones of the Latz family:

Here interred

Ideal woman, her husband's crown and glory of daughters, the pious and exalted Mrs. Malka, wife of Wolf Latz, who returned to the house of her father on Adar second 25, 622, to witness the pleasantness of God and shelter in heaven in the shadow of Almighty. May the clods of earth delight her, and may she be happy on the last day. (In German) Here rests our unforgettable mother Amalka Latz, nee Faibush. Died March 26, 1862, the age of seventy-eight years.

Here interred

A perfect, upright, and God-fearing man, who lived by his hard labor all his life, scholar R. Samuel, surnamed Sanwib, son of Wolf Latz. Born 2nd day of Shebat 571, died in good name 11th Kislav. (In German) Here rests with God my dear husband, our non-forgetable father, grand, and father-in-law, Samuel Latz, born February 11, 1811, died November 21, 1882. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L. Remark of ~~Write~~ Record officially that he was born February 11, 1810.

Weeping Stone

Ideal daughter, young virgin Esther, daughter of Wolf Latz, died in good name Saturday, Iyar 25, 603.

E-very ear heard of thy works
S-urely hast fed the poor and widow.
T-hou art praised by all young folks
E-very woman is a beloved daughter
R-everedly you surpass all.
M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

(There are four more lines on this stone but letters are not legible)
This Esther is Ernestine.

Tombstone of _____

Clean hands, upright in his ways
Pursuing justice, kindness all his days.
Heartily loved his parents more than gold
Kept them, fed them, when they were old.
Lament ye for a man so brave
Prematurely led to his grave.

Fifty-three years old, dear Hyman, son of Salkind Latz, bless his memory, died Friday, Jebeth 26, 632. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.
(In German) Here rests Heiman Latz, the pride of honest and religious life. Torn from his own. Born February 17, 1819, died January 5, 1872. Was never married. (Stone fell and overturned)

Interred here

Eminent woman, Dinah, daughter of Hayine, and wife of Salkind Latz, died Shebat 25, 626. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Interred here

J-ust, perfect, and upright man
A-nd kins' support was your pursuit
H-arvest in heaven your labors fruit
I-n all your deeds a faithful man.
E-ternal rest should be your fate.
L-eft oblivion - earth, at seventy-eight.

Jahiel, son of Salkind Latz, died Sivan 13, 645. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Interred here

Dear, honorable Dabish Ariele Leib, son of Samuel Latz, died in good name Ab 12, 605. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Here interred

Joel, son of Jacob Latz, died when (Illegible) 622 - - - - -
Buried with great honor on the morrow.

J-ubilantly angels thy coming are hailing
O-ur crown fallen; thy children are wailing.
E-arth, dear father, suddenly forsaken
L-ife and soul to heaven were taken.

This is our only comfort and solace; uprightly he lived by sweat of his face, may ever precede him justice and grace.

Here interred, dear God-fearing woman, Hinda, widow of R. Joel Latz, died in good name Saturday, Tamuz 2, 636.

Glorious was thy earthly life
Every step a song of praise.
Ever hopeful, ever faithful
Through joy and woe with pious ways
Ideal, all shining unforgotten
Your star for all is abating
For us, the children who truly loved you,
Thou good mother
Showing the road to eternal weal.

Here interred

Young and tender, pride of her husband, joy of her parents, wife of R. Jahiel Latz, died Saturday 23 of Second Adar, buried next day 600.

Ideal woman, your husband's crown
Why didst thou hasten to find a grave
Not fully twenty, and bringest sorrow
To loving parents and men so brave.
Time passes on; time does vanish,
I'll not vanquish my wounded heart
Waves of time all overflowing,
But from grief and sorrow I'll never part.

Remark: This fiery inscription is heartrending. Her husband's tombstone is described on preceding page. He lived forty-five years after her, and never married again.

Grave of Hirsh, son of Wolf Latz

Here rests in God my innermost beloved husband, and our true care-taking father, Hartwig Latz, born December 17, 1814. Died March 16, 1885. Deeply lamented by his kin.

And his wife's grave

Here rests in God our beloved mother, Johanna Latz, nee weitz, born March 12, 1823 died September 8, 1901. Ever lamented by her children. Remark; On tombstone is written that Hirsh was born December 17, and his birth record shows he was born December 23.

R. Yehudi Ariele, son of R. Joel, may he rest in peace, wife, Kazern ?
 daughter of R. Ensche, the Levite, be in peace.
 In memory of our dear parents, Julius Latz, born December 13, 1829,
 died February 24, 1912, 6 Adar 5672; and Caroline Latz, nee Dariziger,
 born October 26, 1833, died January 20, 1919, Shevat 19, 5679.

The beloved in life, in death parted
 While the clods of their earth are united
 Their childrens' eyes are dimmed and drear
 By the double stone to parents dear.
 M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Remark: Joel, the father of Julius, as seen in records, was in the
 saddle business. So was his son Julius. He had the largest magazine
 in Posen in this line. Some people still remember him well, and he
 is praised by all. His sons, Joachim, Hugo, and Harrieh settled in
 Berlin.

Here interred

An upright and just man, a charitable man, at all times earning his
 livelihood by hard toil, R. Solomon, son of Bezabel Ferber, who died
 in good name 19 Tamuz 634. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L. Here rests
 my dear husband, Solomon Ferber, died 19 Tamuz 5634, July 4, 1875.
 Peace to his ashes.

Here interred

A dear and worthy woman, who, with husband and children, were very
 charitable, Rachel, daughter of R. Joel Latz, wife of R. Solomon
 Ferber, who died Iyar 29, 636. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.
 Here rests our beloved mother and sister, Roschen Ferber, nee Latz,
 died 29 Iyar, 5636, May 23, 1876. Peace to her ashes.

Remarks: Rachel was the sister of Julius Latz, of the contribution
 for the new structure of Solomon Benjamin Latz. Her son, Arnold Ferber,
 in Mexico, (long dead) was one of the warm-hearted contributors to the
 Latz institution. Besides his annual contribution sent from Mexico
 he founded a perpetual fund of five thousand dollars for the institution.
 This money was invested in Berlin, and a special curator takes care of it

Here rests with God my dear husband and unforgotten father, Adolf Latz.
 Born February 26, 1838, died October 9, 1886. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Here rests with God our innermost beloved mother Johanna Latz, nee Halle.
 Born February 26, 1838, died October 9, 1886. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Here rests in God my innermost beloved dear son, our unforgotten brother,
 Louis Latz. Died June 30, 1883 at age of forty. Peace to his ashes.
 M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Here rests my beloved husband, Wilhelm Latz. Born April 19, 1848, died
 February 7, 1887. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Here rests in peace our beloved brother, George Latz, born July 20, 1861
 died January 30, 1892. Deeply lamented by his kin. M. H. S. B. B. in the
 C. of L.

A woman, Gitel, wife of Avigdor Latz, N. U. N. D. ? first day of Kislev 606. M. H. S. B. B. in the C. of L.

Remarks: There are no birth records of year 1785, and we do not know who R. Avigdor Latz was.

A ~~man~~ of perfect honesty, R. Mona, son of R. Samuel Latz, died at age of ninety-three, Thursday, 6th day of Succoth 639. Here rests Mona Latz, born 1785, died October 17, 1878.

Remarks: It is impossible to know about the man, Mona, son of Samuel. (Which Samuel?) Possibly, we may surmise that there were more members in the Latz family than were recorded in the birth records of the government archives. On the tombstone of the woman, Gitel, there are missing words. The letters, N. U. N. D. are not explainable. It may mean "descendant of" but whose?

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

I see before me the large photograph of R. Solomon, son of Benjamin Latz, his memory be blessed. The picture is fascinating with its typically Jewish gracefulness. His physiognomy is like that of the aristocrats of Israel and his great rabbis, whose pictures are usually hanging in every truly Israelitish home. A beard, wholly of majestic hoariness, adorns a courageous and earnest face. The glory of compassion is spread over the face. The beard is broad at the top, at both sides of his earlocks, tapering down till over his chest, when it divides into two parts. His lips express Jewish wisdom and knowledge of life. A beautiful nose, somewhat arched at its end, between two full eyes, looking straightforward. Their profound view manifests the character of the man. We cannot tell whether or not he had a high forehead, because he wears a high hairy hat which descends to a half of the forehead over the white earlocks. His body is drawn in, and from between the sleeves of his coat are seen two tender hands, long fingers, as if all hammered of grace, holding an open snuff tobacco box.

This picture arouses a reverence to its subject, and the face is that of a Jewish merchant, a man respected among his people, one hundred and ten years ago, within the walls of the Jewish Ghetto, in the city of Posen. Underneath the picture appears the inscription:

SOLOMON BENJAMIN LATZ

FOUNDER OF THIS OLD AND INVALID HOME

With this enterprise has this pious philanthropist and broad-hearted Jew acquired for himself an everlasting name, that will not be forgotten. To himself, his children, and his posterity, he left a glorious heritage. R. Solomon (Zalman), son of R. Benjamin Latz, was that pleasing type of Jew in whom our people in exile glorify.

and who is a guarantee that a people who can have such sons is
facing toward a bright future, planted on moral, sublime, fruitful,
Jewish and human foundations.

*** *****

Posen, November 18, 1938

Peace and strength to my dear Sir, Irving Latz, Fort Wayne, Indiana:

To this letter I attach six pictures of your ancestor, Rabbi Solomon Benjamin Latz, may his memory be blessed. I hope you will be pleased with them. The work on them was successful. Kindly acknowledge to me their receipt.

The plate of the pictures is in my possession, so if you need any more I can supply you. The price of every picture, according to the photographer, will come to twenty cents.

From the German letter herein attached you can see how I endeavored to gather the information about all the members of your exalted family. I cannot stop wondering, and even you may wonder that such an institute which exists only and especially for the research and information of Israelitish families, does not know anything, and advises me to get information, locally. I did, therefore, well when I made my research here; and it is, as yet, not completed. I shall exert every effort until I get them all. There is a way to get information by resorting to old people who reside in Suburban towns in the vicinity of Posen. Private investigation is always more successful than official. Due to the terrible events in Germany, I shall wait about a month and perhaps the situation will improve.

If you have any interest in this investigation, kindly send me three dollars for postage. Postage in Poland costs doubly more than in America. Whatever information I could obtain here has been incorporated in the biography which you have already received.

Please do not be offended if I ask you what you intend to do with this biography. It would be good to publish it as a memorial to your great ancestors. And if you do, please let me know, and I will add some details and embellishments to emphasize the luster of that great Jewish man, Rabbi Solomon Benjamin Latz.

I, again, thank you for your kindness and punctuality which is noble in all its senses. May the Lord fulfil all your wishes for good and bear gratitude and blessing from your respecer,

(Signed) Saul Blum